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ANN RADCLIFFE

(1764-1823)

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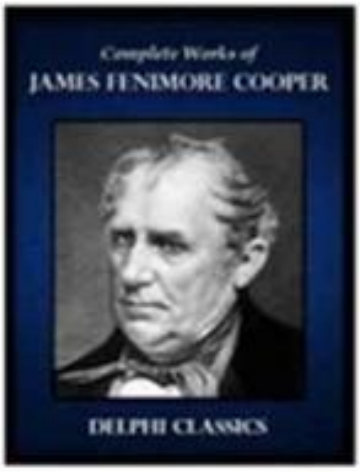

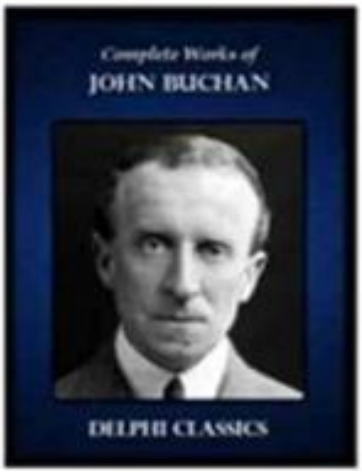

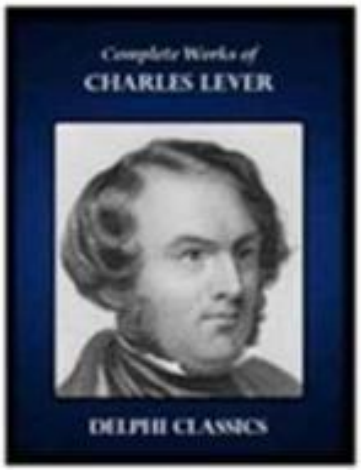

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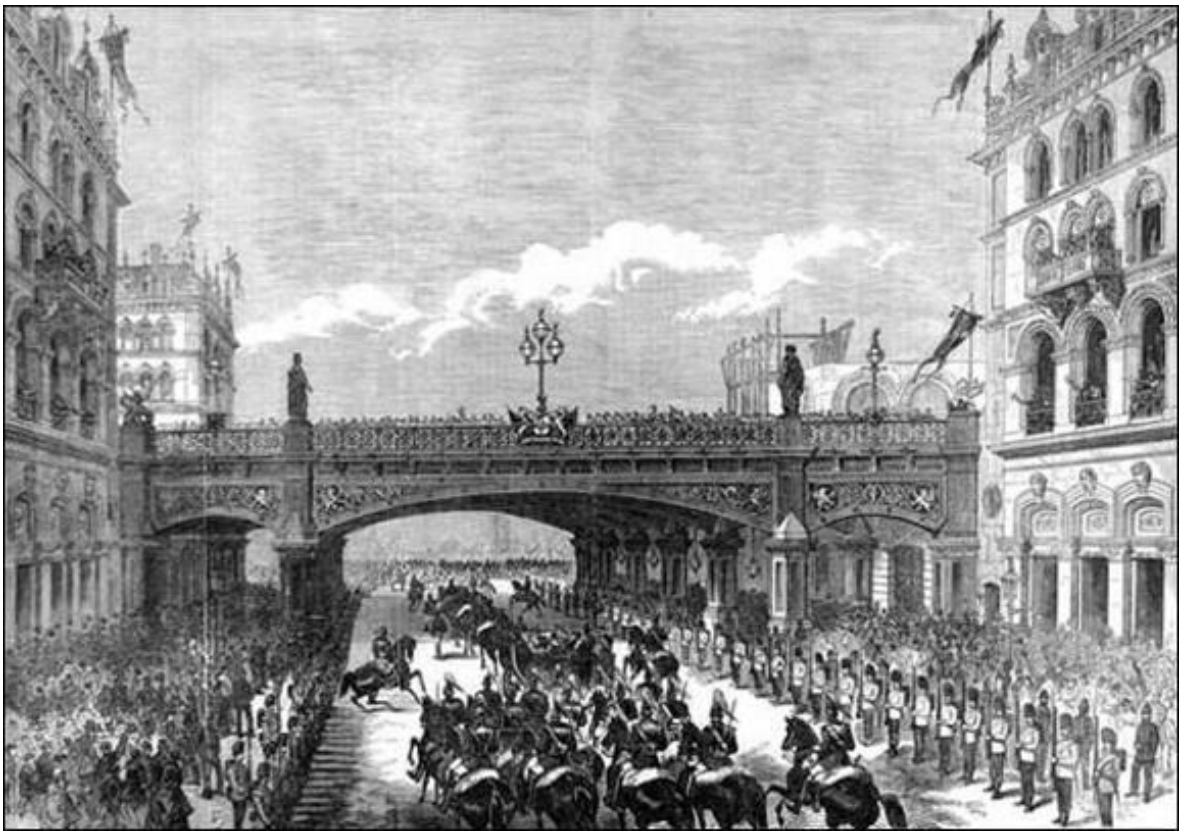


Holborn — Radcliffe's birthplace

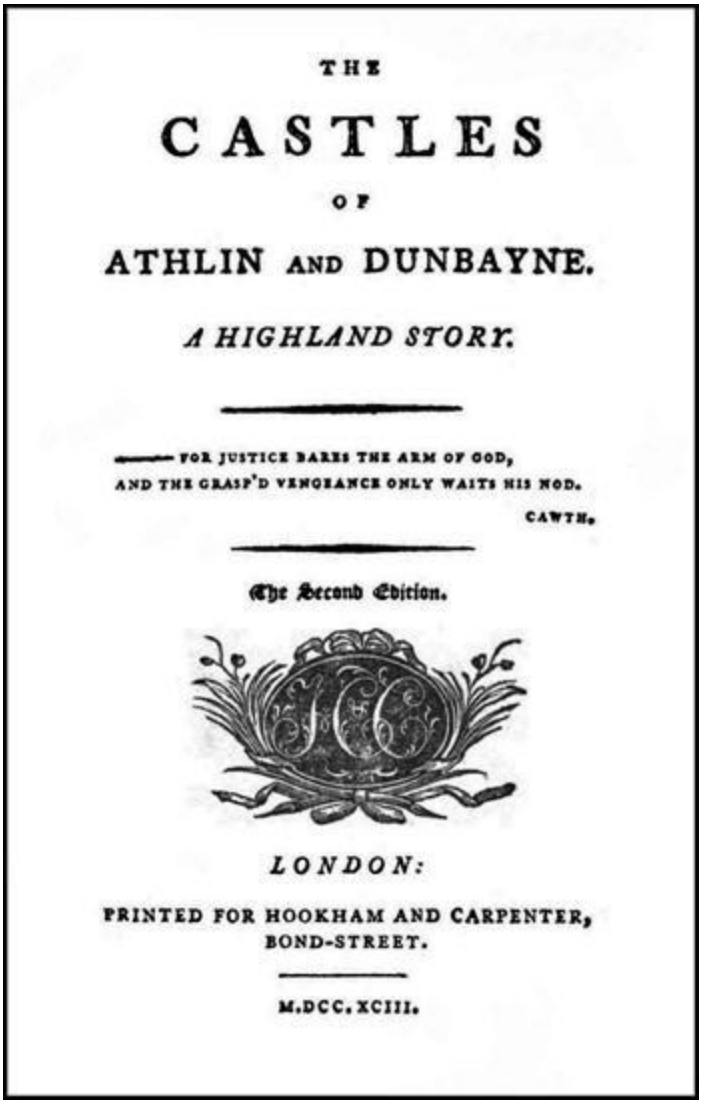
Holborn today

THE CASTLES OF ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE: A HIGHLAND STO RY

The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story was Ann Radcliffe's first novel, published in 1789 by Thomas Hookham. Radcliffe was an immensely successful and popular writer who garnered both commercial and to a certain extent, considering the low regard in which novels were held, critical plaudits. She began exploring her theories of the sublime and of viewing the landscape as a character and work of art. Her novels were a skilful interweaving of the romance genre with works of sensibility.

Her first Gothic tale centres on two opposing clans in feudal Scotland : Athlin and Dunbayne. Malcolm the Lord of Dunbayne has recently murdered Earl Osbert's father in a cowardly ambush and left Osbert, his sister Mary and their mother Matilda bereft. This calculated killing results in Osbert's burning desire to seek revenge on Malcolm while he simultaneously worries over leaving or endangering his mother and sister by any reckless acts. They encourage Osbert to calm his vengeful passion and not to pursue any retribution against his father's murderer. However, they fail in this quest and Osbert is assisted in his attempt to destroy Malcolm by the peasant, Alleyn when they launch an attack on Malcolm's castle. Apart from the theme of revenge, the novel also contains the romance elements of many Gothic tales; Osbert is torn between vengeance and the love he bears his family and his sister Mary is divided over her love for Alleyn and the duty, obedience and honour she owes her family.

Mary becomes the object of desire for three very different men but her ability or opportunity to choose is constrained by the expectations and responsibilities that a woman in her position faced in protecting the family name and acceding to male familial wishes. Malcolm and Osbert appear as opposites in the feudal world of morality they inhabit, although it is not difficult to uncover similarities in their codes of conduct regarding their behaviour to power. Radcliffe weaves a gothic tale of usurpation, imprisonment and romance into a seemingly conservative text, which conforms to the chivalric code and restores the correct dynastical and patriarchal order.



THE

CASTLES

OF

ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE.

A HIGHLAND STORY.

——— FOR JUSTICE BARES THE ARM OF GOD,
AND THE GRASP'D VENGEANCE ONLY WAITS HIS NOD.

CAWTH.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HOOKHAM AND CARPENTER,
BOND-STREET.

M.DCC.XCIII.

The first edition's title page

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CHAPTER I

ON the northeast coast of Scotland , in the most romantic part of the Highlands, stood the Castle of Athlin ; an edifice built on the summit of a rock whose base was in the sea. This pile was venerable from its antiquity, and from its Gothic structure; but more venerable from the virtues which it enclosed. It was the residence of the still beautiful widow, and the children of the noble Earl of Athlin, who was slain by the hand of Malcolm, a neighbouring chief, proud, oppressive, revengeful; and still residing in all the pomp of feudal greatness, within a few miles of the castle of Athlin . Encroachment on the domain of Athlin, was the occasion of the animosity which subsisted between the chiefs. Frequent broils had happened between their clans, in which that of Athlin had generally been victorious. Malcolm, whose pride was touched by the defeat of his people; whose ambition was curbed by the authority, and whose greatness was rivalled by the power of the Earl, conceived for him that deadly hatred which opposition to its favourite passions naturally excites in a mind like his, haughty and unaccustomed to controul; and he meditated his destruction. He planned his purpose with all that address which so eminently marked his character, and in a battle which was attended by the chiefs of each party in person, he contrived, by a curious finesse, to entrap the Earl, accompanied by a small detachment, in his wiles, and there slew him. A general rout of his clan ensued, which was followed by a dreadful slaughter; and a few only escaped to tell the horrid catastrophe to Matilda. Overwhelmed by the news, and deprived of those numbers which would make revenge successful, Matilda forbore to sacrifice the lives of her few remaining people to a feeble attempt at retaliation, and she was constrained to endure in silence her sorrows and her injuries.

Inconsolable for his death, Matilda had withdrawn from the public eye, into this ancient seat of feudal government, and there, in the bosom of her people and her family, had devoted herself to the education of her children. One son and one daughter were all that survived to her care, and their growing virtues promised to repay all her tenderness. Osbert was in his nineteenth year: nature had given him a mind ardent and susceptible, to which education had added refinement and expansion. The visions of

genius were bright in his imagination, and his heart, unchilled by the touch of disappointment, glowed with all the warmth of benevolence.

When first we enter on the theatre of the world, and begin to notice its features, young imagination heightens every scene, and the warm heart expands to all around it. The happy benevolence of our feelings prompts us to believe that every body is good, and excites our wonder why every body is not happy. We are fired with indignation at the recital of an act of injustice, and at the unfeeling vices of which we are told. At a tale of distress our tears flow a full tribute to pity: at a deed of virtue our heart unfolds, our soul aspires, we bless the action, and feel ourselves the doer. As we advance in life, imagination is compelled to relinquish a part of her sweet delirium; we are led reluctantly to truth through the paths of experience; and the objects of our fond attention are viewed with a severer eye. Here an altered scene appears;–frowns where late were smiles; deep shades where late was sunshine: mean passions, or disgusting apathy stain the features of the principal figures. We turn indignant from a prospect so miserable, and court again the sweet illusions of our early days; but ah! they are fled for ever! Constrained, therefore, to behold objects in their more genuine hues, their deformity is by degrees less painful to us. The fine touch of moral susceptibility, by frequent irritation becomes callous; and too frequently we mingle with the world, till we are added to the number of its votaries.

Mary, who was just seventeen, had the accomplishments of riper years, with the touching simplicity of youth. The graces of her person were inferior only to those of her mind, which illumined her countenance with inimitable expression.

Twelve years had now elapsed since the death of the Earl, and time had blunted the keen edge of sorrow. Matilda’s grief had declined into a gentle, and not unpleasing melancholy, which gave a soft and interesting shade to the natural dignity of her character. Hitherto her attention had been solely directed towards rearing those virtues which nature had planted with so liberal a hand in her children, and which, under the genial influence of her eye, had flourished and expanded into beauty and strength. A new hope, and new solicitudes, now arose in her breast; these dear children were arrived at an age, dangerous from its tender susceptibility, and from the influence which imagination has at that time over the passions.

Impressions would soon be formed which would stamp their destiny for life. The anxious mother lived but in her children, and she had yet another cause of apprehension.

When Osbert learned the story of his father's death, his young heart glowed to avenge the deed. The late Earl, who had governed with the real dignity of power, was adored by his clan; they were eager to revenge his injuries; but oppressed by the generous compassion of the Countess, their murmurs sunk into silence: yet they fondly cherished the hope that their young Lord would one day lead them on to conquest and revenge. The time was now come when they looked to see this hope, the solace of many a cruel moment, realized. The tender fears of a mother would not suffer Matilda to risque the chief of her last remaining comforts. She forbade Osbert to engage. He submitted in silence, and endeavored by application to his favourite studies, to stifle the emotions which roused him to aims. He excelled in the various accomplishments of his rank, but chiefly in the martial exercises, for they were congenial to the nobility of his soul, and he had a secret pleasure in believing that they would one time assist him to do justice to the memory of his dead father. His warm imagination directed him to poetry, and he followed where she led. He loved to wander among the romantic scenes of the Highlands, where the wild variety of nature inspired him with all the enthusiasm of his favourite art. He delighted in the terrible and in the grand, more than in the softer landscape; and, wrapt in the bright visions of fancy, would often lose himself in awful solitudes.

It was in one of these rambles, that having strayed for some miles over hills covered with heath, from whence the eye was presented with only the bold outlines of uncultivated nature, rocks piled on rocks, cataracts and vast moors unmarked by the foot of traveller, he lost the path which he had himself made; he looked in vain for the objects which had directed him, and his heart, for the first time, felt the repulse of fear. No vestige of a human being was to be seen, and the dreadful silence of the place was interrupted only by the roar of distant torrents, and by the screams of the birds which flew over his head. He shouted, and his voice was answered only by the deep echoes of the mountains. He remained for some time in a silent dread not wholly unpleasing, but which was soon heightened to a degree of terror not to be endured; and he turned his steps backward,

forlorn, and dejected. His memory gave him back no image of the past; having wandered some time, he came to a narrow pass, which he entered, overcome with fatigue and fruitless search: he had not advanced far, when an abrupt opening in the rock suddenly presented him with a view of the most beautifully romantic spot he had ever seen. It was a valley almost surrounded by a barrier of wild rocks, whose base was shaded with thick woods of pine and fir. A torrent, which tumbled from the heights, and was seen between the woods, rushed with amazing impetuosity into a fine lake which flowed through the vale, and was lost in the deep recesses of the mountains. Herds of cattle grazed in the bottom, and the delighted eyes of Osbert were once more blessed with the sight of human dwellings. Far on the margin of the stream were scattered a few neat cottages. His heart was so gladdened at the prospect, that he forgot he had yet the way to find which led to this Elysian vale. He was just awakened to this distressing reality, when his attention was once more engaged by the manly figure of a young Highland peasant, who advanced towards him with an air of benevolence, and, having learned his distress, offered to conduct him to his cottage. Osbert accepted the invitation, and they wound down the hill, through an obscure and intricate path, together. They arrived at one of the cottages which the Earl had observed from the height; they entered, and the peasant presented his guest to a venerable old Highlander, his father. Refreshments were spread on the table by a pretty young girl, and Osbert, after having partook of them and rested awhile, departed, accompanied by Alleyn, the young peasant, who had offered to be his guide. The length of the walk was beguiled by conversation. Osbert was interested by discovering in his companion a dignity of thought, and a course of sentiment similar to his own. On their way, they passed at some distance the castle of Dunbayne. This object gave to Osbert a bitter reflection, and drew from him a deep sigh. Alleyn made observations on the bad policy of oppression in a chief, and produced as an instance the Baron Malcolm. These lands, said he, are his, and they are scarcely sufficient to support his wretched people, who, sinking under severe exactions, suffer to lie uncultivated, tracts which would otherwise add riches to their Lord. His clan, oppressed by their burdens, threaten to rise and do justice to themselves by force of arms. The Baron, in haughty confidence, laughs at their defiance, and is insensible to his danger: for should an insurrection

happen, there are other clans who would eagerly join in his destruction, and punish with the same weapon the tyrant and the murderer. Surprized at the bold independence of these words, delivered with uncommon energy, the heart of Osbert beat quick, and “O God! my father!” burst from his lips. Alleyn stood aghast! uncertain of the effect which his speech had produced; in an instant the whole truth flashed upon his mind: he beheld the son of the Lord whom he had been taught to love, and whose sad story had been impressed upon his heart in the early days of childhood; he sunk at his feet, and embraced his knees with a romantic ardor. The young Earl raised him from the ground, and the following words relieved him from his astonishment, and filled his eyes with tears of mingled joy and sorrow: “There are other clans as ready as your own to avenge the wrongs of the noble Earl of Athlin; the Fitz-Henrys were ever friends to virtue.” The countenance of the youth, while he spoke, was overspread with the glow of conscious dignity, and his eyes were animated with the pride of virtue.– The breast of Osbert kindled with noble purpose, but the image of his weeping mother crossed his mind, and checked the ardor of the impulse. “A time may come my friend,” said he, “when your generous zeal will be accepted with the warmth of gratitude it deserves. Particular circumstances will not suffer me, at present, to say more.” The warm attachment of Alleyn to his father sunk deep in his heart.

It was evening before they reached the castle, and Alleyn remained the Earl’s guest for that night.

CHAPTER I I

THE following day was appointed for the celebration of an annual festival given by the Earl to his people, and he would not suffer Alleyn to depart. The hall was spread with tables; and dance and merriment resounded through the castle. It was usual on that day for the clan to assemble in arms, on account of an attempt, the memory of which it was meant to perpetuate, made, two centuries before, by an hostile clan to surprize them in their festivity.

In the morning were performed the martial exercises, in which emulation was excited by the honorary rewards bestowed on excellence. The Countess and her lovely daughter beheld, from the ramparts of the castle, the feats performed on the plains below. Their attention was engaged, and their curiosity excited, by the appearance of a stranger who managed the lance and the bow with such exquisite dexterity, as to bear off each prize of chivalry. It was Alleyn. He received the palm of victory, as was usual, from the hands of the Earl; and the modest dignity with which he accepted it, charmed the beholders.

The Earl honoured the feast with his presence, at the conclusion of which, each guest arose, and seizing his goblet with his left hand, and with his right striking his sword, drank to the memory of their departed Lord. The hall echoed with the general voice. Osbert felt it strike upon his heart the alarum of war. The people then joined hands, and drank to the honour of the son of their late master. Osbert understood the signal, and overcome with emotion, every consideration yielded to that of avenging his father. He arose, and harangued the clan with all the fire of youth and indignant virtue. As he spoke, the countenance of his people flashed with impatient joy; a deep murmur of applause ran through the assembly: and when he was silent each man, crossing his sword with that of his neighbour, swore that sacred pledge of union, never to quit the cause in which they now engaged, till the life of their enemy had paid the debt of justice and of revenge.

In the evening, the wives and daughters of the peasantry came to the castle, and joined in the festivity. It was usual for the Countess and her ladies to observe from a gallery of the hall, the various performances of

dance and song; and it had been a custom of old for the daughter of the castle to grace the occasion by performing a Scotch dance with the victor of the morning. This victor now was Alleyn, who beheld the lovely Mary led by the Earl into the hall, and presented to him as his partner in the dance. She received his homage with a sweet grace. She was dressed in the habit of a Highland lass, and her fine auburn tresses, which waved in her neck, were ornamented only with a wreath of roses. She moved in the dance with the light steps of the Graces. Profound silence reigned through the hall during the performance, and a soft murmur of applause arose on its conclusion. The admiration of the spectators was divided between Mary and the victorious stranger. She retired to the gallery, and the night concluded in joy to all but the Earl, and to Alleyn; but very different was the source and the complexion of their inquietude. The mind of Osbert revolved the chief occurrences of the day, and his soul burned with impatience to accomplish the purposes of filial piety; yet he dreaded the effect which the communication of his designs might have on the tender heart of Matilda: on the morrow, however, he resolved to acquaint her with them, and in a few days to rise and prosecute his cause with arms.

Alleyn, whose bosom, till now, had felt only for others' pains, began to be conscious of his own. His mind, uneasy and restless, gave him only the image of the high-born Mary; he endeavoured to exclude her idea, but with an effort so faint, that it would still intrude! Pleased, yet sad, he would not acknowledge, even to himself, that he loved; so ingenious are we to conceal every appearance of evil from ourselves. He arose with the dawn, and departed from the castle full of gratitude and secret love, to prepare his friends for the approaching war.

The Earl awoke from broken slumbers, and summoned all his fortitude to encounter the tender opposition of his mother. He entered her apartment with faultering steps, and his countenance betrayed the emotions of his soul. Matilda was soon informed of what her heart had foreboded, and overcome with dreadful sensation, sunk lifeless in her chair. Osbert flew to her assistance, and Mary and the attendants soon recovered her to sense and wretchedness.

The mind of Osbert was torn by the most cruel conflict: filial duty, honour, revenge, commanded him to go; filial love, regret, and pity, entreated him to stay. Mary fell at his feet, and clasping his knees with all

the wild energy of grief besought him to relinquish his fatal purpose, and save his last surviving parent. Her tears, her sighs, and the soft simplicity of her air, spoke a yet stronger language than her tongue: but the silent grief of the Countess was still more touching, and in his endeavours to sooth her, he was on the point of yielding his resolution, when the figure of his dying father arose to his imagination, and stamped his purpose irrevocably. The anxiety of a fond mother, presented Matilda with the image of her son bleeding and ghastly; and the death of her Lord was revived in her memory with all the agonizing grief that sad event had impressed upon her heart, the harsher characters of which, the lenient hand of time had almost obliterated. So lovely is Pity in all her attitudes, that fondness prompts us to believe she can never transgress; but she changes into a vice, when she overcomes the purposes of stronger virtue. Sterner principles now nerved the breast of Osbert against her influence and impelled him on to deeds of arms. He summoned a few of the most able and trusty of the clan, and held a council of war; in which it was resolved that Malcolm should be attacked with all the force they could assemble, and with all the speed which the importance of the preparation would allow. To prevent suspicion and alarm to the Baron, it was agreed it should be given out, that these preparations were intended for assistance to the Chief of a distant part. That when they set out on the expedition, they should pursue, for some time, a contrary way, but under favour of the night should suddenly change their route, and turn upon the castle of Dunbayne.

In the mean time, Alleyn was strenuous in exciting his friends to the cause, and so successful in the undertaking, as to have collected, in a few days, a number of no inconsiderable consequence. To the warm enthusiasm of virtue was now added a new motive of exertion. It was no longer simply an attachment to the cause of justice, which roused him to action; the pride of distinguishing himself in the eyes of his mistress, and of deserving her esteem by his zealous services, gave combined force to the first impulse of benevolence. The sweet thought of deserving her thanks, operated secretly on his soul, for he was yet ignorant of its influence there. In this state he again appeared at the castle, and told the Earl, that himself and his friends were ready to follow him whenever the signal should be given. His offer was accepted with the warmth of kindness it claimed, and he was desired to hold himself in readiness for the onset.

In a few days the preparations were completed, Alleyn and his friends were summoned, the clan assembled in arms, and, with the young Earl at their head, departed on their expedition. The parting between Osbert and his family may be easily conceived; nor could all the pride of expected conquest suppress a sigh which escaped from Alleyn when his eyes bade adieu to Mary who, with the Countess, stood on the terrace of the castle, pursuing with aching sight the march of her beloved brother, till distance veiled him from her view; she then turned into the castle weeping, and foreboding future calamity. She endeavoured, however, to assume an appearance of tranquillity, that she might deceive the fears of Matilda, and sooth her sorrow. Matilda, whose mind was strong as her heart was tender, since she could not prevent this hazardous undertaking, summoned all her fortitude to resist the impressions of fruitless grief, and to search for the good which the occasion might present. Her efforts were not vain; she found it in the prospect which the enterprize afforded of honour to the memory of her murdered Lord, and of retribution on the head of the murderer.

It was evening when the Earl departed from the castle; he pursued a contrary route till night favoured his designs, when he wheeled towards the castle of Dunbayne. The extreme darkness of the night assisted their plan, which was to scale the walls, surprize the centinels; burst their way into the inner courts sword in hand, and force the murderer from his retreat. They had trod many miles the dreary wilds, unassisted by the least gleam of light, when suddenly their ears were struck with the dismal note of a watch-bell, which chimed the hour of the night. Every heart beat to the sound. They knew they were near the abode of the Baron. They halted to consult concerning their proceedings, when it was agreed, that the Earl with Alleyn and a chosen few, should proceed to reconnoitre the castle, while the rest should remain at a small distance awaiting the signal of approach. The Earl and his party pursued their march with silent steps; they perceived a faint light, which they guessed to proceed from the watchtower of the castle, and they were now almost under its walls. They paused awhile in silence to give breath to expectation, and to listen if any thing was stirring. All was involved in the gloom of night, and the silence of death prevailed. They had now time to examine, as well as the darkness would permit, the situation of the castle, and the height of the walls; and to

prepare for the assault. The edifice was built with Gothic magnificence upon a high and dangerous rock. Its lofty towers still frowned in proud sublimity, and the immensity of the pile stood a record of the ancient consequence of its possessors. The rock was surrounded by a ditch, broad, but not deep, over which were two drawbridges, one on the north side, the other on the east; they were both up, but as they separated in the center, one half of the bridge remained on the side of the plains. The bridge on the north led to the grand gateway of the castle; that on the east to a small watchtower: these were all the entrances. The rock was almost perpendicular with the walls, which were strong and lofty. After surveying the situation, they pitched upon a spot where the rock appeared most accessible, and which was contiguous to the principal gate, and gave signal to the clan. They approached in silence, and gently throwing down the bundles of faggot, which they had brought for the purpose, into the ditch, made themselves a bridge over which they passed in safety, and prepared to ascend the heights. It had been resolved that a party, of which Alleyn was one, should scale the walls, surprize the centinels, and open the gates to the rest of the clan, which, with the Earl, were to remain without. Alleyn was the first who fixed his ladder and mounted; he was instantly followed by the rest of his party, and with much difficulty, and some hazard, they gained the ramparts in safety. They traversed a part of the platform without hearing the sound of a voice or a step; profound sleep seemed to bury all. A number of the party approached some centinels who were asleep on their post; them they seized; while Alleyn, with a few others, flew to open the nearest gate, and to let down the drawbridge. This they accomplished; but in the mean time the signal of surprize was given, and instantly the alarm bell rang out, and the castle resounded with the clang of arms. All was tumult and confusion. The Earl, with part of his people, entered the gate; the rest were following, when suddenly the portcullis was dropped, the bridge drawn up, and the Earl and his people found themselves surrounded by an armed multitude, which poured in torrents from every recess of the castle. Surprized, but not daunted, the Earl rushed forward sword in hand, and fought with a desperate valour. The soul of Alleyn seemed to acquire new vigour from the conflict; he fought like a man panting for honour, and certain of victory; wherever he rushed, conquest flew before him. He, with the Earl, forced his way into the inner

courts, in search of the Baron, and hoped to have satisfied a just revenge, and to have concluded the conflict with the death of the murderer; but the moment in which they entered the courts, the gates were closed upon them; they were environed by a band of guards; and, after a short resistance, in which Alleyn received a slight wound, they were seized as prisoners of war. The slaughter without was great and dreadful: the people of the Baron inspired with fury, were insatiate for death: many of the Earl's followers were killed in the courts and on the platform; many, in attempting to escape, were thrown from the ramparts, and many were destroyed by the sudden raising of the bridge. A small part, only of the brave and adventurous band who had engaged in the cause of justice, and who were driven back from the walls, survived to carry the dreadful tidings to the Countess. The fate of the Earl remained unknown. The consternation among the friends of the slain is not to be described, and it was heightened by the unaccountable manner in which the victory had been obtained; for it was well known that Malcolm had never, but when war made it necessary, more soldiers in his garrison than feudal pomp demanded; yet on this occasion, a number of armed men rushed from the recesses of his castle, sufficient to overpower the force of a whole clan. But they knew not the secret means of intelligence which the Baron possessed; the jealousy of conscience had armed him with apprehension for his safety; and for some years he had planted spies near the castle of Athlin, to observe all that passed within it, and to give him immediate intelligence of every warlike preparation. A transaction so striking, and so public as that which had occurred on the day of the festival, when the whole people swore to avenge the murder of their Chief, it was not probable would escape the valiant eye of his mercenaries: the circumstance had been communicated to him with all the exaggerations of fear and wonder, and had given him the signal for defence. The accounts sent him of the military preparations which were forming, convinced him that this defence would soon be called for; and, laughing at the idle tales which were told him of distant wars, he hastened to store his garrison with arms and with men, and held himself in readiness to receive the assailants. The Baron had conducted his plans with all that power of contrivance which the secrecy of the business demanded; and it was his design to suffer the enemy to mount his walls, and to put them to the sword, when

the purpose of this deep-laid stratagem had been nearly defeated by the drowsiness of the centinels who were posted to give signal of their approach.

The fortitude of Matilda fainted under the pressure of so heavy a calamity; she was attacked with a violent illness, which had nearly terminated her sorrows and her life; and had rendered unavailing all the tender cares of her daughter. These tender cares, however, were not ineffectual; she revived, and they assisted to support her in the severe hours of affliction, which the unknown fate of the Earl occasioned. Mary, who felt all the horrors of the late event, was ill qualified for the office of a comforter; but her generous heart, susceptible of the deep sufferings of Matilda, almost forgot its own distress in the remembrance of her mother’s. Yet the idea of her brother, surrounded with the horrors of imprisonment and death, would often obtrude itself on her imagination, with an emphasis which almost overcame her reason. She had also a strong degree of pity for the fate of the brave young Highlander who had assisted, with a disinterestedness so noble, in the cause of her house; she wished to learn his further destiny, and her heart often melted in compassion at the picture which her fancy drew of his sufferings.

CHAPTER II I

THE Earl, after being loaded with fetters, was conducted to the chief prison of the castle, and left alone to the bitter reflections of defeat and uncertain destiny; but misfortune, though it might shake, could not overcome his firmness; and hope had not yet entirely forsaken him. It is the peculiar attribute of great minds, to bear up with increasing force against the shock of misfortune; with them the nerves of resistance strengthen with attack; and they may be said to subdue adversity with her own weapons.

Reflection, at length, afforded him time to examine his prison: it was a square room, which formed the summit of a tower built on the east side of the castle, round which the bleak winds howled mournfully; the inside of the apartment was old and falling to decay: a small mattrass, which lay in one corner of the room, a broken matted chair, and a tottering table, composed its furniture; two small and strongly grated windows, which admitted a sufficient degree of light and air, afforded him on one side a view into an inner court, and on the other a dreary prospect of the wild and barren Highlands.

Alleyn was conveyed through dark and winding passages to a distant part of the castle, where at length a small door, barred with iron, opened, and disclosed to him an abode, whence light and hope were equally excluded. He shuddered as he entered, and the door was closed upon him.

The mind of the Baron, in the mean time, was agitated with all the direful passions of hate, revenge, and exulting pride. He racked imagination for the invention of tortures equal to the force of his feelings; and he at length discovered that the sufferings of suspense are superior to those of the most terrible evils, when once ascertained, of which the contemplation gradually affords to strong minds the means of endurance. He determined, therefore, that the Earl should remain confined in the tower, ignorant of his future destiny; and in the mean while should be allowed food only sufficient to keep him sensible of his wretchedness.

Osbert was immersed in thought, when he heard the door of his prison unbarred, and the Baron Malcolm stood before him. The heart of Osbert swelled high with indignation, and defiance flashed in his eyes. “I am

come," said the insulting victor, "to welcome the Earl of Athlin to my castle; and to shew that I can receive my friends with the hospitality they deserve; but I am yet undetermined what kind of festival I shall bestow on his arrival."

"Weak tyrant," returned Osbert, his countenance impressed with the firm dignity of virtue, "to insult the vanquished, is congenial with the cruel meanness of the murderer; nor do I expect, that the man who slew the father, will spare the son; but know, that son is nerved against your wrath, and welcomes all that your fears or your cruelty can impose."

"Rash youth," replied the Baron; "your words are air; they fade from sense, and soon your boasted strength shall sink beneath my power. I go to meditate your destiny." With these words he quitted the prison, enraged at the unbending virtue of the Earl.

The sight of the Baron, roused in the soul of Osbert all those opposite emotions of furious indignation and tender pity which the glowing image of his father could excite, and produced a moment of perfect misery. The dreadful energy of these sensations exasperated his brain almost to madness; the cool fortitude in which he had so lately gloried, disappeared; and he was on the point of resigning his virtue and his life, by means of a short dagger, which he wore concealed under his vest, when the soft notes of a lute surprized his attention. It was accompanied by a voice so enchantingly tender and melodious, that its sounds fell on the heart of Osbert in balmy comfort: it seemed sent by Heaven to arrest his fate:–the storm of passion was hushed within him, and he dissolved in kind tears of pity and contrition. The mournful tenderness of the air declared the person from whom it came to be a sufferer; and Osbert suspected it to proceed from a prisoner like himself. The music ceased. Absorbed in wonder, he went to the grates, in quest of the sweet musician, but no one was to be seen; and he was uncertain whether the sounds arose from within or from without the castle. Of the guard, who brought him his small allowance of food, he inquired concerning what he had heard; but from him he could not obtain the information he sought, and he was constrained to remain in a state of suspense.

In the mean time the castle of Athlin, and its neighbourhood, was overwhelmed with distress. The news of the earl's imprisonment at length reached the ears of the countess, and hope once more illumined her mind.

She immediately sent offers of immense ransom to the baron, for the restoration of her son, and the other prisoners; but the ferocity of his nature disdained an incomplete triumph. Revenge subdued his avarice; and the offers were rejected with the spurn of contempt. An additional motive, however, operated in his mind, and confirmed his purpose. The beauty of Mary had been often reported to him in terms which excited his curiosity; and an incidental view he once obtained of her, raised a passion in his soul, which the turbulence of his character would not suffer to be extinguished. Various were the schemes he had projected to obtain her, none of which had ever been executed: the possession of the earl was a circumstance the most favourable to his wishes; and he resolved to obtain Mary, as the future ransom of her brother. He concealed, for the present, his purpose, that the tortures of anxiety and despair might operate on the mind of the countess, to grant him an easy consent to the exchange, and to resign the victim the wife of her enemy.

The small remains of the clan, unsubdued by misfortune, were eager to assemble; and, hazardous as was the enterprize, to attempt the rescue of their Chief. The hope which this undertaking afforded, once more revived the Countess; but alas! a new source of sorrow was now opened for her: the health of Mary visibly declined; she was silent and pensive; her tender frame was too susceptible of the sufferings of her mind; and these sufferings were heightened by concealment. She was prescribed amusement and gentle exercise, as the best restoratives of peace and health. One day, as she was seeking on horseback these lost treasures, she was tempted by the fineness of the evening to prolong her ride beyond its usual limits: the sun was declining when she entered a wood, whose awful glooms so well accorded with the pensive tone of her mind. The soft serenity of evening, and the still solemnity of the scene, conspired to lull her mind into a pleasing forgetfulness of its troubles; from which she was, ere long, awakened by the approaching sound of horses' feet. The thickness of the foliage limited her view; but looking onward, she thought she perceived through the trees, a glittering of arms; she turned her palfry, and sought the entrance of the wood. The clattering of hoofs advanced in the breeze! her heart, misgave her, and she quickened her pace. Her fears were soon justified; she looked back, and beheld three horsemen armed and disguised advancing with the speed of pursuit. Almost fainting, she

flew on the wings of terror; all her efforts were vain; the villains came up; one seized her horse, the others fell upon her two attendants: a stout scuffle ensued, but the strength of her servants soon yielded to the weapons of their adversaries; they were brought to the ground, dragged into the wood, and there left bound to the trees. In the mean time, Mary, who had fainted in the arms of the villain who seized her, was borne away through the intricate mazes of the woods; and her terrors may be easily imagined, when she revived, and found herself in the hands of unknown men. Her dreadful screams, her tears, her supplications, were ineffectual; the wretches were deaf alike to pity and to enquiry; they preserved an inflexible silence, and she saw herself conveying towards the mouth of a horrible cavern, when despair seized her mind, and she lost all signs of existence: in this state she remained some time; but it is impossible to describe her situation, when she unclosed her eyes, and beheld Alleyn, who was watching with the most trembling anxiety her return to life, and whose eyes, on seeing her revive, swam in joy and tenderness. Wonder; fearful joy, and the various shades of mingled emotions, passed in quick succession over her countenance; her surprize was increased, when she observed her own servants standing by, and could discover no one but friends. She scarcely dared to trust her senses, but the voice of Alleyn, tremulous with tenderness, dissolved in a moment the illusions of fear, and confirmed her in the surprising reality. When she was sufficiently recovered, they quitted this scene of gloom: they travelled on in a slow pace, and the shades of night were fallen long before they reached the castle; there distress and confusion appeared. The Countess, alarmed with the most dreadful apprehensions, had dispatched her servants various ways in search of her child, and her transports on again beholding her in safety, prevented her observing immediately that it was Alleyn who accompanied her. Joy, however, soon yielded to its equal wonder, when she perceived him, and in the tumult of contending emotions, she scarce knew which first to interrogate. When she had been told the escape of her daughter, and by whom effected, she prepared to hear, with impatient solicitude, news of her beloved son, and the means by which the brave young Highlander had eluded the vigilance of the Baron. Of the Earl, Alleyn could only inform the Countess, that he was taken prisoner with himself, within the walls of the fortress, as they fought side by side; that he was conducted

unwounded, to a tower, situated on the east angle of the castle, where he was still confined. Himself had been imprisoned in a distant part of the pile, and had been able to collect no other particulars of the Earl's situation, than those he had related. Of himself he gave a brief relation of the following circumstances:

After having lain some weeks in the horrible dungeon allotted him, his mind involved in the gloom of despair, and filled with the momentary expectation of death, desperation furnished him with invention, and he concerted the following plan of escape:–He had observed, that the guard who brought him his allowance of food, on quitting the dungeon, constantly sounded his spear against the pavement near the entrance. This circumstance excited his surprize and curiosity. A ray of hope beamed through the gloom of his dungeon. He examined the spot, as well as the obscurity of the place would permit; it was paved with flag stones like the other parts of the cell, and the paving was everywhere equally firm. He, however, became certain, that some means of escape was concealed beneath that part, for the guard was constant in examining it by striking that spot, and treading more firmly on it; and this he endeavoured to do without being observed. One day, immediately after the departure of the guard, Alleyn set himself to unfasten the pavement; this, with much patience and industry, he effected, by means of a small knife which had escaped the search of the soldiers. He found the earth beneath hard, and without any symptoms of being lately disturbed; but after digging a few feet, he arrived at a trap; he trembled with eagerness. It was now almost night, and he overcome with weariness; he doubted whether he should be able to penetrate through the door, and what other obstructions were behind it, before the next day. He therefore, threw the earth again into the hole, and endeavoured to close the pavement; with much difficulty, he trod the earth into the opening, but the pavement he was unable exactly to replace. It was too dark examine the stones; and he found, that even if he should be able to make them fit, the pavement could not be made firm. His mind and body were now overcome, and he threw himself on the ground in an agony of despair. It was midnight, when the return of his strength and spirits produced another effort. He tore the earth up with hasty violence, cut round the lock of the trap door, and raising it, unwilling to hesitate or consider, sprung through the aperture. The vault was of considerable

depth, and he was thrown down by the violence of the fall; an hollow echo, which seemed to murmur at a distance, convinced him that the place was of considerable extent. He had no light to direct him, and was therefore obliged to walk with his arms extended, in silent and fearful examination. After having wandered through the void a considerable time, he came to a wall, along which he groped with anxious care; it conducted him onward for a length of way: it turned; he followed, and his hand touched the cold iron work of a barred window. He felt the gentle undulation of the air upon his face; and to him, who had been so long confined among the damp vapours of a dungeon, this was a moment of luxury. The air gave him strength; and the means of escape, which now seemed presented to him, renewed his courage. He set his foot against the wall, and grasping a bar with his hand, found it gradually yield to his strength, and by successive efforts, he entirely displaced it. He attempted another but, it was more firmly fixed, and every effort to loosen it was ineffectual; he found that it was fastened in a large stone of the wall, and to remove this stone, was his only means of displacing the bar; he set himself, therefore, again to work with his knife, and with much patience, loosened the mortar sufficiently to effect his purpose. After some hours, for the darkness made his labour tedious, and sometimes ineffectual, he had removed several of the bars, and had made an opening almost sufficient to permit his escape, when the dawn of light appeared; he now discovered, with inexpressible anguish, that the grate opened into an inner court of the castle, and even while he hesitated, he could perceive soldiers descending slowly into the court, from the narrow staircases which led to their apartments. His heart sickened at the sight. He rested against the wall in a pause of despair, and was on the point of springing into the court, to make a desperate effort at escape, or die in the attempt, when he perceived, by the increasing light which fell across the vault, a massy door in the wall; he ran towards it, and endeavoured to open it; it was fastened by a lock and several bolts. He struck against it with his foot, and the hollow sound which was returned, convinced him that there were vaults beyond; and by the direction of these vaults, he was certain that they must extend to the outer walls of the castle; if he could gain these vaults, and penetrate beyond them in the darkness of the ensuing night, it would be easy to leap the wall, and cross the ditch; but it was impossible to cut away the lock, before the return of

his guard, who regularly visited the cell soon after the dawn of day. After some consideration, therefore, he determined to secrete himself in a dark part of the vault, and there await the entrance of the guard, who on observing the deranged bars of the grate, would conclude, that he had escaped through the aperture. He had scarcely placed himself according to his plan, when he heard the door of the dungeon unbolted; this was instantly followed by a loud, voice, which founded down the opening, and "Alleyn" was shouted in a tone of fright and consternation. After repeating the call, a man jumped into the vault. Alleyn, though himself concealed in darkness, could perceive, by the faint light which fell upon the spot, a soldier with a drawn sword in his hand. He approached the grate with execrations, examined it, and proceeded to the door; it was fast, he returned to the grate, and then proceeded along the walls, tracing them with the point of his sword. He at length approached the spot where Alleyn was concealed, who felt the sword strike upon his arm, and instantly grasping the hand which held it, the weapon fell to the ground. A short scuffle ensued. Alleyn threw down his adversary, and standing over him, seized the sword, and presented it to his breast; the soldier called for mercy. Alleyn, always unwilling to take the life of another, and considering that if the soldier was slain, his comrades would certainly follow to the vault, returned him his sword. "Take your life," said he, "your death can avail me nothing;–take it, and if you can, go tell Malcolm, that an innocent man has endeavoured to escape destruction." The guard, struck with his conduct, arose from the ground in silence, he received his sword, and followed Alleyn to the trap door. They returned into the dungeon, where Alleyn was once more left alone. The soldier, undetermined how to act, went to find his comrades; on the way he met Malcolm, who, ever restless and vigilant frequently walked the ramparts at an early hour. He enquired if all was well. The soldier, fearful of discovery, and unaccustomed to dissemble, hesitated at the question; and the stern air assumed by Malcolm, compelled him to relate what had happened. The Baron, with much harshness, reprobated his neglect, and immediately followed him to the dungeon, where he loaded Alleyn with insult. He examined the cell, descended into the vault, and returning to the dungeon stood by, while a chain, which had been fetched from a distant part of the castle, was fixed into the wall;–to this Alleyn was fastened.

“We will not long confine you thus,” said Malcolm as he quitted the cell, “a few days shall restore you to the liberty you are so fond of; but as a conqueror ought to have spectators of his triumph, you must wait till a number is collected sufficient to witness the death of so great an hero.” “I disdain your insults,” returned Alleyn, “and am equally able to support misfortune, and to despise a tyrant.” Malcolm retired enraged at the boldness of his prisoner, and uttering menaces on the carelessness of the guard, who vainly endeavoured to justify himself. “His safety be upon your head,” said the Baron. The soldier was shocked, and turned away in sullen silence. Dread of his prisoner’s effecting an escape, now seized his mind; the words of Malcolm filled him with resentment, while gratitude towards Alleyn, for the life he had spared, operated with these sentiments, and he hesitated whether he should obey the Baron, or deliver Alleyn, and fly his oppressor. At noon, he carried him his customary food; Alleyn was not so lost in misery, but that he observed the gloom which hung upon his features; his heart foreboded impending evil: the soldier bore on his tongue the sentence of death. He told Alleyn, that the Baron had appointed the following day for his execution; and his people were ordered to attend. Death, however long contemplated, must be dreadful when it arrives; this was no more than what Alleyn had expected, and on what he had brought his mind to gaze without terror; but his fortitude now sunk before its immediate presence, and every nerve of his frame thrilled with agony. “Be comforted,” said the soldier, in a tone of pity, “I, too, am no stranger to misery; and if you are willing to risque the danger of double torture, I will attempt to release both you and myself from the hands of a tyrant.” At these words, Alleyn started from the ground in a transport of delightful wonder: “Tell me not of torture,” cried he, “all tortures are equal if death is the end, and from death I may now escape; lead me but beyond these walls, and the small possessions I have, shall be yours for ever.” “I want them not,” replied the generous soldier, “it is enough for me, that I save a fellow creature from destruction.” These words overpowered the heart of Alleyn, and tears of gratitude swelled in his eyes. Edric told him, that the door he had seen in the vault below, opened into a chain of vaults, which stretched beyond the wall of the castle, and communicated with a subterraneous way, anciently formed as a retreat from the fortress, and which terminated in the cavern of a forest at some distance. If this door

could be opened, their escape was almost certain. They consulted on the measures necessary to be taken. The soldier gave Alleyn a knife larger than the one he had, and directed him to cut round the lock, which was all that withheld their passage. Edric's office of centinel was propitious to their scheme, and it was agreed that at midnight they should descend the vaults. Edric, after having unfastened the chain, left the cell, and Alleyn set himself again to remove the pavement, which had been already replaced by order of the Baron. The near prospect of deliverance now gladdened his spirits; his knife was better formed for his purpose; and he worked with alacrity and ease. He arrived at the trap door, and once more leaped into the vault. He applied himself to the lock of the door, which was extremely thick, and it was with difficulty he separated them; with trembling hands he undrew the bolts, the door unclosed, and discovered to him the vaults. It was evening when he finished his work. He was but just returned to the dungeon, and had thrown himself on the ground to rest, when the sound of a distant step caught his ear; he listened to its advance with trembling eagerness. At length the door was unbolted; Alleyn, breathless with expectation, started up, and beheld not his soldier, but another; the opening was again discovered, and all was now over. The soldier brought a pitcher of water, and casting round the place a look of sullen scrutiny, departed in silence. The stretch of human endurance was now exceeded, and Alleyn sunk down in a state of torpidity. On recovering, he found himself again enveloped in the horrors of darkness, silence, and despair. Yet amid all his sufferings, he disdained to doubt the integrity of his soldier: we naturally recoil from painful sensations, and it is one of the most exquisite tortures of a noble mind, to doubt the sincerity of those in whom it has confided. Alleyn concluded, that the conversation of the morning had been overheard, and that this guard had been sent to examine the cell, and to watch his movements. He believed that Edric was now, by his own generosity, involved in destruction; and in the energy of this thought, he forgot for a moment his own situ

Midnight came, but Edric did not appear; his doubts were now confirmed into certainty, and he resigned himself to the horrid tranquillity of mute despair. He heard, from a distance, the clock of the castle strike one; it seemed to sound the knell of death; it roused his benumbed senses, and he rose from the ground in an agony of acutest recollection. Suddenly

he heard the steps of two persons advancing down the avenue; he started, and listened. Malcolm and murder arose to his mind; he doubted not that the soldier had reported what he had seen in the evening, and that the persons whom he now heard, were coming to execute the final orders of the Baron. They now drew near the dungeon, when suddenly he remembered the door in the vault. His senses had been so stunned by the appearance of the stranger, and his mind so occupied with a feeling of despair, as to exclude every idea of escape; and in the energy of his sufferings he had forgot this last resource. It now flashed like lightning upon his mind; he sprung to the trap door, and his feet had scarcely touched the bottom of the vault, when he heard the bolts of the dungeon undraw; he had just reached the entrance of the inner vault, when a voice sounded from above. He paused, and knew it to be Edric's. Apprehension so entirely possessed his mind, that he hesitated whether he should discover himself; but a moment of recollection dissipated every ignoble suspicion of Edric's fidelity, and he answered the call. Immediately Edric descended, followed by the soldier whose former appearance had filled Alleyn with despair, and whom Edric now introduced as his faithful friend and comrade, who, like himself, was weary of the oppression of Malcolm, and who had resolved to fly with them, and escape his rigour. This was a moment of happiness too great for thought! Alleyn, in the confusion of his joy, and in his impatience to seize the moment of deliverance, scarcely heard the words of Edric. Edric having returned to fasten the door of the dungeon, to delay pursuit, and given Alleyn a sword which he had brought for him, led the way through the vaults. The profound silence of the place was interrupted only by the echoes of their footsteps, which running through the dreary chasms in confused whisperings, filled their imaginations with terror. In traversing these gloomy and desolate recesses they often paused to listen, and often did their fears give them the distant sounds of pursuit. On quitting the vaults, they entered an avenue, winding, and of considerable length, from whence branched several passages into the rock. It was closed by a low and narrow door, which opened upon a flight of steps, that led to the subterraneous way under the ditch of the castle. Edric knew the intricacies of the place: they entered, and closing the door began to descend, when the lamp which Edric carried in his hand was blown out by the current of the wind, and they were left in total

darkness. Their feelings may be more easily imagined than described; they had, however, no way but to proceed, and grope with cautious steps the dark abyss. Having continued to descend for some time, their feet reached the bottom, and they found themselves once more on even ground; but Edric knew they had yet another flight to encounter, before they could gain the subterraneous passage under the fosse, and for which it required their utmost caution to search. They were proceeding with slow and wary steps, when the foot of Alleyn stumbled upon something which clattered like broken armour, and endeavouring to throw it from him, he felt the weight resist his effort: he stooped to discover what it was, and found in his grasp the cold hand of a dead person. Every nerve thrilled with horror at the touch, and he started back in an agony of terror. They remained for some time in silent dismay, unable to return, yet fearful to proceed, when a faint light which seemed to issue from the bottom of the last descent, gleamed upon the walls, and discovered to them the second staircase, and at their feet the pale and disfigured corpse of a man in armour, while at a distance they could distinguish the figures of men. At this sight their hearts died within them, and they gave themselves up for lost. They doubted not but the men whom they saw were the murderers; that they belonged to the Baron; and were in search of some fugitives from the castle. Their only chance of concealment was to remain where they were; but the light appeared to advance, and the faces of the men to turn towards them. Winged with terror, they sought the first ascent, and flying up the steps, reached the door, which they endeavoured to open, that they might hide themselves from pursuit among the intricacies of the rock; their efforts, however, were vain, for the door was fastened by a spring lock, and the key was on the other side. Compelled to give breath to their fears, they ventured to look back, and found themselves again in total darkness; they paused upon the steps, and listening, all was silent. They rested here a considerable time; no footsteps startled them; no ray of light darted through the gloom; every thing seemed hushed in the silence of death: they resolved once more to venture forward; they gained again the bottom of the first descent, and shuddering as they approached the spot where they knew the corpse was laid, they groped to avoid its horrid touch, when suddenly the light again appeared, and in the same place where they had first seen it. They stood petrified with despair. The light, however, moved

slowly onward, and disappeared in the windings of the avenue. After remaining a long time in silent suspense, and finding no further obstacle, they ventured to proceed. The light had discovered to them their situation, and the staircase, and they now moved with greater certainty. They reached the bottom in safety, and without any fearful interruption; they listened, and again the silence of the place was undisturbed. Edric knew they were now under the fosse, their way was plain before them, and their hopes were renewed in the belief, that the light and the people they had seen, had taken a different direction, Edric knowing there were various passages branching from the main avenue which led to different openings in the rock. They now stepped on with alacrity, the prospect of deliverance was near, for Edric judged they were now not far from the cavern. An abrupt turning in the passage confirmed at once this supposition, and extinguished the hope which had attended it; for the light of a lamp burst suddenly upon them, and exhibited to their sickening eyes, the figures of four men in an attitude of menace, with their swords pointed ready to receive them. Alleyn drew his sword, and advanced: “We will die hardly,” cried he. At the sound of his voice, the weapons instantly dropped from the hands of his adversaries, and they advanced to meet him in a transport of joy. Alleyn recognized with astonishment, in the faces of the three strangers, his faithful friends and followers; and Edric in that of the fourth, a fellow soldier. The same purpose had assembled them all in the same spot. They quitted the cave together; and Alleyn, in the joyful experience of unexpected deliverance, resolved never more to admit despair. They concluded, that the body which they had passed in the avenue, was that of some person who had perished either by hunger or by the sword in those subterranean labyrinths.

They marched in company till they came within a few miles in of the castle of Athlin, when Alleyn made known his design of collecting his friends, and joining the clan in an attempt to release the Earl; Edric, and the other soldier, having solemnly enlisted in the cause, they parted; Alleyn and Edric pursuing the road to the castle, and the others striking off to a different part of the country. Alleyn and Edric had not proceeded far, when the groans of the wounded servants of Matilda drew them into the wood, in which the preceding dreadful scene had been acted. The surprize of Alleyn was extreme, when he discovered the servants of the Earl in this

situation; but surprize soon yielded to a more poignant sensation, when he heard that Mary had been carried off by armed men. He scarcely waited to release the servants, but seized one of their horses which was grazing near, instantly mounted, ordering the rest to follow, and took the way which had been pointed as the course of the ravishers. Fortunately it was the right direction; and Alleyn and the soldier came up with them as they were hastening to the mouth of that cavern, whose frightful aspect had chilled the heart of Mary with a temporary death. Their endeavours to fly were vain; they were overtaken at the entrance; a sharp conflict ensued in which one of the ruffians was wounded and fled: his comrades seeing the servants of the Earl approaching relinquished their prize, and escaped through the recesses of the cave. The eyes of Alleyn were now fixed in horror on the lifeless form of Mary, who had remained insensible during the whole of the affray; he was exerting every effort for her recovery, when she unclosed her eyes, and joy once more illumined his soul.

During the recital of these particulars, which Alleyn delivered with a modest brevity, the mind of Mary had suffered a variety of emotions sympathetic to all the vicissitudes of his situation. She endeavoured to conceal from herself the particular interest she felt in his adventures; but so unequal were her efforts to the strength of her emotions, that when Alleyn related the scene of Dunbayne cavern, her cheek grew pale and she relapsed into a fainting fit. This circumstance alarmed the penetration of the Countess; but the known weakness of her daughter’s frame appeared a probable cause of the disorder, and repressed her first apprehension. It gave to Alleyn a mixed delight of hope and fear, such as he had never known before; for the first time he dared to acknowledge to his own heart that he loved, and that heart for the first time thrilled with the hope of being loved again.

He received from the Countess the warm overflowings of a heart grateful for the preservation of her child, and from Mary a blush which spoke more than her tongue could utter. But the minds of all were involved in the utmost perplexity concerning the rank and the identity of the author of the plan, nor could they discover any clue which would lead them through this intricate maze of wonder, to the villain who had fabricated so diabolical a scheme. Their suspicions, at length, rested upon the Baron Malcolm, and this supposition was confirmed by the appearance of the

horsemen, who evidently acted only as the agents of superior power. Their conjectures were indeed just. Malcolm was the author of the scheme. It had been planned, and he had given orders to his people to execute it long before the Earl fell into his hands. They had, however, found no opportunity of accomplishing the design when the castle was surprized, and in the consequent tumult of his mind, the Baron had forgot to withdraw his orders.

Alleyn expressed his design of collecting the small remnant of his friends, and uniting with the clan in attempting the rescue of the Earl. “Noble youth,” exclaimed the Countess, unable longer to repress her admiration, “how can I ever repay your generous services! Am I then to receive both my children at your hands? Go–my clan are now collecting for a second attempt upon the walls of Dunbayne,–go! lead them to conquest, and restore to me my son.” The languid eyes of Mary rekindled at these words, she glowed with the hope of clasping once more to her bosom her long lost brother; but the suffusions of hope were soon chased by the chilly touch of fear, for it was Alleyn who was to lead the enterprize, and it was Alleyn who might fall in the attempt. These contrary emotions unveiled to her at once the state of her affections, and she saw in the eye of fancy, the long train of inquietudes and sorrows which were likely to ensue. She sought to obliterate from her mind every remembrance of the past, and of the fatal knowledge which was now disclosed; but she sought in vain, for the monitor in her breast constantly presented to her mind the image of Alleyn, adorned with those brave and manly virtues which had so eminently distinguished his conduct; the insignificance of the peasant was lost in the nobility of the character, and every effort at forgetfulness was baffled.

Alleyn passed that night at the castle, and the next morning, after taking leave of the Countess and her daughter, to whom his eyes bade a respectful and mournful adieu, he departed with Edric for his father’s cottage, impatient to acquaint the good old man with his safety, and to rouse to arms his slumbering friends. The breath of love had now raised into flame those sparks of ambition which had so long been kindling in his breast; he was not only eager to avenge the cause of injured virtue, and to rescue from misery and death, the son of the Chief whom he had been ever taught

to reverence, but he panted to avenge the insult offered to his mistress, and to achieve some deed of valour worthy her admiration and her thanks.

Alleyn found his father at breakfast, with his niece at his side; his face was darkened with sorrow, and he did not perceive Alleyn, when he entered. The joy of the old man almost overcame him when he beheld his son in safety, for he was the solace of his declining years; and Edric was welcomed with the heartiness of an old friend.
ation.

CHAPTER I V

MEANWHILE the Earl remained a solitary prisoner in the tower; uncertain fate was yet suspended over him; he had, however, a magnanimity in his nature which baffled much of the cruel effort of the Baron. He had prepared his mind by habitual contemplation for the worst, and although that worst was death, he could now look to it even with serenity. Those violent transports which had assailed him on sight of the Baron, were, since he was no longer subject to his presence, reduced within their proper limits; yet he anxiously avoided dwelling on the memory of his father, lest those dreadful sensations should threaten him with returning torture. Whenever he permitted himself to think of the sufferings of the Countess and his sister, his heart melted with a sorrow that almost unnerved him; much he wished to know how they supported this trial, and much he wished that he could convey to them intelligence of his state. He endeavoured to abstract his mind from his situation, and sought to make himself artificial comforts even from the barren objects around him; his chief amusement was in observing the manners and customs of the birds of prey which lodged themselves in the battlements of his tower, and the rapacity of their nature furnished him with too just a parallel to the habits of men.

As he was one day standing at the grate which looked upon the castle, observing the progress of these birds, his ear caught the sound of that sweet lute whose notes had once saved him from destruction; it was accompanied by the same melodious voice he had formerly heard, and which now sung with impassioned tenderness the following air:

When first the vernal morn of life
Beam’d on my infant eye,
Fond I survey’d the smiling scene,
Nor saw the tempest nigh.

Hope’s bright illusions touch’d my soul,
My young ideas led;

And Fancy’s vivid tints combin’d,
And fairy prospect spread.

My guileless heart expanded wide,
With filial fondness fraught;
Paternal love that heart supplied
With all its fondness sought.

But O! the cruel quick reverse!
Fate all I loved involv’d;
Pale Grief Hope’s trembling rays dispers’d,
And Fancy’s dreams dissolv’d.

Lost in surprize, Osbert stood for some time looking down upon an inner court, whence the sounds seemed to arise; after a few minutes he observed a young lady enter from that side on which the tower arose; on her arm rested an elder one, in whose face might be traced the lines of decaying beauty; but it was visible, from the melancholy which clouded her features, that the finger of affliction had there anticipated the ravages of time. She was dressed in the habit of a widow, and the black veil which shaded her forehead, and gave a fine expression to her countenance, devolved upon the ground in a length of train, and heightened the natural majesty of her figure; she moved with slow steps, and was supported by the young lady whose veil half disclosed a countenance where beauty was touched with sorrow and inimitable expression; the elegance of her form and the dignity of her air, proclaimed her to be of distinguished rank. On her arm was hung that lute, whose melody had just charmed the attention of the Earl, who was now fixed in wonder at what he beheld, that was equalled only by his admiration. They retired through a gate on the opposite side of the court, and were seen no more. Osbert followed them with his eyes, which for some time remained fixed upon the door through which they had disappeared, almost insensible of their departure. When he returned to himself, he discovered, as if for the first time, that he was in solitude. He conjectured that these strangers were confined by the

oppressive power of the Baron, and his eyes were suffused with tears of pity. When he considered that so much beauty and dignity were the unresisting victims of a tyrant, his heart swelled high with indignation, his prison became intolerable to him, and he longed to become at once the champion of virtue, and the deliverer of oppressed innocence. The character of Malcolm arose to his mind black with accumulated guilt, and aggravated the detestation with which he had ever contemplated it: the hateful idea nerved his soul with a confidence of revenge. Of the guard, who entered, he enquired concerning the strangers, but could obtain no positive information; he came to impart other news; to prepare the Earl for death; the morrow was appointed for his execution. He received the intelligence with the firm hardihood of indignant virtue, disdaining to solicit, and disdaining to repine; and his mind yet grasped the idea of revenge. He drove from his thoughts, with precipitation, the tender ideas of his mother and sister; remembrances which would subdue his fortitude without effecting any beneficial purpose. He was told of the escape of Alleyn; this intelligence gave him inexpressible pleasure, and he knew this faithful youth would undertake to avenge his death.

When the news of Alleyn's flight had reached the Baron, his soul was stung with rage, and he called for the guards of the dungeon; they were no where to be found; and after a long search it was known that they were fled with their prisoner; the flight of the other captives was also discovered. This circumstance exasperated the passion of Malcolm to the utmost, and he gave orders that the life of the remaining centinel should be forfeited for the treachery of his comrades, and his own negligence; when recollecting the Earl, whom in the heat of his resentment he had forgot, his heart exulted in the opportunity he afforded of complete revenge; and in the fullness of joy with which he pronounced his sentence, he retracted the condemnation of the trembling guard. The moment after he had dispatched the messenger with his resolve to the Earl, his heart faultered from its purpose. Such is the alternate violence of evil passions, that they never suffer their subjects to act with consistency, but, torn by conflicting energies, the gratification of one propensity is destruction to the enjoyment of another; and the moment in which they imagine happiness in their grasp, is to them the moment of disappointment. Thus it was with the Baron; his soul seemed to attain its full enjoyment in the contemplation of

revenge, till the idea of Mary inflamed his heart with an opposite passion; his wishes had caught new ardor from disappointment, for he had heard that Mary had been once in the power of his emissaries; and perhaps the pain which recoils upon the mind from every fruitless effort of wickedness, served to increase the energies of his desires. He spurned the thought of relinquishing the pursuit, yet there appeared to be no method of obtaining its object, but by sacrificing his favourite passion; for he had little doubt of obtaining Mary, when it should be known that he resolved not to grant the life of the Earl upon any other ransom. The balance of these passions hung in his mind in such nice equilibrium, that it was for some time uncertain which would preponderate; revenge, at length, yielded to love; but he resolved to preserve the torture of expected death, by keeping the Earl ignorant of his reprieve till the last moment.

The Earl awaited death with the same stern fortitude with which he received its sentence, and was led from the tower to the platform of the castle, silent and unmoved. He beheld the preparations for his execution, the instruments of death, the guards arranged in files, with an undaunted mind. The glare of externals had no longer power over his imagination. He beheld every object with indifference, but that on which his eye now rested; it was on the murderer, who exhibited himself in all the pride of exulting conquest: he started at the sight, and his soul shrunk back upon itself. Disdaining, however, to appear disconcerted, he endeavoured to resume his dignity, when the remembrance of his mother, overwhelmed with sorrow, rushed upon his mind, and quite unmanned him; the tears started in his eyes, and he sunk senseless on the ground.

On recovering, he found himself in his prison, and he was informed that the Baron had granted him a respite. Malcolm mistaking the cause of disorder in the Earl, thought he had stretched his sufferings to their utmost limits; he therefore had ordered him to be re-conveyed to the tower.

A scene so striking and so public as that which had just been performed at the castle of Dunbayne, was a subject of discourse to the whole country; it was soon reported to the Countess with a variety of additional circumstances, among which it was affirmed, that the Earl had been really executed. Overwhelmed with this intelligence, Matilda relapsed into her former disorder. Sickness had rendered Mary less able to support the shock, and to apply that comfort to the ambitions of her mother, which had

once been so successfully administered. The physician pronounced the malady of the Countess to be seated in the mind, and beyond the reach of human skill, when one day a letter was brought to her, the superscription of which was written in the hand of Osbert; she knew the characters, and bursting the seal, read that her son was yet alive, and did not despair of throwing himself once more at her feet. He requested that the remains of his clan might immediately attempt his release. He described in what part of the castle his prison was situated, and thought, that by the assistance of long scaling-ladders and ropes, contrived in the manner he directed, he might be able to effect his escape through the grate. This letter was a reviving cordial to the Countess and to Mary.

Alleyn was indefatigable in collecting followers for the enterprize he had engaged in. On receiving intelligence of the safety of the Earl, he visited the clan, and was strenuous in exhorting them to immediate action. They required little incitement to a cause in which every heart was so much interested, and for which every hand was already busied in preparation. These preparations were at length completed; Alleyn, at the head of his party, joined the assembled clan. The Countess for a second time beheld from the ramparts the departure of her people upon the same hazardous enterprize; the present scene revived in her mind a sad membrance of the past: the same tender fears, and the same prayers for success she now gave to their departure; and when they faded in distance from her sight, she returned into the castle dissolved in tears. The heart of Mary was torn by a complex sorrow, and incapable of longer concealing from herself the interest she took in the departure of Alleyn, her agitation became more apparent. The Countess in vain endeavoured to compose her mind. Mary, affected by her tender concern, and prompted by the natural ingenuousness of her disposition, longed to make her the confidant of her weakness, if weakness that can be termed which arises from gratitude, and from admiration of great and generous qualities; but delicacy and timidity arrested the half-formed sentence, and closed her lips in silence. Her health gradually declined under the secret agitation of her mind; her physician knew her disorder to originate in suppressed sorrow; and advised, as the best cordial, a. confidential friend. Matilda now perceived the cause of her grief; her former passing observations recurred to her memory, and justified her discernment. She strove by every soothing effort

to win her to her confidence. Mary, oppressed by the idea of ungenerous concealment, resolved at length to unveil her heart to a mother so tender of her happiness. She told her all her sentiments. The Countess suffered a distress almost equal to that of her daughter; her affectionate heart swelled with equal wishes for her happiness; she admired with warmest gratitude the noble and aspiring virtues of the young Highlander; but the proud nobility of her soul repelled with quick vivacity every idea of union with a youth of such ignoble birth: she regarded the present attachment as the passing impression of youthful fancy, and believed that gentle reasoning, aided by time and endeavour, would conquer the enthusiasm of love. Mary listened with attention to the reasonings of the Countess; her judgment acknowledged their justness, while her heart regretted their force. She resolved, however, to overcome an attachment which would produce so much distress to her family and to herself. Notwithstanding her endeavours to exclude Alleyn from her thoughts, the generous and heroic qualities of his mind burst upon her memory in all their splendor, she could not but be conscious that he loved her; she saw the struggles of his soul, and the delicacy of his passion, which made him ever retire in the most profound and respectful silence from its object. She solicited her mother to assist in expelling the destructive image from her mind. The Countess exerted every effort to amuse her to forgetfulness; every hour, except those which were given to exercises necessary for her health, was devoted to the cultivation of her mind, and the improvement of her various accomplishments. These endeavours were not unsuccessful; the Countess with joy observed the returning health and tranquillity of her daughter; and Mary almost believed she had taught herself to forget. These engagements served also to beguile the tedious moments which must intervene, ere news could arrive from Alleyn concerning the probable success of the enterprize.

Misery yet dwelt in the castle of Dunbayne; for there the virtues were captive, while the vices reigned despotic. The mind of the Baron, ardent and restless, knew no peace: torn by conflicting passions, he was himself the victim of their power.

The Earl knew that his life hung upon the caprice of a tyrant; his mind was nerved for the worst; yet the letter which the compassion of one of his guards, at the risque of his life, had undertaken to convey to the Countess,

afforded him a faint hope that his people might yet effect his escape. In this expectation, he spent hour after hour at his grate, wishing, with trembling anxiety, to behold his clan advancing over the distant hills. These hills became at length, in a situation so barren of real comforts, a source of ideal pleasure to him. He was always at the grate, and often, in the fine evenings of summer saw the ladies, whose appearance had so strongly excited his admiration and pity, walk on a terrace below the tower. One very fine evening, under the pleasing impressions of hope for himself, and compassion for them, his sufferings for a time lost their acuteness. He longed to awaken their sympathy, and make known to them that they had a fellow-prisoner. The parting sun trembled on the tops of the mountains, and a softer shade fell upon the distant landscape. The sweet tranquillity of evening threw an air of tender melancholy over his mind: his sorrows for a while were hushed; and under the enthusiasm of the hour, he composed the following stanzas, which, having committed them to paper, he the next evening dropp’d upon the terrace.

SONNET

Hail! to the hallow’d hill, the circling lawn,
The breezy upland, and the mountain stream!
The last tall pine that earliest meets the dawn,
And glistens latest to the western gleam!

Hail! every distant hill, and downland plain!
Your dew-hid beauties Fancy oft unveils;
What time to shepherd’s reed, or poet’s strain,
Sorrowing my heart its destin’d woe bewails.

Blest are the fairy hour, the twilight shade
Of Ev’ning, wand’ring thro’ her woodlands dear,
Sweet the still sound that steals along the glade;
‘Tis fancy wafts it, and her vot’ries hear.

‘Tis fancy wafts it!–and how sweet the sound!
I hear it now the distant hills uplong;
While fairy echos from their dells around,
And woods, and wilds, the feeble notes prolong!

He had the pleasure to observe that the paper was taken up by the ladies, who immediately retired into the castle.

CHAPTER V

ONE morning early, the Earl discerned a martial band emerging from the verge of the horizon; his heart welcomed his hopes, which were soon confirmed into certainty. It was his faithful people, led on by Alleyn. It was their design to surround and attack the castle; and though their numbers gave them but little hopes of conquest, they yet believed that, in the tumult of the engagement, they might procure the deliverance of the Earl. With this view they advanced to the walls. The centinels had descried them at a distance; the alarm was given; the trumpets sounded, and the walls of the castle were filled with men. The Baron was present, and directed the preparations. The secret purpose of his soul was fixed. The clan surrounded the fosse, into which they threw bundles of faggots, and gave the signal of attack. Scaling ladders were thrown up to the window of the tower. The Earl, invigorated with hope and joy, had by the force of his arm, almost wrenched from its fastening, one of the iron bars of the grate; his foot was lifted to the stanchion, ready to aid him in escaping through the opening, when he was seized by the guards of the Baron, and conveyed precipitately from the prison. He was led, indignant and desperate, to the lofty ramparts of the castle, from whence he beheld Alleyn and his clan, whose eager eyes were once more blessed with the sight of their Chief;–they were blessed but for a moment; they beheld their Lord in chains, surrounded with guards, and with the instruments of death. Animated, however, with a last hope, they renewed the attack with redoubled fury, when the trumpets of the Baron sounded a parley, and they suspended their arms. The Baron appeared on the ramparts; Alleyn advanced to hear him. “The moment of attack,” cried the Baron, “is the moment of death to your Chief. If you wish to preserve his life, desist from the assault, and depart in peace; and bear this message to the Countess your mistress:–the Baron Malcolm will accept no other ransom for the life and the liberty of the Earl, than her beauteous daughter, whom he now sues to become his wife. If she accedes to these terms, the Earl is instantly liberated,–if she refuses, he dies.” The emotions of the Earl, and of Alleyn on hearing these words, were inexpressible. The Earl spurned, with haughty virtue, the base concession. “Give me death,” cried he with loud impatience; “the house of

Athlin shall not be dishonoured by alliance with a murderer: renew the attack, my brave people; since you cannot save the life, revenge the death of your Chief; he dies contented, since his death preserves his family from dishonour." The guards instantly surrounded the Earl.

Alleyn, whose heart, torn by contending emotions, was yet true to the impulse of honour, on observing this, instantly threw down his arms, refusing to obey the commands of the Earl; a hostage for whose life he demanded, while he hastened to the castle of Athlin with the conditions of the Baron. The clan, following the example of Alleyn, rested on their arms, while a few prepared to depart with him on the embassy. In vain were the remonstrances and the commands of the Earl; his people loved him too well to obey them, and his heart was filled with anguish when he saw Alleyn depart from the walls.

The situation of Alleyn was highly pitiable; all the firm virtues of his soul were called upon to support it. He was commissioned on an embassy, the alternate conditions of which would bring misery on the woman he adored, or death to the friend whom he loved.

When the arrival of Alleyn was announced to the Countess, impatient joy thrilled in her bosom; for she had no doubt that he brought offers of accommodation; and no ransom was presented to her imagination, which she would not willingly give for the restoration of her son. At the sound of Alleyn's voice, those tumults which had began to subside in the heart of Mary, were again revived, and she awoke to the mournful certainty of hopeless endeavour. Yet she could not repress a strong emotion of joy on again beholding him. The soft blush of her cheek shewed the colours of her mind, while, in endeavouring to shade her feelings, she impelled them into stronger light.

The agitations of Alleyn almost subdued his strength, when he entered the presence of the Countess; and his visage, on which was impressed deep distress, and the paleness of fear, betrayed the inward workings of his soul. Matilda was instantly seized with apprehension for the safety of her son, and in a tremulous voice, enquired his fate. Alleyn told her he was well, proceeding with tender caution to acquaint her with the business of his embassy, and with the scene to which he had lately been witness. The sentence of the Baron fell like the stroke of death upon the heart of Mary, who fainted at the words. Alleyn flew to support her. In endeavouring to

revive her daughter, the Countess was diverted for a time from the anguish which this intelligence must naturally impart. It was long ere Mary returned to life, and she returned only to a sense of wretchedness. The critical situation of Matilda can scarcely be felt in its full extent. Torn by the conflict of opposite interests, her brain was the seat of tumult, and wild dismay. Which ever way she looked, destruction closed the view. The murderer of the husband, now sought to murder the happiness of the daughter. On the sentence of the mother hung the final fate of the son. In rejecting these terms, she would give him instant death; in accepting them, her conduct would be repugnant to the feelings of indignant virtue, and to the tender injured memory of her murdered Lord. She would destroy for ever the peace of her daughter, and the honour of her house. To effect his deliverance by force of arms was utterly impracticable, since the Baron had declared, that “the moment of attack should be the moment of death to the Earl.” Honour, humanity, parental tenderness, bade her save her son; yet, by a strange contrariety of interests, the same virtues pleaded with a voice equally powerful, for the reverse of the sentence. Hitherto hope had still illumined her mind with a distant ray; she now found herself suddenly involved in the darkness of despair, whose glooms were interrupted only by the gleams of horror which arose from the altar, on which was to be sacrificed one of her beloved children. Her mind shrunk from the idea of uniting her daughter to the murderer of her father. The ferocious character of Malcolm was alone sufficient to blight for ever the happiness of the woman whose fate should be connected with his. To give to the murderer the child of the murdered was a thought too horrid to rest upon. The Countess rejected with force the Baron’s offer of exchange, when the bleeding figure of her beloved son, pale and convulsed in death, started on her imagination, and stretched her brain almost to frenzy.

Meanwhile Mary suffered a conflict equally dreadful. Nature had bestowed on her a heart susceptible of all the fine emotions of delicate passion; a heart which vibrated in unison with the sweetest feelings of humanity; a mind, quick in perceiving the nicest lines of moral rectitude, and strenuous in endeavouring to act up to its perceptions. These gifts were unnecessary to make her sensible of the wretchedness of her present situation; of which a common mind would have felt the misery; they served, however, to sharpen the points of affliction, to increase their force,

and to disclose, in stronger light, the various horrors of her situation. Fraternal love and pity called loudly upon her to resign herself into the power of the man whom, from the earliest dawn of perception, she had contemplated with trembling aversion and horror. The memory of her murdered parent, every feeling dear to virtue, the tremulous, but forceful voice of love awakened her heart, and each opposed, with wild impetuosity, every other sentiment. Her soul shrunk back with terror from the idea of union with the Baron. Could she bear to receive, in marriage, that hand which was stained with the blood of her father?–The polluted touch would freeze her heart in horror!–could she bear to pass her life with the man, who had for ever blasted the smiling days of him who gave her being?–With the man who would stand before her eyes a perpetual monument of misery to herself, and of dishonour to her family? whose chilling aspect would repel every amiable and generous affection, and strike them back upon her heart only to wound it? To cherish the love of the noble virtues, would be to cherish the remembrance of her dead father, and of her living lover. How wretched must be her situation, when to obliterate from her memory the image of virtue, could alone afford her a chance of obtaining a horrid tranquillity; virtue which is so dear to the human heart, that when her form forsakes us, we pursue her shadow. Wherever in search of comfort she directed her aching sight, Misery's haggard countenance obtruded on her view. Here she beheld herself entombed in the arms of the murderer;–there, the spectacle of her beloved brother, encircled with chains, and awaiting the stroke of death, arose to her imagination; the scene was too affecting; fancy gave her the horrors of reality. The reflection, that through her he suffered, that she yet might save him from destruction, broke with irresistible force upon her mind, and instantly bore away every opposing feeling.–She resolved, that since she must be wretched, she would be nobly wretched; since misery demanded one sacrifice, she would devote herself the victim.

With these thoughts, she entered the apartment of the Countess, whose concurrence was necessary to ratify her resolves, and, having declared them, awaited in trembling expectation her decision. Matilda had suffered a distraction of mind, which the nature of no former trial had occasioned her. On the unfortunate death of a husband tenderly beloved, she had suffered all the sorrow which tenderness, and all the shock which the

manner of his death could occasion. The event, however, shocking as it was, did not hang upon circumstances over which she had an influence; it was decided by an higher power;–it was decided, and never could be recalled; she had there no dreadful choice of horrors, no evil ratified by her own voice, to taint with deadly recollections her declining days. This choice, though forced upon her by the power of a tyrant, she would still consider as in part her own; and the thought that she was compelled to doom to destruction one of her children, harrowed up her soul almost to frenzy.

Her mind, at length exhausted with excess of feeling, was now fallen into a state of cold and silent despair; she became insensible to the objects around her, almost to the sense of her own sufferings, and the voice, and the proposal of her daughter, scarcely awakened her powers of perception. “He shall live,” said Mary, in a voice broken and tender; “He shall live, I am ready to become the sacrifice.” Tears prevented her proceeding. At the word “live,” the Countess raised her eyes, and threw round her a look of wildness, which settling on the features of Mary, softened into an expression of ineffable tenderness, she waved her head, and turned to the window. A few tears bedewed her cheek; they fell like the drops of Heaven upon the withered plant, reviving and expanding its dying foliage; they were the first her eyes had known since the fatal news had reached her. Recovering herself a little, she sent for Alleyn, who was still in the castle. She wished to consult with him, whether there was not yet a possibility of effecting the escape of the Earl. In afflictions of whatever degree, where death has not already fixed the events in certainty, the mind shoots almost beyond the sphere of possibility in search of hope, and seldom relinquishes the fond illusion, till the stroke of reality dissolves the enchantment. Thus it was with Matilda; after the grief produced by the first stroke of this disaster was somewhat abated, she was inclined to think that her situation might not prove so desperate as she imagined; and her heart was warmed by a remote hope, that there might yet be devised some method of procuring the escape of the Earl. Alleyn came; he came in the trembling expectation of receiving the decision of the Countess, and in the intention of offering to engage in any enterprize, however hazardous, for the enlargement of the Earl. He repelled, with instant force, every idea of Mary’s becoming the wife of Malcolm; the thought was too full of agony

to be endured, and he threw the sensation from his heart as a poison which would destroy the pulse of life. To preserve Mary from a misery so exquisite, and to save the life of the Earl, he was willing to encounter any hazard; to meet death itself as an evil which appeared less dreadful than either of the former. He came prepared with this resolution, and it served to support that fortitude which affliction had disturbed, though it could not subdue. When he came again to the Countess, his distress was heightened by the scene before him; he beheld her leaning on a sofa, pale and silent; her unconscious eyes were fixed on an opposite window; her countenance was touched with a wildness expressive of the disorder of her mind, and she remained for some time insensible of his approach. Such is the fluctuation of a mind overcome by distress, that if for a moment a ray of hope cheers its darkness, it vanishes at the touch of recollection. Mary was standing near the Countess, whose hand she held to her bosom. Her present sorrow had heightened the natural pensiveness of her countenance, and shaded her features with an interesting langour, more enchanting than the vivacity of blooming health; her eyes sought to avoid Alleyn, as an object dangerous to the resolution she had formed. Matilda remained absorbed in thought. Mary wished to repeat the purpose of her soul, but her voice trembled, and the half-formed sentence died away on her lips. Alleyn enquired the commands of the Countess. “I am ready,” said Mary, at length, in a low and tremulous voice, “to give myself the victim to the Baron’s revenge.–I will save my brother.” At these words, the heart of Alleyn grew cold. Mary, overcome by the effort which they had occasioned her, scarcely finished the sentence; her nerves shook, a mist fell over her eyes, and she sunk on the sofa by which she had stood. Alleyn hung over the couch in silent agony, watching her return to life. By the assistance of those about her, she soon revived. Alleyn, in the joy which he felt at her recovery, forgot for a moment his situation, and pressed with ardor her hand to his bosom. Mary, whose senses were yet scarcely recollected, yielded unconsciously to the softness of her heart, and betrayed its situation by a smile so tender, as to thrill the breast of Alleyn with the sweet certainty of being loved. Hitherto his passion had been chilled by the despair which the vast superiority of her birth occasioned, and by the modesty which forbade him to imagine that he had merit sufficient to arrest the eye of the accomplished Mary. Perhaps, too, the

diffidence natural to genuine love, might contribute to deceive him. It was not till this moment, that he experienced that certainty which awakened in his heart a sense of delight hitherto unknown to him. For a moment he forgot the distresses of the castle, and his own situation; every idea faded from his mind, but the one he had so lately acquired; and in that moment he seemed to taste perfect felicity. Recollection, however, with all its train of black dependancies soon returned, and plunged him in a misery as poignant as the joy from which he was now precipitated.

The Countess was now sufficiently composed to enter on the subject nearest her heart. Alleyn caught, with eagerness, her mention of attempting the deliverance of the Earl, for the possibility of accomplishing which, he declared himself willing to encounter any danger: he seconded so warmly the design, and spoke with such flattering probability of success, that the spirits of Matilda began once more to revive; yet she trembled to encourage hopes which hung on such perilous uncertainty. It was agreed, that Alleyn should consult with the most able and trusty of the clan, whom age or infirmity had detained from battle, on the means most likely to ensure success, and then proceed immediately on the expedition: having first delivered to the Baron a message from the Countess, requiring time for deliberation upon a choice so important, and importing that an answer should be returned at the expiration of a fortnight.

Alleyn accordingly assembled those whom he judged most worthy of the council: various schemes were proposed, none of which appeared likely to succeed; when it was recollected that the Earl might possibly have been removed from the tower to some new place of confinement, which it would be necessary first to discover, that the plan might be adapted to the situation. It was therefore concluded to suspend further consultation till Alleyn had obtained the requisite information; and that in the mean time he should deliver to Malcolm the message of the Countess: for these purposes Alleyn immediately set out for the castle.

CHAPTER V I

THE castle of Dunbayne was still the scene of triumph, and of wretchedness. Malcolm, exulting in his scheme, already beheld Mary at his feet, and the Earl retiring in an anguish more poignant than that of death. He was surprized that his invention had not before supplied him with this means of torture: for the first time he welcomed love, as the instrument of his revenge; and the charms of Mary were heightened to his imagination by the ardent colours of this passion. He was confirmed in his resolves, never to relinquish the Earl, but on the conditions he had offered; and thus for ever would he preserve the house of Athlin a monument of his triumph.

Osbert, for greater security, was conveyed from the tower into a more centrical part of the castle, to an apartment spacious but gloomy, whose gothic windows partly excluding light, threw a solemnity around, which chilled the heart almost to horror. He heeded not this; his heart was occupied with horrors of its own. He was now involved in a misery more intricate, and more dreadful, than his imagination had yet painted. To die, was to him, who had so long contemplated the near approach of death, a familiar and transient evil; but to see, even in idea, his family involved in infamy, and in union with the murderer, was the stroke which pierced his heart to its center. He feared that the cruel tenderness of the mother would tempt Matilda to accept the offers of the Baron; and he scarcely doubted, that the noble Mary would resign herself the price of his life. He would have written to the Countess to have forbidden her acceptance of the terms, and to have declared his fixed resolution to die, but that he had no means of conveying to her a letter; the soldier who had so generously undertaken the conveyance of his former one, having soon after disappeared from his station. The manly fortitude which had supported him through his former trials, did not desert him in this hour of darkness; habituated so long to struggle with opposing feelings, he had acquired the art of managing them; his mind attained a confidence in its powers; resistance served only to increase its strength, and to confirm the magnanimity of its nature.

Alleyn had now joined the clan, and was ardent in pursuit of the necessary intelligence. He learned that the Earl had been removed from the tower, but in what part of the castle he was now confined he could not discover; on this point all was vague conjecture. That he was alive, was only judged from the policy of the Baron, whose ardent passion for Mary was now well understood. Alleyn employed every stratagem his invention could suggest, to discover the prison of the Earl, but without success: at length compelled to deliver to Malcolm the message of the Countess, he demanded as a preliminary, that the Earl should be shewn to his people from the ramparts, that they might be certain he was still alive. Alley hoped that his appearance would lead to a discovery of the place of his imprisonment, purposing to observe narrowly the way by which he should retire.

The Earl appeared in safety on the ramparts, amid the shouts and acclamations of his people; the Baron frowning defiance, was seen at his side. Alleyn advanced to the walls, and delivered the message of Matilda. Osbert started at its purpose; he foresaw that deliberation portended compliance:–stung with the thought, he swore aloud he never would survive the infamy of the concession; and addressing himself to Alleyn, commanded him instantly to return to the Countess, and bid her spurn the base compliance, as she feared to sacrifice both her children to the murderer of their father. At these words, a smile of haughty triumph marked the features of the Baron, and he turned from Osbert in silent joy and exultation. The Earl was led off by the guards. Alleyn endeavoured in vain to mark the way they took; the lofty walls soon concealed them from his view.

Alleyn now experienced how strenuously a vigorous mind protects its favourite hope; wayward circumstances may shock, disappointment may check it; but it rises superior to opposition and traverses the sphere of possibility to accomplish its purpose. Alleyn did not yet despair, but he was perplexed in what manner to proceed.

In his way from the ramparts, Osbert was surprized by the appearance of two ladies at a window near which he passed: the agitation of his mind did not prevent his recognizing them as the same he had observed from the grates of the tower, with such lively admiration, and who had excited in his mind so much pity and curiosity: In the midst of his distress, his

thoughts had often dwelt on the sweet graces of the younger, and he had sighed to obtain the story of her sorrows; for the melancholy which hung upon her features proclaimed her to be unfortunate. They now stood observing Osbert as he passed, and their eyes expressed the pity which his situation inspired. He gazed earnestly and mournfully upon them, and when he entered his prison, again enquired concerning them, but the same inflexible silence was preserved on the subject.

As the Earl sat one day musing in his prison, his eyes involuntarily fixed upon a pannel in the opposite wainscot;–he observed that it was differently formed from the rest, and that its projection was somewhat greater; a hope started into his mind, and he quitted his seat to examine it. He perceived that it was surrounded by a small crack, and on pushing it with his hands it shook under them. Certain that it was something more than a pannel, he exerted all his strength against it, but without producing any new effect. Having tried various means to move it without success, he gave up the experiment, and returned to his seat melancholy and disappointed. Several days passed without any further notice being taken of the wainscot; unwilling, however, to relinquish a last hope, he returned to the examination, when, in endeavouring to remove the pannel, his foot accidentally hit against one corner, and it suddenly flew open. It had been contrived that a spring which was concealed within, and which fastened the partition, should receive its impulse from the pressure of a certain part of the pannel, which was now touched by the foot of the Earl. His joy on the discovery cannot be expressed. An apartment wide and forlorn, like that which formed his prison, now lay before him; the windows, which were high and arched, were decorated with painted glass; the floor was paved with marble; and it seemed to be the deserted remains of a place of worship. Osbert traversed, with hesitating steps, its dreary length, towards a pair of folding doors, large and of oak, which closed the apartment: these he opened; a gallery, gloomy and vast, appeared beyond; the windows, which were in the same style of Gothic architecture with the former, were shaded by thick ivy that almost excluded the light. Osbert stood at the entrance uncertain whether to proceed; he listened, but heard no footstep in his prison, and determined to go on. The gallery terminated on the left in a large winding staircase, old and apparently neglected, which led to a hall below; on the right was a door, low, and rather obscure. Osbert,

apprehensive of discovery, passed the staircase, and opened the door, when a suite of noble apartments, magnificently furnished, was disclosed to his wondering eyes. He proceeded onward without perceiving any person, but having passed the second room, heard the faint sobs of a person weeping; he stood for a moment, undetermined whether to proceed; but an irresistible curiosity impelled him forward, and he entered an apartment, in which were seated the beautiful strangers, whose appearance had so much interested his feelings. The elder of the ladies was dissolved in tears and a casket and some papers lay open on a table beside her. The younger was so intent upon a drawing, which she seemed to be finishing, as not to observe the entrance of the Earl; the elder lady, on perceiving him, arose in some confusion, and the surprize in her eyes seemed to demand an explanation of so unaccountable a visit. The Earl, surprized at what he beheld, stepped back with an intention of retiring; but recollecting that the intrusion demanded an apology, he returned. The grace with which he excused himself, confirmed the impression which his figure had already made on the mind of Laura, which was the name of the younger lady; who on looking up, discovered a countenance in which dignity and sweetness were happily blended. She appeared to be about twenty, her person was of the middle stature, extremely delicate, and very elegantly formed. The bloom of her youth was shaded by a soft and pensive melancholy, which communicated an expression to her fine blue eyes, extremely interesting. Her features were partly concealed by the beautiful luxuriance of her auburn hair, which curling round her face, descended in tresses on her bosom; every feminine grace played around her; and the simple dignity of her air declared the purity and the nobility of her mind. On perceiving the Earl, a faint blush animated her cheek, and she involuntarily quitted the drawing upon which she had been engaged.

If the former imperfect view he had caught of Laura had given an impression to the heart of Osbert, it now received a stronger character from the opportunity afforded him of contemplating her beauty. He concluded that the Baron, attracted by her charms, had entrapped her into his power, and detained her in the castle an unwilling prisoner. In this conjecture he was confirmed by the mournful cast of her countenance, and by the mystery which appeared to surround her. Fired by this idea, he melted in compassion for her sufferings; which compassion was tinctured

and increased by the passion which now glowed in his heart. At that moment he forgot the danger of his present situation; he forgot even that he was a prisoner; and awake only to the wish of alleviating her sorrows, he rejected cold and useless delicacy, and resolved, if possible, to learn the cause of her misfortunes. Addressing himself to the Baroness, “if, Madam,” said he, “I could by any means soften the affliction which I cannot affect not to perceive, and which has so warmly interested my feelings, I should regard this as one of the most happy moments of my life; a life marked alas! too strongly with misery! but misery has not been useless, since it has taught me sympathy.” The Baroness was no stranger to the character and the misfortunes of the Earl. Herself the victim of oppression, she knew how to commiserate the sufferings of others. She had ever felt a tender compassion for the misfortunes of Osbert, and did not now withhold sincere expressions of sympathy, and of gratitude, for the interest which he felt in her sorrow. She expressed her surprize at seeing him thus at liberty; but observing the chains which encircled his hands, she shuddered, and guessed a part of the truth. He explained to her the discovery of the pannel, by which circumstance he had found his way into that apartment. The idea of aiding him to escape, rushed upon the mind of the Baroness, but was repressed by the consideration of her own confined situation; and she was compelled, with mournful reluctance, to resign that thought which reverence for the character of the late Earl, and compassion for the misfortunes of the present, had inspired. She lamented her inability to assist him, and informed him that herself and her daughter were alike prisoners with himself; that the walls of the castle were the limits of their liberty; and that they had suffered the pressure of tyranny for fifteen years. The Earl expressed the indignation which he felt at this recital, and solicited the Baroness to confide in his integrity; and, if the relation would not be too painful to her, to honour him so far as to acquaint him by what cruel means she fell into the power of Malcolm. The Baroness, apprehensive for his safety reminded him of the risk of discovery by a longer absence from his prison; and, thanking him again for the interest he took in her sufferings, assured him of her warmest wishes for his deliverance, and that if an opportunity ever offered, she would acquaint him with the sad particulars of her story. The eyes of Osbert made known that gratitude which it was difficult for his tongue to utter. Tremulously he

solicited the consolation of sometimes revisiting the apartments of the Baroness; a permission which would give him some intervals of comfort amid the many hours of torment to which he was condemned. The Baroness, in compassion to his sufferings, granted the request. The Earl departed, gazing on Laura with eyes of mournful tenderness; yet he was pleased with what had passed, and retired to his prison in one of those peaceful intervals which are known even to the wretched. He found all quiet, and closing the pannel in safety, sat down to consider the past, and anticipate the future. He was flattered with hopes, that the discovery of the pannel might aid him to escape; the glooms of despondence which had lately enveloped his mind, gradually disappeared, and joy once more illumined his prospects; but it was the sunshine of an April morn, deceitful and momentary. He recollected that the castle was beset with guards, whose vigilance was insured by the severity of the Baron; he remembered that the strangers, who had taken so kind an interest in his fate, were prisoners like himself; and that he had no generous soldier to teach him the secret windings of the castle, and to accompany him in flight. His imagination was haunted by the image of Laura; vainly he strove to disguise from himself the truth; his heart constantly belied the sophistry of his reasonings. Unwarily be had drank the draught of love, and he was compelled to acknowledge the fatal indiscretion. He could not, however, resolve to throw from his heart the delicious poison; he could not resolve to see her no more.

The painful apprehension for his safety, which his forbearing to renew the visit he had so earnestly solicited, would occasion the Baroness; the apparent disrespect it would convey; the ardent curiosity with which he longed to obtain the history of her misfortunes; the lively interest he felt in learning the situation of Laura, with respect to the Baron; and the hope,–the wild hope, with which he deluded his reason, that he might be able to assist them, determined him to repeat the visit. Under these illusions, the motive which principally impelled him to the interview was concealed.

In the mean time Alleyn had returned to the castle of Athlin with the resolutions of the Earl; whose resolves served only to aggravate the distress of its fair inhabitants. Alleyn, however, unwilling to crush a last hope, tenderly concealed from them the circumstance of the Earl’s

removal from the tower: silently and almost hopelessly meditating to discover his prison; and administered that comfort to the Countess, and to Mary, which his own expectation would not suffer him to participate. He retired in haste to the veterans whom he had before assembled, and acquainted them with the removal of the Earl; which circumstance must for the present suspend their consultations. He left them, therefore, and instantly returned to the clan: there to prosecute his enquiries. Every possible exertion was made to obtain the necessary intelligence, but without success. The moment in which the Baron would demand the answer of the Countess, was now fast approaching, and every heart sunk in despair, when one night the centinels of the camp were alarmed by the approach of men, who hailed them in unknown voices; fearful of surprize, they surrounded the strangers, and led them to Alleyn; to whom they related, that they fled from the capricious tyranny of Malcolm, and sought refuge in the camp of his enemy; whose misfortunes they bewailed, and in whose cause they enlisted. Rejoiced at the circumstance, yet doubtful of its truth, Alleyn interrogated the soldiers concerning the prison of the Earl. From them he learned, that Osbert was confined in a part of the castle extremely difficult of access; and that any plan of escape must be utterly impracticable without the assistance of one well acquainted with the various intricacies of the pile. An opportunity of success was now presented, with which the most sanguine hopes of Alleyn had never flattered him. He received from the soldiers strong assurance of assistance; from them, likewise, he learned, that discontent reigned, among the people of the Baron; who, impatient of the yoke of tyranny, only waited a favourable opportunity to throw it off, and resume the rights of nature. That the vigilant suspicions of Malcolm excited him to punish with the harshest severity every appearance of inattention; that being condemned to suffer a very heavy punishment for a slight offence, they had eluded the impending misery, and the future oppression of their Chief, by desertion.

Alleyn immediately convened a council, before whom the soldiers were brought; they repeated their former assertions; and one of the fugitives added, that he had a brother, whose place of guard over the person of the Earl on that night, had made it difficult to elude observation, and had prevented his escaping with them; that on the night of the morrow he stood

guard at the gate of the lesser drawbridge, where the centinels were few; that he was himself willing to risque the danger of conversing with him; and had little doubt of gaining him to assist in the deliverance of the Earl. At these words, the heart of Alleyn throbbed with joy. He promised large rewards to the brave soldier and to his brother, if they undertook the enterprize. His companion was well acquainted with the subterraneous passages of the rock, and expressed himself desirous of being useful. The hopes of Alleyn every instant grew stronger; and he vainly wished, at that moment, to communicate to the Earl's unhappy family the joy which dilated his heart.

The eve of the following day was fixed upon to commence their designs; when James should endeavour to gain his brother to their purpose. Having adjusted these matters, they retired to rest for the remainder of the night; but sleep had fled the eyes of Alleyn; anxious expectation filled his mind; and he saw, in the waking visions of fancy, the meeting of the Earl with his family: he anticipated the thanks he should receive from the lovely Mary; and sighed at the recollection, that thanks were all for which he could ever dare to hope.

At length the dawn appeared, and waked the clan to hopes and prospects far different from those of the preceding morn. The hours hung heavily on the expectation of Alleyn, whose mind was filled with solicitude for the event of the meeting between the brothers. Night at length came to his wishes. The darkness was interrupted only by the faint light of the moon moving through the watery and broken clouds, which enveloped the horizon. Tumultuous gusts of wind broke at intervals the silence of the hour. Alleyn watched the movements of the castle; he observed the lights successively disappear. The bell from the watchtower chimed one; all was still within the walls; and James ventured forth to the drawbridge. The drawbridge divided in the center, and the half next the plains was down; he mounted it, and in a low yet firm voice called on Edmund. No answer was returned; and he began to fear that his brother had already quitted the castle. He remained some time in silent suspense before he repeated the call, when he heard the gate of the drawbridge gently unbarred, and Edmund appeared. He was surprized to see James, and bade him instantly fly the danger that surrounded him. The Baron, incensed at the frequent desertion of his soldiers, had sent out people in pursuit, and had promised

considerable rewards for the apprehension of the fugitives. James, undaunted by what he heard, kept his ground, resolved to urge his purpose to the point. Happily the centinels who stood guard with Edmund, overcome with the effect of a potion he had administered to favour his escape, were sunk in sleep, and the soldiers conducted their discourse in a low voice without interruption.

Edmund was unwilling to defer his flight, and possessed not resolution sufficient to encounter the hazard of the enterprize, till the proffered reward consoled his self-denial, and roused his slumbering courage. He was well acquainted with the subterraneous avenues of the castle; the only remaining difficulty, was that of deceiving the vigilance of his fellow-centinels, whose watchfulness made it impossible for the Earl to quit his prison unperceived. The soldiers who were to mount guard with him on the following night, were stationed in a distant part of the castle, till the hour of their removal to the door of the prison; it was, therefore, difficult to administer to them that draught which had steeped in forgetfulness the senses of his present associates. To confide to their integrity, and endeavour to win them to his purpose, was certainly to give his life into their hands, and probably to aggravate the disastrous fate of the Earl. This scheme was beset too thick with dangers to be hazarded, and their invention could furnish them with none more promising. It was, however, agreed, that on the following night, Edmund should seize the moment of opportunity to impart to the Earl the designs of his friends, and to consult on the means of accomplishing them. Thus concluding, James returned in safety to the tent of Alleyn, where the most considerable of the clan were assembled, there awaiting with impatient solicitude, his arrival. The hopes of Alleyn were somewhat chilled by the report of the soldier; from the vigilance which beset the doors of the prison, escape from thence appeared impracticable. He was condemned, however, to linger in suspense till the third night from the present, when the return of Edmund to his station at the bridge would enable him again to commune with his brother. But Alleyn was unsuspicious of a circumstance which would utterly have defeated his hopes, and whose consequence threatened destruction to all their schemes. A centinel on duty upon that part of the rampart which surmounted the drawbridge, had been alarmed by hearing the gate unbar, and approaching the wall, had perceived a man standing on the half of the

bridge which was dropped, and in converse with some person on the castle walls. He drew as near as the wall would permit, and endeavoured to listen to their discourse. The gloom of night prevented his recognizing the person on the bridge; but he could clearly distinguish the voice of Edmund in that of the man who was addressed. Excited by new wonder, he gave all his attention to discover the subject of their conversation. The distance occasioned between the brothers by the suspended half of the bridge, obliged them to speak in a somewhat higher tone than they would otherwise have done; and the centinel gathered sufficient from their discourse, to learn that they were concerting the rescue of the Earl; that the night of Edmund's watch at the prison was to be the night of enterprize; and that some friends of the Earl were to await him in the environs of the castle. All this he carefully treasured up, and the next morning communicated it to his comrades.

On the following evening the Earl, yielding to the impulse of his heart, once more unclosed his partition, and sought the apartments of the Baroness. She received him with expressions of satisfaction; while the artless pleasure which lighted up the countenance of Laura, awakened the pulse of rapture in that heart which had long throbbed only to misery. The Earl reminded the Baroness of her former promise, which the desire of exciting sympathy in those we esteem, and the melancholy pleasure which the heart finds in lingering among the scenes of former happiness, had induced her to give. She endeavoured to compose her spirits, which were agitated by the remembrance of past sufferings, and gave him a relation of the following circumstances.

CHAPTER VI I

LOUISA, Baroness Malcolm, was the descendant of an ancient and honourable house in Switzerland. Her father, the Marquis de St. Claire, inherited all those brave qualities, and that stern virtue, which had so eminently distinguished his ancestors. Early in life he lost a wife whom he tenderly loved, and he seemed to derive his sole consolation from the education of the dear children she had left behind. His son, whom he had brought up to the arms himself so honourably bore, fell before he reached his nineteenth year, in the service of his country; an elder daughter died in infancy; Louisa was his sole surviving child. His chateau was situated in one of those delightful vallies of the Swiss cantons, in which the beautiful and the sublime are so happily united; where the magnificent features of the scenery are contrasted, and their effect heightened by the blooming luxuriance of woods and pasturage, by the gentle winding of the stream, and the peaceful aspect of the cottage. The Marquis was now retired from the service, for grey age had overtaken him. His residence was the resort of foreigners of distinction, who, attracted by the united talents of the soldier and the philosopher, under his roof partook of the hospitality so characteristic of his country. Among the visitors of this description was the late Baron Malcolm, brother to the present Chief, who then travelled through Switzerland. The beauty of Louisa, embellished by the elegance of a mind highly cultivated, touched his heart, and he solicited her hand in marriage. The manly sense of the Baron, and the excellencies of his disposition, had not passed unobserved, or unapproved by the Marquis; while the graces of his person, and of his mind, had anticipated for him, in the heart of Louisa, a preeminence over every other suitor. The Marquis had but one objection to the marriage; this was likewise the objection of Louisa: neither the one nor the other could endure the idea of the distance which was to separate them. Louisa was to the Marquis the last prop of his declining years; the Marquis was to Louisa the father and the friend to whom her heart had hitherto been solely devoted, and from whom it could not now be torn but with an anguish equal to its attachment. This remained an insurmountable obstacle, till it was removed by the tenderness of the Baron, who entreated the Marquis to quit Switzerland, and reside with his

daughter in Scotland. The attachment of the Marquis to his natal land, and the pride of hereditary dominion, was too powerful to suffer him to acquiesce in the proposal without much struggle of contending feelings. The desire of securing the happiness of his child, by a union with a character so excellent as the Baron's, and of seeing her settled before death should deprive her of the protection of a father, at length subdued every other consideration, and he resigned the hand of his daughter to the Baron Malcolm. The Marquis adjusted his affairs, and consigning his estates to the care of trusty agents, bade a last adieu to his beloved country; that country which, during sixty years, had been the principal scene of his happiness, and of his regrets. The course of years had not obliterated from his heart the early affections of his youth: he took a sad farewell of that grave which enclosed the reliques of his wife, from which it was not his least effort to depart, and whither he ordered that his remains should be conveyed. Louisa quitted Switzerland with a concern scarcely less acute than that of her father; the poignancy of which, however, was greatly softened by the tender assiduities of her Lord, whose affectionate attentions hourly heightened her esteem, and encreased her love.

They arrived at Scotland without any accident, where the Baron welcomed Louisa as the mistress of his domains. The Marquis de St. Claire had apartments in the castle, where the evening of his days declined in peaceful happiness. Before his death, he had the pleasure of seeing his race renewed in the children of the Baroness, in a son who was called by the name of the Marquis, and in a daughter who now shared with her mother the sorrows of confinement. On the death of the Marquis it was necessary for the Baron to visit Switzerland, in order to take possession of his estates, and to adjust some affairs which a long absence had deranged. He attended the remains of the Marquis to their last abode. The Baroness, desirous of once more beholding her native country, and anxious to pay a last respect to the memory of her father, entrusted her children to the care of a faithful old servant, whom she had brought with her from the Vallois, and who had been the nurse of her early childhood, and accompanied the Baron to the continent. Having deposited the remains of the Marquis according to his wish in the tomb of his wife, and arranged their affairs, they returned to Scotland, where the first intelligence they received on their arrival at the castle, was of the death of their son, and of the old nurse

his attendant. The servant had died soon after their departure; the child only a fortnight before their return. This disastrous event affected equally the Baron and his lady, who never ceased to condemn herself for having entrusted her son to the care of servants. Time, however subdued the poignancy of this affliction, but came fraught with another yet more acute; this was the death of the Baron, who, in the pride of youth, constituting the felicity of his family, and of his people, was killed by a fall from his horse, which he received in hunting. He left the Baroness and an only daughter to bewail with unceasing sorrow his loss.

The paternal estates devolved of course to his only brother, the present Baron, whose character formed a mournful and striking contrast to that of the deceased Lord. All his personal property, which was considerable, with the estates in Switzerland, he bequeathed to his beloved wife and daughter. The new Baron, immediately on the demise of his brother, took possession of the castle, but allowed the Baroness, with a part of her suit, to remain its inhabitant till the expiration of the year. The Baroness, absorbed in grief, still loved to recall, in the scene of her late felicity, the image of her Lord, and to linger in his former haunts. This motive, together with the necessity of preparation for a journey to Switzerland, induced her to accept the offer of the Baron.

The memory of his brother had quickly faded from the mind of Malcolm, whose attention appeared to be wholly occupied by schemes of avarice and ambition, His arrogance, and boundless love of power, embroiled him with the neighbouring Chiefs, and engaged him in continual hostility. He seldom visited the Baroness; when he did, his manner was cold, and even haughty. The Baroness, shocked to receive such treatment from the brother of her deceased Lord, and reduced to feel herself an unwelcome guest in that castle which she had been accustomed to consider as her own, determined to set off for the continent immediately, and seek, in the solitudes of her native mountains, an asylum from the frown of insulting power. The contrast of character between the brothers drew many a sigh of bitter recollection from her heart, and added weight to the sorrows which already oppressed it. She gave orders, therefore, to her domestics, to prepare for immediate departure; but was soon after told that the Baron had forbade them to obey the command. Astonished at this circumstance, she had not time to demand an

explanation, ere a message from Malcolm required a few moments private conversation. The messenger was followed almost instantly by the Baron, who entered the apartment with hurried steps, his countenance overspread with the dark purposes of his soul. “I come, Madam,” said he, in a voice stern and determined, “to inform you, that you quit not this castle. The estates which you call yours, are mine; and; think not that I shall neglect to prosecute my claim. The frequent and ill-timed generosities of my brother, have diminished the value of the lands which are mine by inheritance; and I have therefore an indispensable right to repay myself from those estates which he acquired with you. In point of justice, he possessed not the right of devising these estates, and I shall not suffer myself to be deceived by the evasions of the law; resign, therefore, the will, which remains only a record of unjust wishes, and ineffectual claims. When the receipts from your estates have satisfied my demands, they shall again be yours. The apartments you now inhabit shall remain your own; but beyond the wall of this castle you shall not pass; for I will not, by suffering your departure, afford you an opportunity of contesting those rights which I can enforce without opposition.”

Overcome with astonishment and dread, the Baroness was for some time deprived of all power of reply. At length, roused by the spirit of indignation, “I am too well informed, my Lord,” said she, “of my just claims to the lands in question; and know also too well the value of that integrity which is now no more, to credit your bold assertions; they serve only to unveil to me the darkness of a character, cruel and rapacious; whose boundless avarice, trampling on the barriers of justice and humanity, seizes on the right of the defenceless widow, and on the portion of the unresisting orphan. This, my Lord, you are permitted to do; they have no means of resistance; but think not to impose on me by a sophistical assertion of right, or to gloss the villainy of your conduct with the colours of justice; the artifice is beneath the desperate force of your character, and is not sufficiently specious to deceive the discernment of virtue. From being your prisoner I have no means of escaping; but never, my Lord, will I resign into your hands that will which is the efficient bond of my rights, and the last sad record of the affection of my departed Lord.” Grief closed her lips. The Baron denouncing vengeance on her resistance, his features inflamed with rage, quitted the apartment. The Baroness was

left to lament, with deepening anguish, the stroke which had deprived her of a beloved husband; and reflection gave her the wretchedness of her situation in yet more lively colours. She was now a stranger in a foreign land, deprived by him, of whom she had a right to demand protection, of all her possessions; a prisoner in his castle, without one friend to vindicate her cause, and far remote from any means of appeal to the laws of the country. She wept over the youthful Laura, and while she pressed her with mournful fondness to her bosom, she was confirmed in her resolution never to relinquish that will, by which alone the rights of her injured child could ever be ascertained.

The Baron, bold in iniquity, obtained, by forged powers, the revenues of the foreign estates; and by this means, effectually kept the Baroness in his power, and deprived her of her last resource. Secure in the possession of the estates, and of the Baroness, he no longer regarded the will as an object of importance; and as she did not attempt any means of escape, or the recovery of her rights, he suffered her to remain undisturbed, and in quiet possession of the will.

The Baroness now passed her days in unvaried sorrow, except in those intervals when she forced her mind from its melancholy subject, and devoted herself to the education of her daughter. The artless efforts of Laura, to assuage the sorrows of her mother, only fixed them in her heart in deeper impression, since they gave to her mind, in stronger tints, the cruelty and oppression to which her tender years were condemned. The progress which she made in music and drawing, and in the lighter subjects of literature, while it pleased the Baroness, who was her sole instructress, brought with it the bitter apprehension, that these accomplishments would probably be buried in the obscurity of a prison; still, however, they were not useless, since they served at present to cheat affliction of many a weary moment, and would in future delude the melancholy hours of solitude. Laura was particularly fond of the lute, which she touched with exquisite sensibility, and whose tender notes were so sweetly in unison with the chords of sorrow, and with those plaintive tones with which she loved to accompany it. While she sung, the Baroness would sit absorbed in recollection, the tears fast falling from her eyes, and she might be said to taste in those moments the luxury of woe.

Malcolm, stung with a sense of guilt, avoided the presence of his injured captive, and sought an asylum from conscience in the busy scenes of war.

Eighteen years had now elapsed since the death of the Baron, and the confinement of Louisa. Time had blunted the point of affliction, though it still retained its venom; but she seldom dared to hope for that which for eighteen years had been withheld. She derived her only consolation from the improvement and the tender sympathy of her daughter, who endeavoured, by every soothing attention, to alleviate the sorrows of her parent.

It was at this period that the Baroness communicated to the Earl the story of her calamities.

The Earl listened with deep attention to the recital. His soul burned with indignation against the Baron, while his heart gave to the sufferings of the fair mourners all that sympathy could ask. Yet he was relieved from a very painful sensation, when he learned that the beauty of Laura had not influenced the conduct of the Baron. Her oppressed situation struck upon his heart the finest touch of pity; and the passion which her beauty and her simplicity had inspired, was strengthened and meliorated by her misfortunes. The fate of his father, and the idea of his own injuries, rushed upon his mind; and, combining with the sufferings of the victims now before him, roused in his soul a storm of indignation, little inferior to that he had suffered in his first interview with the Baron. Every consideration sunk before the impulse of a just revenge; his mind, occupied with the hateful image of the murderer was hardened against danger, and in the first energies of his resentment he would have rushed to the apartment of Malcolm, and striking the sword of justice in his heart, have delivered the earth from a monster, and have resigned himself the willing sacrifice of the action. “Shall the monster live?” cried he, rising from his seat. His step was hurried, and his countenance was stamped with a stern virtue. The Baroness was alarmed, and following him to the door of her apartment, which he had half opened, conjured him to pause for a moment on the dangers that surrounded him. The voice of reason, in the accents of the Baroness, interrupted the hurried tumult of his soul; the illusions of passion disappeared; he recollected that he was ignorant of the apartment of the Baron, and that he had no weapon to assist his purpose; and he found himself as a traveller on enchanted ground, when the wand of the

magician suddenly dissolves the airy scene, and leaves him environed with the horrors of solitude and of darkness.

The Earl returned to his seat hopeless and dejected, and lost to every thing but to the bitterness of disappointment. He forgot where he was, and the lateness of the hour, till reminded by the Baroness of the dangers of a longer stay, when he mournfully bade her good night; and advancing to Laura with timid respect, pressed her hand tenderly to his lips, and retired to his prison.

CHAPTER VII I

HE had now opened the partition, and was entering the room, when by the faint gleam which the fire threw across the apartment, he perceived indistinctly the figure of a man, and in the same instant heard the sound of approaching armour. Surprize and horror thrilled through every nerve; he remained fixed to the spot, and for some moments hesitated whether to retire. A fearful silence ensued; the person whom he thought he had seen, disappeared in the darkness of the room; the noise of armour was heard no more; and he began to think that the figure he had seen, and the sound he had heard were the phantoms of a sick imagination, which the agitation of his spirits, the solemnity of the hour, and the wide desolation of the place, had conjured up. The low sounds of an unknown voice now started upon his ear; it seemed to be almost close beside him; he sprung onward, and his hand grasped the steely coldness of armour, while the arm it enclosed struggled to get free. “Speak! what wretch art thou?” cried Osbert, when a sudden blaze of light from the fire discovered to him a soldier of the Baron. His agitation for some time prevented his observing that there was more of alarm than of design expressed in the countenance of the man; but the apprehension of the Earl was quickly lost in astonishment, when he beheld the guard at his feet. It was Edmund who had entered the prison under pretense of carrying fuel to the fire, but secretly for the purpose of conferring with Osbert. When the Earl understood he came from Alleyn, his bosom glowed with gratitude towards that generous youth, whose steady and active zeal had never relaxed since the hour in which he first engaged in his cause. The transport of his heart may be easily imagined, when he learned the schemes that were planning for his deliverance. The circumstance which had nearly defeated the warm hopes of his friends, was by him disregarded, since the knowledge of the secret door opened to him, with the assistance of a guide through the intricacies of the castle, a certain means of escape. Edmund was well acquainted with all these. The Earl told him of the discovery of the false panel; bade him return to Alleyn with the joyful intelligence, and on his next night of watch prepare to aid him in escape. Edmund knew well the apartments which Osbert described, and the great staircase which led into a part of the castle that had long

been totally forsaken, and from whence it was easy to pass unobserved into the vaults which communicated with the subterraneous passages in the rock.

Alleyn heard the report of James with a warm and generous joy, which impelled him to hasten immediately to the castle of Athlin, and dispel the sorrows that inhabited there; but the consideration that his sudden absence from the camp might create suspicion, and invite discovery, checked the impulse; and he yielded with reluctance to the necessity which condemned the Countess and Mary to the horrors of a lengthened suspense.

The Countess, meanwhile, whose designs, strengthened by the steady determination of Mary, were unshaken by the message of the Earl, which she considered as only the effect of a momentary impulse, watched the gradual departure of those days which led to that which enveloped the fate of her children, with agony and fainting hope. She received no news from the camp; no words of comfort from Alleyn; and she saw the confidence which had nourished her existence slowly sinking in despair. Mary sought to administer that comfort to the afflictions of her mother, which her own equally demanded; she strove, by the fortitude with which she endeavoured to resign herself, to soften the asperity of the sufferings which threatened the Countess, and she contemplated the approaching storm with the determined coolness of a mind aspiring to virtue as the chief good. But she sedulously sought to exclude Alleyn from her mind; his disinterested and noble conduct excited emotions dangerous to her fortitude, and which rendered yet more poignant the tortures of the approaching sacrifice.

Anxious to inform the Baroness of his approaching deliverance, to assure her of his best services, to bid adieu to Laura, and to seize the last opportunity he might ever possess of disclosing to her his admiration and his love, the Earl revisited the apartments of the Baroness. She felt a lively pleasure on the prospect of his escape; and Laura, in the joy which animated her on hearing this intelligence, forgot the sorrows of her own situation; forgot that of which her heart soon reminded her–that Osbert was leaving the place of her confinement, and that she should probably see him no more. This thought cast a sudden shade over her features, and from the enlivening expression of joy, they resumed their wonted melancholy. Osbert marked the momentary change, and his heart spoke to him the

occasion. “My cup of joy is dashed with bitterness,” said he, “for amid the happiness of approaching deliverance, I quit not my prison without some pangs of keen regret;–pangs which it were probably useless to make known, yet which my feeling will not suffer me at this moment to conceal. Within these walls, from whence I fly with eagerness, I leave a heart fraught with the most tender passion; a heart which, while it beats with life, must ever unite the image of Laura with the fondness of love. Could I hope that she were not insensible to my attachment I should depart in peace, and would defy the obstacles which bid me despair. Were I even certain that she would repel my love with cold indifference, I would yet, if she accept my services, effect her rescue, or give my life the forfeiture.” Laura was silent; she wished to speak her gratitude, yet feared to tell her love; but the soft timidity of her eye, and the tender glow of her cheek, revealed the secret that trembled on her lips. The Baroness observed her confusion, and thanking the Earl for the noble service he offered, declined accepting it. She besought him to involve no further the peace of his family and of himself, by attempting an enterprize so crowded with dangers, and which might probably cost him his life. The arguments of the Baroness fell forceless when opposed to the feelings of the Earl; so warmly he urged his suit, and dwelt so forcibly on his approaching departure, that the Baroness ceased to oppose, and the silence of Laura yielded acquiescence. After a tender farewell, with many earnest wishes for his safety, the Earl quitted the apartment elated with hope. But the Baron had been informed of his projected escape, and had studied the means of counteracting it. The centinel had communicated his discovery to some of his comrades, who, without virtue or courage sufficient to quit the service of the Baron, were desirous of obtaining his favour and failed not to seize on an opportunity so flattering as the present, to accomplish their purpose they communicated to their Chief the intelligence they had received.

Malcolm, careful to conceal his knowledge of the scheme, from a design to entrap those of the clan who were to meet the Earl, had suffered Edmund to return to his station at the prison, where he had placed the informers as secret guards, and had taken such other precautions as were necessary to intercept their flight, should they elude the vigilance of the soldiers, and likewise to secure those of his people who should be drawn

toward the castle in expectation of their Chief. Having done this, he prided himself in security, and in the certainty of exulting over his enemies, thus entangled in their own stratagem.

After many weary moments of impatience to Alleyn, and of expectation to the Earl, the night at length arrived on which hung the event of all their hopes. It was agreed that Alleyn, with a chosen few, should await the arrival of the Earl in the cavern where terminated the subterraneous avenue. Alleyn parted from James with extreme agitation, and returned to his tent to compose his mind.

It was now the dead of night; profound sleep reigned through the castle of Dunbayne, when Edmund gently unbolted the prison door, and hailed the Earl. He sprung forward, and instantly unclosed the pannel, which they fastened after them to prevent discovery, and passing with fearful steps the cold and silent apartments, descended the great staircase into the hall, whose wide and dark desolation was rendered visible only by the dim light of the taper which Edmund carried in his hand, and whose vaulted ceiling re-echoed their steps. After various windings they descended into the vaults; in passing their dreary length they often paused in fearful silence, listening to the hollow blasts which burst suddenly through the passages, and which seemed to bear in the sound the footsteps of pursuit. At length they reached the extremity of the vaults, where Edmund searched for a trapdoor which lay almost concealed in the dirt and darkness; after some time they found, and with difficulty raised it, for it was long since it had been opened; and it was besides heavy with iron work. They entered, and letting the door fall after them, descended a narrow flight of steps which conducted them to a winding passage closed by a door that opened into the main avenue whence Alleyn had before made his escape. Having gained this, they stepped on with confidence, for they were now not far from the cavern where Alleyn and his companions were awaiting their arrival. The heart of Alleyn now swelled with joy, for he perceived a gleam of distant light break upon the walls of the avenue, and at the same time thought he heard the faint sound of approaching footsteps. Impatient to throw himself at the feet of the Earl, he entered the avenue. The light grew stronger upon the walls; but a point of rock, whose projection caused a winding in the passage, concealed from his view the persons his eyes so eagerly sought. The sound of steps was now fast approaching, and Alleyn gaining the rock,

suddenly turned upon three soldiers of the Baron. They instantly seized him their prisoner. Astonishment for a while overcame every other sensation; but as they led him along, the horrid reverse of the moment struck upon his heart with all its consequences, and he had no doubt that the Earl had been seized and carried back to his prison. As he marched along, absorbed in this reflection, a light appeared at some distance, from a door that opened upon the avenue, and discovered the figures of two men, who on perceiving the party, they retreated with precipitation, and closed the door after them. Alleyn knew the Earl in the person of one of them. Two of the soldiers quitting Alleyn, pursued the fugitives, and quickly disappeared through a door. Alleyn finding himself alone with the guard, seized the moment of opportunity, and made a desperate effort to regain his sword. He succeeded; and in the suddenness of the attack, obtained also the weapon of his adversary, who, unarmed, fell at his feet, and called for mercy. Alleyn gave him his life. The soldier, grateful for the gift, and fearful of the Baron’s vengeance, desired to fly with him, and enlist in his service. They quitted the subterraneous way together. On entering the cavern, Alleyn found it vacated by his friends, who on hearing the clash of armour, and the loud and menacing voices of the soldiers, understood his fate, and apprehensive of numbers, had fled to avoid a similar disaster. Alleyn returned to his tent, shocked with disappointment, and lost in despair. Every effort which he had made for the deliverance of the Earl, had proved unsuccessful; and this scheme, on which was suspended his last hope, had been defeated at the very moment when he exulted in its completion. He threw himself on the ground, and lost in bitter thought, observed not the curtain of his tent undraw, till recalled by a sudden noise, he looked up, and beheld the Earl. Terror fixed him to the spot, and for a moment he involuntarily acknowledged the traditionary visions of his nation. The wellknown voice of Osbert, however, awakened him to truth, and the ardor with which he embraced his knees, immediately convinced him that he clasped reality.

The soldiers, in the eagerness of pursuit, had mistaken the door by which Osbert had retired, and had entered one below it, which, after engaging them in a fruitless search through various intricate passages, had conducted them to a remote part of the castle, from whence, after much perplexity and loss of time, they were at length extricated. The Earl, who

had retreated on sight of the soldiers, had fled in the mean time to regain the trapdoor; but the united strength of himself and of Edmund was in vain exerted to open it. Compelled to encounter the approaching evil, the Earl took the sword of his companion, resolving to meet the approach of his adversaries, and to effect his deliverance, or yield his life and his misfortunes to the attempt. With this design he advanced deliberately along the passage, and arriving at the door, stopped to discover the motions of his pursuers: all was profoundly silent. After remaining some time in this situation, he opened the door, and examining the avenue with a firm yet anxious eye as far as the light of his taper threw its beams, discovered no human being. He proceeded with cautious firmness towards the cavern, every instant expecting the soldiers to start suddenly upon him from some dark recess.–With astonishment he reached the cave without interruption; and unable to account for his unexpected deliverance, hastened with Edmund to join his faithful people.

The soldiers who watched the prison, being ignorant of any other way by which the Earl could escape, than the door which they guarded, had suffered Edmund to enter the apartment without fear. It was some time before they discovered their error; surprized at the length of his stay, they opened the door of the prison, which to their utter astonishment, they found empty. The grates were examined; they remained as usual; every corner was explored; but the false pannel remained unknown; and having finished their examination without discovering any visible means by which the Earl had quitted the prison, they were seized with terror, concluding it to be the work of a supernatural power, and immediately alarmed the castle. The Baron, roused by the tumult, was informed of the fact, and dubious of the integrity of his guards, ascended to the apartment; which having himself examined without discovering any means of escape, he no longer hesitated to pronounce the centinels accessary to the Earl’s enlargement. The unfeigned terror which they exhibited was mistaken for artifice, and their supposed treachery was admitted and punished in the same moment. They were thrown into the dungeon of the castle. Soldiers were immediately dispatched in pursuit; but the time which had elapsed ere the guards had entered the prison, had given the Earl an opportunity of escape. When the certainty of this was communicated to the Baron, every passion whose single force is misery, united in his breast to torture him;

and his brain, exasperated almost to madness, gave him only direful images of revenge.

The Baroness and Laura, awakened by the tumult, had been filled with apprehension for the Earl, till they were informed of the cause of the general confusion; and hope and dubious joy were ere long confirmed into certainty, for they were told of the fruitless search of the pursuers.

It was now the last day of the term in which the Countess had stipulated to return her answer; she had yet heard nothing from Alleyn; for Alleyn had been busied in schemes, of the event of which he could send no account, for their success had been yet undetermined. Every hope of the Earl's deliverance was now expired, and in the anguish of her heart, the Countess prepared to give that answer which would send the devoted Mary to the arms of the murderer. Mary, who assumed a fortitude not her own, strove to abate the rigor of her mother's sufferings, but vainly strove; they were of a nature which defied consolation. She wrote the fatal agreement, but delayed till the last moment delivering it into the hands of the messenger. It was necessary, however, that the Baron should receive it on the following morn, lest the impatience of revenge should urge him to seize on the life of the Earl as the forfeiture of delay. She sent, therefore, for the messenger, who was a veteran of the clan, and with extreme agitation delivered to him her answer; grief interrupted her voice; she was unable to speak to him; and he was awaiting her orders, when the door of the apartment was thrown open, and the Earl, followed by Alleyn, threw himself at her feet. A faint scream was uttered by the Countess, and she sunk in her chair. Mary, not daring to trust herself with the delightful vision, endeavoured to restrain the tide of joy, which hurried to her heart, and, threatened to overwhelm her.

The castle of Athlin resounded with tumultuous joy on this happy event; the courts were filled with those of the clan who had been disabled from attending the field, and whom the report of the Earl's return, which had circulated with astonishing rapidity, had brought thither. The hall re-echoed with voices; and the people could hardly be restrained from rushing into the presence of their Chief, to congratulate him on his escape.

When the first transports of the meeting were subsided, the Earl presented Alleyn to his family as his friend and deliverer; whose steady attachment he could never forget, and whose zealous service he could

never repay. The cheek of Mary glowed with pleasure and gratitude at this tribute to the worth of Alleyn; and the smiling approbation of her eyes rewarded him for his noble deeds. The Countess received him as the deliverer of both her children, and related to Osbert the adventure in the wood. The Earl embraced Alleyn, who received the united acknowledgments of the family, with unaffected modesty. Osbert hesitated not to pronounce the Baron the author of the plot; his heart swelled to avenge the repeated injuries of his family, and he secretly resolved to challenge the enemy to single combat. To renew the siege he considered as a vain project; and this challenge, though a very inadequate mode of revenge, was the only honourable one that remained for him. He forbore to mention his design to the Countess, well knowing that her tenderness would oppose the measure, and throw difficulties in his way, which would embarrass, without preventing his purpose. He mentioned the misfortunes of the Baroness, and the loveliness of her daughter, and excited the esteem and the commiseration of his hearers.

The clamours of the people to behold their Lord, now arose to the apartment of the Countess, and he descended into the hall, accompanied by Alleyn, to gratify their zeal. An universal shout of joy resounded through the walls on his appearance. A noble pleasure glowed on the countenance of the Earl at sight of his faithful people; and in the delight of that moment his heart bore testimony to the superior advantages of an equitable government. The Earl, impatient to testify his gratitude, introduced Alleyn to the clan, as his friend and deliverer, and immediately presented his father with a lot of land, where he might end his days in peace and plenty. Old Alleyn thanked the Earl for his offered kindness, but declined accepting it; alleging, that he was attached to his old cottage, and that he had already sufficient for the comforts of his age.

On the following morning, a messenger was privately dispatched to the Baron, with the challenge of the Earl. The challenge was couched in terms of haughty indignation, and expressed, that nothing but the failure of all other means could have urged him to the condescension of meeting the assassin of his father, on terms of equal combat.

Happiness was once more restored to Athlin. The Countess, in the unexpected preservation of her children, seemed to be alive only to joy. The Earl was now for a time secure in the bosom of his family, and, though

his impatience to avenge the injuries of those most dear to him, and to snatch from the hand of oppression the fair sufferers at Dunbayne, would not allow him to be tranquil, yet he assumed a gaiety unknown to his heart, and the days were spent in festivals and joy.

CHAPTER I X

IT was at this period, that, one stormy evening, the Countess was sitting with her family in a room, the windows of which looked upon the sea. The winds burst in sudden squalls over the deep, and dashed the foaming waves against the rocks with inconceivable fury. The spray, notwithstanding the high situation of the castle, flew up with violence against the windows. The Earl went out upon the terrace beneath to contemplate the storm. The moon shone faintly by intervals, through broken clouds upon the waters, illumining the white foam which burst around, and enlightening the scene sufficiently to render it visible. The surges broke on the distant shores in deep resounding murmurs, and the solemn pauses between the stormy gusts filled the mind with enthusiastic awe. As the Earl stood wrapt in the sublimity of the scene, the moon, suddenly emerging from a heavy cloud, shewed him at some distance a vessel driven by the fury of the blast towards the coast. He presently heard the signals of distress; and soon after shrieks of terror, and a confused uproar of voices were borne on the wind. He hastened from the terrace to order his people to go out with boats to the assistance of the crew, for he doubted not that the vessel was wrecked; but the sea ran so high as to make the adventure impracticable. The sound of voices ceased, and he concluded that the wretched mariners were lost, when the screams of distress again struck his ear, and again were lost in the tumult of the storm; in a moment after, the vessel struck upon the rock beneath the castle; an universal shriek ensued. The Earl, with his people, hastened to the assistance of the crew; the fury of the gust was now abated, and the Earl, jumping into a boat with Alleyn and some others, rowed to the ship, where they rescued a part of the drowning people. They were conducted to the castle, and every comfort was liberally administered to them. Among those, whom the Earl had received into his boat, was a stranger, whose dignified aspect and manners bespoke him to be of rank; he had several people belonging to him, but they were foreigners, and ignorant of the language of the country. He thanked his deliverer with a noble frankness, that charmed him. In the hall they were met by the Countess and her daughter, who received the stranger with the warm welcome, which

compassion for his situation had inspired. He was conducted to the supper room, where the magnificence of the board exhibited only the usual hospitality of his host. The stranger spoke English fluently, and displayed in his conversation a manly and vigorous mind, acquainted with the sciences, and with life; and the cast of his observations seemed to characterize the benevolence of his heart. The Earl was so much pleased with his guest, that he pressed him to remain at his castle till another vessel could be procured; his guest equally pleased with the Earl, and a stranger to the country, accepted the invitation.

New distress now broke upon the peace of Athlin; several days had expired, and the messenger, who had been sent to Malcolm, did not appear. It was almost evident, that the Baron, disappointed and enraged at the escape of his prisoner, and eager for a sacrifice, had seized this man as the subject of a paltry revenge. The Earl, however, resolved to wait a few days, and watch the event.

The struggles of latent tenderness and assumed indifference, banished tranquillity from the bosom of Mary, and pierced it with many sorrows. The friendship and honours bestowed by the Earl on Alleyn, who now resided solely at the castle, touched her heart with a sweet pride; but alas! these distinctions served only to confirm her admiration of that worth, which had already attached her affections, and afforded him opportunities of exhibiting, in brighter colours, the various excellencies of a heart noble and expansive, and of a mind, whose native elegance meliorated and adorned the bold vigour of its flights. The langour of melancholy, notwithstanding the efforts of Mary, would at intervals steal from beneath the disguise of cheerfulness, and diffuse over her beautiful features an expression extremely interesting. The stranger was not insensible to its charms, and it served to heighten the admiration, with which he had first beheld her, into something more tender and more powerful. The modest dignity, with which she delivered her sentiments, which breathed the purest delicacy and benevolence, touched his heart, and he felt an interest concerning her, which he had never before experienced.

Alleyn, whose heart amid the anxieties and tumults of the past scenes, had still sighed to the image of Mary;–that image, which fancy had pictured in all the charms of the original, and whose glowing tints were yet softened and rendered more interesting by the shade of melancholy with

which absence and a hopeless passion had surrounded them, found, amid the leisure of peace, and the frequent opportunities which were afforded him of beholding the object of his attachment, his sighs redouble, and the glooms of sorrow thicken. In the presence of Mary, a soft sadness clouded his brow; he endeavoured to assume a cheerfulness foreign to his heart; but endeavoured in vain. Mary perceived the change in his manners; and the observation did not contribute to enliven her own. The Earl, too, observed that Alleyn had lost much of his wonted spirits, and bantered him on the change, but thought not of his sister.

Alleyn wished to quit a place so destructive to his peace as the castle of Athlin; he formed repeated resolutions of withdrawing himself from those walls, which held him in a sort of fascination, and rendered ineffectual every half-formed wish, and every weak endeavour. When he could no longer behold Mary, he would frequently retire to the terrace, which was overlooked by the windows of her apartment, and spend half the night in traversing, with silent, mournful steps, that spot, which afforded him the melancholy pleasure of being near the object of his love.

Matilda wished to question Alleyn concerning some circumstances of the late events, and for this purpose ordered him one day to attend her in her closet. As he passed the outer apartment of the Countess, he perceived something lying near the door, through which she had before gone, and, examining it, discovered a bracelet, to which was attached a miniature of Mary. His heart beat quick at the sight; the temptation was too powerful to be resisted; he concealed it in his bosom, and passed on. On quitting the closet, he sought, with breathless impatience, a spot, where he might contemplate at leisure that precious portrait, which chance had so kindly thrown in his way. He drew it trembling from his bosom, and beheld again that countenance, whose sweet expression had touched his heart with all the delightful agonies of love. As he pressed it with impassioned tenderness to his lips, the tear of rapture trembled in his eye, and the romantic ardour of the moment was scarcely heightened by the actual presence of the beloved object, whose light step now stole upon his ear, and half turning he beheld not the picture, but the reality!–Surprized!–confused!–The picture fell from his hand. Mary, who had accidentally strolled to that spot, on observing the agitation of Alleyn, was retiring, when he, in whose heart had been awakened every tender sensation, losing

in the temptation of the moment the fear of disdain, and forgetting the resolution which he had formed of eternal silence, threw himself at her feet, and pressed her hand to his trembling lips. His tongue would have told her that he loved, but his emotion, and the repulsive look of Mary, prevented him. She instantly disengaged herself with an air of offended dignity, and casting on him a look of mingled anger and concern, withdrew in silence. Alleyn remained fixed to the spot; his eyes pursuing her retiring steps, insensible to every feeling but those of love and despair. So absorbed was he in the transition of the moment, that he almost doubted whether a visionary illusion had not crossed his sight to blast his only remaining comfort–the consciousness of deserving, and of possessing the esteem of her he loved. He left the place with anguish in his heart, and, in the perturbation of his mind, forgot the picture.

Mary had observed her mother's bracelet fall from his hand, and was no longer in perplexity concerning her miniature; but in the confusion which his behavior occasioned her, she forgot to demand it of him. The Countess had missed it almost immediately after his departure from the closet, and had caused a search to be made, which proving fruitless, her suspicions wavered upon him. The Earl, who soon after passed the spot whence Alleyn had just departed, found the miniature. It was not long ere Alleyn recollected the treasure he had dropped, and returned in search of it. Instead of the picture, he found the Earl: a conscious blush crossed his cheek; the confusion of his countenance informed Osbert of a part of the truth; who, anxious to know by what means he had obtained it, presented him the picture, and demanded if he knew it. The soul of Alleyn knew not to dissemble; he acknowledged that he had found, and concealed it; prompted by that passion, the confession of which, no other circumstance than the present could have wrung from his heart. The Earl listened to him with a mixture of concern and pity; but hereditary pride chilled the warm feelings of friendship and of gratitude, and extinguished the faint spark of hope which the discovery had kindled in the bosom of Alleyn. "Fear not, my Lord," said he, "the degradation of your house from one who would sacrifice his life in its defence; never more shall the passion which glows in my heart escape from my lips. I will retire from the spot where I have buried my tranquillity." "No," replied the Earl, "you shall remain here; I can confide in your honour. O! that the only reward which is adequate to

your worth and to your services, it should be impossible for me to bestow." His voice faultered, and he turned away to conceal his emotion, with a suffering little inferior to that of Alleyn.

The discovery which Mary had made, did not contribute to restore peace to her mind. Every circumstance conspired to assure her of that ardent passion which filled the bosom of him whom all her endeavours could not teach her to forget; and this conviction served only to heighten her malady, and consequently her wretchedness.

The interest which the stranger discovered, and the attention he paid to Mary, had not passed unobserved by Alleyn. Love pointed to him the passion which was rising in his heart, and whispered that the vows of his rival would be propitious. The words of Osbert confirmed him in the torturing apprehension; for though his humble birth had never suffered him to hope, yet he thought he discovered in the speech of the Earl, something more than mere hereditary pride.

The stranger had contemplated the lovely form of Mary with increasing admiration, since the first hour he beheld her; this admiration was now confirmed into love;–and he resolved to acquaint the Earl with his birth, and with his passion. For this purpose, he one morning drew him aside to the terrace of the castle, where they could converse without interruption; and pointing to the ocean, over which he had so lately been borne, thanked the Earl, who had thus softened the horrors of shipwreck, and the desolation of a foreign land, by the kindness of his hospitality. He informed him that he was a native of Switzerland, where he possessed considerable estates, from which he bore the title of Count de Santmorin; that enquiry of much moment to his interests had brought him to Scotland, to a neighbouring port of which he was bound, when the disaster from which he had been so happily rescued, arrested the progress of his designs. He then related to the Earl, that his voyage was undertaken upon a report of the death of some relations, at whose demise considerable estates in Switzerland became his inheritance. That the income of these estates had been hitherto received upon the authority of powers, which, if the report was true, were become invalid.

The Earl listened to this narrative in silent astonishment, and enquired, with much emotion, the name of the Count's relations. "The Baroness Malcolm," returned he. The Earl clasped his hands in extasy. The Count,

surprized at his agitation, began to fear that the Earl was disagreeably interested in the welfare of his adversaries, and regretted that he had disclosed the affair, till he observed the pleasure which was diffused through his features. Osbert explained the cause of his emotion, by relating his knowledge of the Baroness; in the progress of whose story, the character of Malcolm was sufficiently elucidated. He told the cause of his hatred towards the Baron, and the history of his imprisonment; and also confided to his honour the secret of his challenge.

The indignation of the Count was strongly excited; he was, however, prevailed on by Osbert to forego any immediate effort of revenge, awaiting for awhile the movements of Malcolm.

The Count was so absorbed in wonder and in new sensations, that he had almost forgot the chief object of the interview. Recollecting himself, he discovered his passion, and requested permission of the Earl to throw himself at the feet of Mary. The Earl listened to the declaration with a mixture of pleasure and concern; the remembrance of Alleyn saddened his mind; but the wish of an equal connection, made him welcome the offers of the Count, whose alliance, he told him, would do honour to the first nobility of his nation. If he found the sentiments of his sister in sympathy with his own on this point, he would welcome him to his family with the affection of a brother; but he wished to discover the situation of her heart, ere his noble friend disclosed to her his prepossession.

The Earl on his return to the castle enquired for Mary, whom he found in the apartment of her mother. He opened to them the history of the Count; his relationship with the Baroness Malcolm, with the object of his expedition, and closed the narrative with discovering the attachment of his friend to Mary, and his offers of alliance with his family. Mary grew pale at this declaration; there was a pang in her heart which would not suffer her to speak; she threw her eyes on the ground, and burst into tears. The Earl took her hand tenderly in his; “My beloved sister,” said he, “knows me too well to doubt my affection, or to suppose I can wish to influence her upon a subject so material to her future happiness; and where her heart ought to be the principal directress. Do me the justice to believe, that I make known to you the offers of the Count as a friend, not as a director. He is a man, who from the short period of our acquaintance, I have judged to be deserving of particular esteem. His mind appears to be noble; his heart

expansive; his rank is equal with your own; and he loves you with an attachment warm and sincere. But with all these advantages, I would not have my sister give herself to the man who does not meet an interest in her heart to plead his cause."

The gentle soul of Mary swelled with gratitude towards her brother; she would have thanked him for the tenderness of these sentiments, but a variety of emotions were struggling at her heart, and suppressed her utterance; tears and a smile, softly clouded with sorrow, were all she could give him in reply. He could not but perceive that some secret cause of grief preyed upon her mind, and he solicited to know, and to remove it. "My dear brother will believe the gratitude which his kindness–" She would have finished the sentence, but the words died away upon her lips, and she threw herself on the bosom of her mother, endeavouring to conceal her distress, and wept in silence. The Countess too well understood the grief of her daughter; she had witnessed the secret struggles of her heart, which all her endeavours were not able to overcome, and which rendered the offers of the Count disgusting, and dreadful to her imagination. Matilda knew how to feel for her sufferings; but the affection of the mother extended her views beyond the present temporary evil, to the future welfare of her child; and in the long perspective of succeeding years, she beheld her united to the Count, whose character diffused happiness, and the mild dignity of virtue to all around him: she received the thanks of Mary for her gentle guidance to the good she possessed; the artless looks of the little ones around her, smiled their thanks; and the luxury of that scene recalled the memory of times for ever passed, and mingled with the tear of rapture the sigh of fond regret. The surest method of erasing that impression which threatened serious evil to the peace of her child if suffered to continue, and to secure her permanent felicity, was to unite her to the Count; whose amiable disposition would soon win her affections, and obliterate from her heart every improper remembrance of Alleyn. She determined, therefore, to employ argument and gentle persuasion, to guide her to her purpose. She knew the mind of Mary to be delicate and candid; easy of conviction, and firm to pursue what her judgment approved; and she did not despair of succeeding.

The Earl still pressed to know the cause of that emotion which afflicted her. "I am unworthy of your solicitude," said Mary, "I cannot teach my

heart to submit." "To submit!–Can you suppose your friends can wish your heart to submit on a point so material to its happiness, to aught that is repugnant to its feelings? If the offers of the Count are displeasing to you, tell me so; and I will return him his answer. Believe that my first wish is to see you happy." "Generous Osbert! How can I repay the goodness of such a brother! I would accept in gratitude the hand of the Count, did not my feelings assure me I should be miserable. I admire his character, and esteem his goodness; but alas!–why should I conceal it from you?–My heart is another's–is another's, whose noble deeds have won its involuntary regards; and who is yet unconscious of my distinction, one who shall for ever remain in ignorance of it." The idea of Alleyn flashed into the mind of the Earl, and he no longer doubted to whom her heart was engaged. "My own sentiments," said he, "sufficiently inform me of the object of your admiration. You do well to remember the dignity of your sex and of your rank; though I must lament with you, that worth like Alleyn's is not empowered by fortune to take its standard with nobility." At Alleyn's name, the blushes of Mary confirmed Osbert in his discovery. "My child," said the Countess, "will not resign her tranquillity to a vain and ignoble attachment. She may esteem merit wherever it is found, but she will remember the duty which she owes to her family and to herself, in contracting an alliance which is to support or diminish the ancient consequence of her house. The offers of a man endowed with so much apparent excellence as the Count, and whose birth is equal to your own, affords a prospect too promising of felicity, to be hastily rejected. We will hereafter converse more largely on this subject." "Never shall you have reason to blush for your daughter," said Mary, with a modest pride; "but pardon me, Madam, if I entreat that we no more renew a subject so painful to my feelings, and which cannot be productive of good;–for never will I give my hand where my heart does not accompany it." This was not a time to press the topic; the Countess for the present desisted, and the Earl left the apartment with a heart divided between pity and disappointment. Hope, however, whispered to his wishes, that Mary might in time be induced to admit the addresses of the Count, and he determined not wholly to destroy his hopes.

CHAPTER X

THE Count was walking on the ramparts of the castle, involved in thought, when Osbert approached; whose lingering step and disappointed air spoke to his heart the rejection of his suit. He told the Count that Mary did not at present feel for him those sentiments of affection which would justify her in accepting his proposals. This information, though it shocked the hopes of the Count, did not entirely destroy them; for he yet believed that time and assiduity might befriend his wishes. While these Noblemen were leaning on the walls of the castle, engaged in earnest conversation, they observed on a distant hill a cloud emerging from the verge of the horizon, whose dusky hue glittered with sudden light; in an instant they descried the glance of arms, and a troop of armed men poured in long succession over the hill, and hurried down its side to the plains below. The Earl thought he recognized the clan of the Baron. It was the Baron himself who now advanced at the head of his people, in search of that revenge which had been hitherto denied him; and who, determined on conquest, had brought with him an host which he thought more than sufficient to overwhelm the castle of his enemy.

The messenger, who had been sent with the challenge, had been detained a prisoner by Malcolm; who in the mean time had hastened his preparations to surprize the castle of Athlin. The detention of his servant had awakened the suspicions of the Earl, and he had taken precautions to guard against the designs of his enemy. He had summoned his clan to hold themselves in readiness for a sudden attack, and had prepared his castle for the worst emergency. He now sent a messenger to the clan with such orders as he judged expedient, arranged his plans within the walls, and took his station on the ramparts to observe the movements of his enemy. The Count, clad in arms, stood by his side. Alleyn was posted with a party within the great gate of the castle.

The Baron advanced with his people, and quickly surrounded the walls. Within all was silent; the castle seemed to repose in security; and the Baron, certain of victory, congratulated himself on the success of the enterprize, when observing the Earl, whose person was concealed in armour, he called to him to surrender himself and his Chief to the arms of

Malcolm. The Earl answered the summons with an arrow from his bow, which missing the Baron, pierced one of his attendants. The archers who had been planted behind the walls, now discovered themselves, and discharged a shower of arrows; at the same time every part of the castle appeared thronged with the soldiers of the Earl, who hurled on the heads of the astonished besiegers, lances and other missile weapons with unceasing rapidity. The alarum bell now rung out the signal to that part of the clan without the walls, and they immediately poured upon the enemy, who, confounded by this unexpected attack, had scarcely time to defend themselves. The clang of arms resounded through the air, with the shouts of the victors, and the groans of the dying. The fear of the Baron, which had principally operated on the minds of his people, was now overcome by surprize, and the fear of death; and on the first repulse, they deserted from the ranks in great numbers, and fled to the distant hills. In vain the Baron endeavoured to rally his soldiers, and keep them to the charge; they yielded to a stronger impulse than the menace of their Chief, who was now left with less than half his number at the foot of the walls. The Baron, to whom cowardice was unknown, disdaining to retreat, continued the attack. At length the gates of the castle were thrown open, and a party issued upon the assailants, headed by the Earl and the Count, who divided in quest of Malcolm. The Count fought in vain, and the search of Osbert was equally fruitless; their adversary was no where to be found. Osbert, apprehensive of his gaining admittance to the castle by stratagem, was returning in haste to the gates, when he received the stroke of a sword upon his shoulder; his armour had broke the force of the blow, and the wound it had given was slight. He turned his sword, and facing his enemy, discovered a soldier of Malcolm’s who attacked him with a desperate courage. The encounter was furious and long; dexterity and equal valour seemed to animate both the combatants. Alleyn, who observed from his post the danger of the Earl, flew instantly to his assistance; but the crisis of the scene was past ere he arrived; the weapon of Osbert had pierced the side of his adversary, and he fell to the ground. The Earl disarmed him, and holding over him his sword, bade him ask his life. “I have no life to ask,” said Malcolm, whose fainting voice the Earl now discovered, “if I had, ‘tis death only I would accept from you. O! cursed–” He would have finished the sentence, but his wound flowed apace, and he fainted with loss of blood. The Earl threw down his

sword, and calling a party of his people, he committed to them the care of the Baron, and ordered them to proceed and seize the castle of Dunbayne. Understanding their Chief was mortally wounded, the remains of Malcolm's army had fled from the walls. The people of the Earl proceeded without interruption, and took possession of the castle without opposition.

The wounds of the Baron were examined when he reached Dunbayne, and a dubious sentence of the event was pronounced. His countenance marked the powerful workings of his mind, which seemed labouring with an unknown evil; he threw his eyes eagerly round the apartment, as if in search of some object which was not present. After several attempts to speak, "Flatter me not," said he, "with hopes of life; it is flitting fast away; but while I have breath to speak, let me see the Baroness." She came, and hanging over his couch in silent horror, received his words: "I have injured you, Madam, I fear beyond reparation. In these last few moments let me endeavour to relieve my conscience by discovering to you my guilt and my remorse." The Baroness started, fearful of the coming sentence. "You had a son." "What of my son?" "You had a son, whom my boundless ambition doomed to exile from his parents and his heritage, and who I caused you to believe died in your absence." "Where is my child!" exclaimed the Baroness. "I know not," resumed Malcolm, "I committed him to the care of a man and woman who then lived on a remote part of my lands, but a few years after they disappeared, and I have never heard of them since. The boy passed for a foundling whom I had saved from perishing. One servant only I entrusted with the secret; the rest were imposed upon. Thus far I tell you, Madam, to prompt you to enquiry, and to assuage the agonies of a bleeding conscience. I have other deeds–" The Baroness could hear no more; she was carried insensible from the apartment. Laura, shocked at her condition, was informed of its cause, and filial tenderness watched over her with unwearied attention.

In the mean time the Earl, on quitting Malcolm, had returned immediately to the castle, and was the first messenger of that event which would probably avenge the memory of his father, and terminate the distresses of his family. The sight of Osbert, and the news he brought, revived the Countess and Mary, who had retired during the assault into an inner apartment of the castle for greater security, and who had suffered, during that period, all the terrors which their situation could inspire. They

were soon after joined by the Count and by Alleyn, whose conduct did not pass unnoticed by the Earl. The cheek of Mary glowed at the relation of this new instance of his worth; and it was Alleyn's sweet reward to observe her emotion. There was a sentiment in the heart of Osbert which struggled against the pride of birth; he wished to reward the services and the noble spirit of the youth, with the virtues of Mary; but the authority of early prejudice silenced the grateful impulse, and swept from his heart the characters of truth.

The Earl, accompanied by the Count, now hastened to the castle of Dunbayne, to cheer the Baroness and her daughter with their presence. As they approached the castle, the stillness and desolation of the scene bespoke the situation of its lord; his people were entirely dispersed, a few only of his centinels wandered before the eastern gate; who, having made no opposition, were suffered by the Earl's people to remain. Few of the Baron's people were to be seen; those few were unarmed, and appeared the effigies of fallen greatness. As the Earl crossed the platform, the remembrance of the past crowded upon his mind. The agonies which he had there suffered,–the image of death which glared upon his sight, aggravated by the bitter and ignominious circumstances which attended his fate; the figure of Malcolm, mighty in injustice, and cruel in power; whose countenance, smiling horribly in triumphant revenge, sent to his heart the stroke of anguish;–each circumstance of torture arose to his imagination in the glowing colours of truth; he shuddered as he passed; and the contrast of the present scene touched his heart with the most affecting sentiments. He saw the innate and active power of justice, which pervades all the circumstances even of this life like vital principle, and shines through the obscurity of human actions to the virtuous, the pure ray of Heaven;–to the guilty, the destructive glare of lightning.

On enquiring for the Baroness, they were told she was in the apartment of Malcolm, whose moment of dissolution was now approaching. The name of the Count was delivered to the Baroness, and overheard by the Baron, who desired to see him. Louisa went out to receive her noble relation with all the joy which a meeting so desirable and so unlooked for, could inspire. On seeing Osbert, her tears flowed fast, and she thanked him for his generous care, in a manner that declared a deep sense of his services. Leaving him, she conducted the Count to Malcolm, who lay on

his couch surrounded with the stillness and horrors of death. He raised his languid head, and discovered a countenance wild and terrific, whose ghastly aspect was overspread with the paleness of death. The beauteous Laura, overcome by the scene, hung like a drooping lily over his couch, dropping fast her tears. “My lord,” said Malcolm, in a low tone, “you see before you a wretch, anxious to relieve the agony of a guilty mind. My vices have destroyed the peace of this lady,–have robbed her of a son–but she will disclose to you the secret guilt, which I have now no time to tell: I have for some years received, as you now well know, the income of those foreign lands which are her due; as a small reparation for the injuries she has sustained, I bequeath to her all the possessions which I lawfully inherit, and resign her into your protection. To ask oblivion of the past of you, Madam, and of you, my Lord, is what I dare not do; yet it would be some consolation to my departing spirit, to be assured of your forgiveness.” The Baroness was too much affected to reply but by a look of assent; the Count assured him of forgiveness, and besought him to compose his mind for his approaching fate. “Composure, my Lord, is not for me; my Life has been marked with vice, and my death with the bitterness of fruitless remorse. I have understood virtue, but I have loved vice. I do not now lament that I am punished, but that I have deserved punishment.” The Baron sunk on his couch, and in a few moments after expired in a strong sigh. Thus terminated the life of a man, whose understanding might have reached the happiness of virtue, but whose actions displayed the features of vice.

From this melancholy scene, the Baroness, with the Count and Laura, retired to her apartment, where the Earl awaited their return with anxious solicitude. The sternness of justice for a moment relaxed when he heard of Malcolm’s death; his heart would have sighed with compassion, had not the remembrance of his father crossed his mind, and checked the impulse. “I can now, Madam,” said he, addressing the Baroness, “restore you a part of those possessions which were once your Lord’s, and which ought to have been the inheritance of your son; this castle from henceforth is yours; I resign it to its lawful owner.” The Baroness was overcome with the remembrance of his services, and could scarcely thank him but with her tears. The servant whom the Baron had mentioned as the confidant of his iniquities, was sent for, and interrogated concerning the infant he had

charge of. From him, however, little comfort was received; for he could only tell that he had conveyed the child, by the orders of his master, to a cottage on the furthest borders of his estates, where he had delivered it to the care of a woman, who there lived with her husband. These people received at the same time a sum of money for its support, with a promise of future supplies. For some years he had been punctual in the payment of the sums entrusted to him by the Baron, but at length he yielded to the temptation of withholding them for his own use; and on enquiring for the people some years after, he found they were gone from the place. The conditions of the Baroness's pardon to the man depended on his endeavours to repair the injury he had promoted, by a strict search for the people to whom he had committed her child. She now consulted with her friends on the best means to be pursued in this business, and immediately sent off messengers to different parts of the country to gather information.

The Baroness was now released from oppression and imprisonment; she was reinstated in her ancient possessions, to which were added all the hereditary lands of Malcolm, together with his personal fortune: she was surrounded by those whom she most loved, and in the midst of a people who loved her; yet the consequence of the Baron's guilt had left in her heart one drop of gall which embittered each source of happiness, and made her life melancholy and painful.

The Count was now her visitor; she was much consoled by his presence; and Laura's hours were often enlivened by the conversation of the Earl, to whom her heart was tenderly attached, and whose frequent visits to the castle were devoted to love and her.

The felicity of Matilda now appeared as perfect and as permanent as is consistent with the nature of sublunary beings. Justice was done to the memory of her Lord, and her beloved son was spared to bless the evening of her days. The father of Laura had ever been friendly to the house of Athlin, and her delicacy felt no repugnance to the union which Osbert solicited. But her happiness, whatever it might appear, was incomplete; she saw the settled melancholy of Mary, for love still corroded her heart and notwithstanding her efforts, shaded her countenance. The Countess wished to produce those nuptials with the Count which she thought would re-establish the peace of her child, and insure her future felicity. She omitted no opportunity of pressing his suit, which she managed with a

delicacy that rendered it less painful to Mary; whose words, however, were few in reply, and who could seldom bear that the subject should ever be long continued. Her settled aversion to the addresses of the Count, at length baffled the expectations of Matilda, and shewed her the fallacy of her efforts. She thought it improper to suffer the Count any longer to nourish in his heart a vain hope; and she reluctantly commissioned the Earl to undeceive him on this point.

With the Baroness, month after month still elapsed in fruitless search of her son; the people with whom he had been placed were no where to be found, and no track was discovered which might lead to the truth. The distress of the Baroness can only be imagined; she resigned herself, in calm despair, to mourn in silence the easy confidence which had entrusted her child to the care of those who had betrayed him. Though happiness was denied her, she was unwilling to withhold it from those whom it awaited; and at length yielded to the entreaties of the Earl, and became its advocate with Laura, for the nuptials which were to unite their fate.

The Earl introduced the Countess and Mary to the castle of Dunbayne. Similarity of sentiment and disposition united Matilda and the Baroness in a lasting friendship. Mary and Laura were not less pleased with each other. The dejection of the Count at sight of Mary, declared the ardour of his passion, and would have awakened in her breast something more than compassion, had not her heart been pre-occupied. Alleyn, who could think of Mary only, wandered through the castle of Athlin a solitary being, who fondly haunts the spot where his happiness lies buried. His prudence formed resolutions, which his passion as quickly broke; and cheated by love, though followed by despair, he delayed his departure from day to day, and the illusion of yesterday continued to be the illusion of the morrow. The Earl, attached to his virtues, and grateful for his services, would have bestowed on him every honour but that alone which could give him happiness, and which his pride would have suffered him to accept. Yet the honours which he refused, he refused with a grace so modest, as to conciliate kindness rather than wound generosity.

In a gallery on the North side of the castle, which was filled with pictures of the family, hung a portrait of Mary. She was drawn in the dress which she wore on the day of the festival, when she was led by the Earl into the hall, and presented as the partner of Alleyn. The likeness was

striking, and expressive of all the winning grace of the original. As often as Alleyn could steal from observation, be retired to this gallery, to contemplate the portrait of her who was ever present to his imagination: here he could breath that sigh which her presence restrained, and shed those tears which her presence forbade to flow. As he stood one day in this place wrapt in melancholy musing, his ear was struck with the notes of sweet music; they seemed to issue from the bottom of the gallery. The instrument was touched with an exquisite expression, and in a voice whose tones floated on the air in soft undulations, he distinguished the following words, which he remembered to be an ode composed by the Earl, and presented to Mary, who had set it to music the day before.

MORNING

Darkness! through thy chilling glooms
Weakly trembles twilight grey;
Twilight fades–and Morning comes,
And melts thy shadows swift away!

She comes in her ætherial car,
Involv'd in many a varying hue;
And thro' the azure shoots afar,
Spirit–light–and life anew!

Her breath revives the drooping flowers,
Her ray dissolves the dews of night;
Recalls the sprightly-moving hours.
And the green scene unveils in light!

Her's the fresh gale that wanders wild
O'er mountain top, and dewy glade;
And fondly steals the breath, beguil'd,
Of ev'ry flow'r in every shade.

Mother of Roses–bright Aurora!–hail!
Thee shall the chorus of the hours salute,
And song of early birds from ev'ry vale,
And blithesome horn, and fragrant zephyr mute!

And oft as rising o'er the plain,
Thou and thy roseate Nymphs appear,

This simple song in choral strain,
From rapturing Bards shall meet thine ear.

CHORUS

Dance ye lightly–lightly on!
‘Tis the bold lark thro’ the air,
Hails your beauties with his song;
Lightly–lightly fleeting fair!

Entranced in the sweet sounds, he had proceeded some steps down the gallery, when the music ceased. He stopped. After a short pause it returned, and as he advanced he distinguished these words, sung in a low voice mournfully sweet:

In solitude I mourn thy reign,
Ah! youth beloved–but loved in vain!

The voice was broken and lost in sobs; the chords of the lute were wildly struck: and in a few moments silence ensued. He stepped on towards the spot whence the sounds had proceeded, and through a door which was left open, he discovered Mary hanging over her lute dissolved in tears. He stood for some moments absorbed in mute admiration, and unobserved by Mary, who was lost in her tears, till a sigh which escaped him, recalled her to reality; she raised her eyes, and beheld the object of her secret sorrows. She arose in confusion; the blush on her cheek betrayed her heart; she was retiring in haste from Alleyn, who remained at the entrance of the room the statue of despair, when she was intercepted by the Earl, who entered by the door she was opening; her eyes were red with weeping; he glanced on her a look of surprize and displeasure, and passed on to the gallery followed by Alleyn, who was now awakened from his trance. “From you Alleyn,” said the Earl, in a tone of displeasure, “I expected other conduct; on your word I relied, and your word has deceived me.” “Hear me, my Lord,” returned the youth, “your confidence I have never abused; hear me.” “I have now no time for parley,” replied Osbert, “my moments are precious; some future hour of leisure may suffice.” So

saying, he walked away, with an abrupt haughtiness, which touched the soul of Alleyn, who disdained to pursue him with further explanation. He was now completely wretched. The same accident which had unveiled to him the heart of Mary, and the full extent of that happiness which fate withheld, confirmed him in despair. The same accident had exposed the delicacy of her he loved to a cruel shock, and had subjected his honour to suspicion; and to a severe rebuke from him, by whom it was his pride to be respected, and for whose safety he had suffered imprisonment, and encountered death.

Mary had quitted the closet distressed and perplexed. She perceived the mistake of the Earl, and it shocked her. She wished to undeceive him; but he was gone to the castle of Dunbayne, to pay one of those visits which were soon to conclude in the nuptials, and whence he did not return till evening. The scene which he had witnessed in the morning, involved him in tumult of distress. He considered the mutual passion which filled the bosom of his sister and Alleyn; he had surprized them in a solitary apartment; he had observed the tender and melancholy air of Alleyn, and the tears and confusion of Mary; and he at first did not hesitate to believe that the interview had been appointed. In the heat of his displeasure he had rejected the explanation of Alleyn with a haughty resentment, which the late scene alone could have excited, and which the delusion it had occasioned alone could excuse. Cooler consideration however, brought to his mind the delicacy and the amiable pride of Mary, and the integrity of Alleyn; and he accused himself of a too hasty decision. The zealous services of Alleyn came to his heart; he repented that he had treated him so rigorously; and on his return enquired for him, that he might hear an explanation, and that he might soften the asperity of his former behaviour.

CHAPTER X I

ALLEYN was no where to be found. The Earl went himself in quest of him, but without success. As he returned from the terrace, chagrined and disappointed, he observed two persons cross the platform at some distance before him; and he could perceive by the dim moonlight which fell upon the spot, that they were not of the castle. He called to them: no answer was returned; but at the sound of his voice they quickened their pace and almost instantly disappeared in the darkness of the ramparts. Surprized at this phenomenon, the Earl followed with hasty steps, and endeavoured to pursue the way they had taken. He walked on silently, but there was no sound to direct his steps. When he came to the extremity of the rampart, which formed the North angle of the castle, he stopped to examine the spot, and to listen if any thing was stirring. No person was to be seen, and all was hushed. After he had stood some time surveying the rampart, he heard the low restrained voice of a person unknown, but the distance prevented his distinguishing the subject of the conversation. The voice seemed to approach the place where he stood. He drew his sword, and watched in silence their motions. They continued to advance, till, suddenly stopping, they turned, and took a long survey of the fabric. Their discourse was conducted in a low tone; but the Earl could discover by the vehemence of their gesture, and the caution of their steps, that they were upon some design dangerous to the peace of the castle. Having finished their examination, they turned again towards the place where the Earl still remained; the shade of a high turret concealed him from their view, and they continued to approach till they arrived within a short space of him, when they turned through a ruined archway of the castle, and were lost in the dark recesses of the pile. Astonished at what he had seen, Osbert hastened to the castle, whence he dispatched some of his people in search of the unknown fugitives; he accompanied some of his domestics to the spot where they had last disappeared. They entered the archway, which led to a decayed part of the castle; they followed over broken pavement the remains of a passage, which was closed by a low obscure door almost concealed from sight by the thick ivy which overshadowed it. On opening this door, they descended a flight of steps which led under the castle, so

extremely narrow and broken as to make the descent both difficult and dangerous. The powerful damps of long pent-up vapours extinguished their light, and the Earl and his attendants were compelled to remain in utter darkness, while one of them went round to the habitable part of the castle to relume the lamp. While they awaited in silence the return of light, a short breathing was distinctly heard at intervals, near the place where they stood. The servants shook with fear, and the Earl was not wholly unmoved. They remained entirely silent, listening its return, when a sound of footsteps slowly stealing through the vault, startled them. The Earl demanded who passed;–he was answered only by the deep echoes of his voice. They clashed their swords and had advanced, when the steps hastily retired before them. The Earl rushed forward, pursuing the sound, till overtaking the person who fled, he seized him; a short scuffle ensued; the strength of Osbert was too powerful for his antagonist, who was nearly overcome, when the point of a sword from an unknown hand pierced his side, he relinquished his grasp, and fell to the ground. His domestics, whom the activity of their master had outran, now came up; but the assassins, whoever they were, had accomplished their escape, for the sound of their steps was quickly lost in the distance of the vaults. They endeavored to raise the Earl, who lay speechless on the ground; but they knew not how to convey him from that place of horror, for they were yet in total darkness, and unacquainted with the place. In this situation, every moment of delay seemed an age. Some of them tried to find their way to the entrance, but their efforts were defeated by the darkness, and the ruinous situation of the place. The light at length appeared, and discovered the Earl insensible, and weltering in his blood. He was conveyed into the castle, where the horror of the Countess on seeing him borne into the hall, may be easily imagined. By the help of proper applications he was restored to life; his wound was examined, and found to be dangerous; he was carried to bed in a state which gave very faint hopes of recovery. The astonishment of the Countess, on hearing the adventure, was equalled only by her distress. All her conjectures concerning the designs, and the identity of the assassin, were vague and uncertain. She knew not on whom to fix the stigma; nor could discover any means by which to penetrate this mysterious affair. The people who had remained in the vaults to pursue the search, now returned to Matilda. Every recess of the castle, and every part

of the ramparts, had been explored, yet no one could be found; and the mystery of the proceeding was heightened by the manner in which the men had effected their escape.

Mary watched over her brother in silent anguish, yet she strove to conceal her distress, that she might encourage the Countess to hope. The Countess endeavoured to resign herself to the event with a kind of desperate fortitude. There is a certain point of misery, beyond which the mind becomes callous, and acquires a sort of artificial calm. Excess of misery may be said to blast the vital powers of feeling, and by a natural consequence consumes its own principle. Thus it was with Matilda; a long succession of trials had reduced her to a state of horrid tranquillity, which followed the first shock of the present event. It was not so with Laura; young in misfortune, and gay in hope, she saw happiness fade from her grasp, with a warmth of feeling untouched by the chill of disappointment. When the news of the Earl's situation reached her, she was overcome with affliction, and pined in silent anguish. The Count hastened to Osbert, but grief sat heavy at his heart, and he had no power to offer to others the comfort which he wanted himself.

A fever, which was the consequence of his wounds, added to the danger of the Earl, and to the despair of his family. During this period, Alleyn had not been seen at the castle; and his absence at this time, raised in Mary a variety of distressing apprehensions. Osbert enquired for him, and wished to see him. The servant who had been sent to his father's cottage, brought word that it was some days since he had been there, and that nobody knew whither he was gone. The surprize was universal; but the effect it produced was various and opposite. A collection of strange and concomitant circumstances, now forced a suspicion on the mind of the Countess, which her heart, and the remembrance of the former conduct of Alleyn, at once condemned. She had heard of what passed between the Earl and him in the gallery; his immediate absence, the event which followed, and his subsequent flight, formed a chain of evidence which compelled her, with the utmost reluctance, to believe him concerned in the affair which had once more involved her house in misery. Mary had too much confidence in her knowledge of his character, to admit a suspicion of this nature. She rejected, with instant disdain, the idea of uniting Alleyn with dishonour; and that he should be guilty of an action so base as the present, soared

beyond all the bounds of possibility. Yet she felt a strange solicitude concerning him, and apprehension for his safety tormented her incessantly. The anguish in which he had quitted the apartment, her brother's injurious treatment, and his consequent absence, all conspired to make her fear that despair had driven him to commit some act of violence on himself.

The Earl, in the delirium of the fever, raved continually of Laura and of Alleyn; they were the sole subjects of his ramblings. Seizing one day the hand of Mary, who sat mournfully by his bedside, and looking for some time pensively in her face, "weep not, my Laura," said he, "Malcolm, nor all the powers on earth shall tear you from me; his walls–his guards–what are they? I'll wrest you from his hold, or perish. I have a friend whose valour will do much for us;–a friend–O! name him not; these are strange times; beware of trusting. I could have given him my very life–but not–I will not name him." Then starting to the other side of the bed, and looking earnestly towards the door with an expression of sorrow not to be described, "not all the miseries which my worst enemy has heaped upon me; not all the horrors of imprisonment and death, have ever touched my soul with a sting so sharp as thy unfaithfulness." Mary was so much shocked by this scene, that she left the room and retired to her own apartment to indulge the agony of grief it occasioned.

The situation of the Earl grew daily more alarming; and the fever, which had not yet reached its crisis, kept the hopes and fears of his family suspended. In one of his lucid intervals, addressing himself to the Countess in the most pathetic manner, he requested, that as death might probably soon separate him for ever from her he most loved, he might see Laura once again before he died. She came, and weeping over him, a scene of anguish ensued too poignant for description. He gave her his last vows; she took of him a last look; and with a breaking heart tearing herself away, was carried to Dunbayne in a state of danger little inferior to his.

The agitation he had suffered during this interview, caused a return of phrenzy more violent than any fit he had yet suffered; exhausted by it, he at length sunk into a sleep, which continued without interruption for near four and twenty hours. During this time his repose was quiet and profound, and afforded the Countess and Mary, who watched him alternately, the consolations of hope. When he awoke he was perfectly sensible, and in a very altered state from that he had been in a few hours before. The crisis

of the disorder was now past, and from that time it rapidly declined till he was restored to perfect health.

The joy of Laura, whose health gradually returned with returning peace, and that of his family, was such as the merits of the Earl deserved. This joy, however, suffered a short interruption from the Count of Santmorin, who, entering one morning the apartment of the Baroness, with letters in his hand, came to acquaint her that he had just received news of the death of a distant relation, who had bequeathed him some estates of value, to which it was necessary he should immediately lay claim; and that he was, therefore, obliged, however reluctantly, to set off for Switzerland without delay. Though the Baroness rejoiced with all his friends, at his good fortune, she regretted, with them, the necessity of his abrupt departure. He took leave of them, and particularly of Mary, for whom his passion was still the same, with much emotion; and it was some time ere the space he had left in their society was filled up, and ere they resumed their wonted cheerfulness.

Preparations were now making for the approaching nuptials, and the day of their celebration was at length fixed. The ceremony was to be performed in a chapel belonging to the castle of Dunbayne, by the chaplain of the Baroness. Mary only was to attend as bride-maid; and the Countess also, with the Baroness, was to be present. The absence of the Count was universally regretted; for from his hand the Earl was to have received his bride. The office was now to be supplied by a neighbouring Laird, whom the family of the Baroness had long esteemed. At the earnest request of Laura, Mary consented to spend the night preceding the day of marriage, at the castle of Dunbayne. The day so long and so anxiously expected by the Earl at length arrived. The morning was extremely fine, and the joy which glowed in his heart seemed to give additional splendour to the scene around him. He set off, accompanied by the Countess, for the castle of Dunbayne. He anticipated the joy with which he should soon retrace the way he then travelled, with Laura by his side, whom death alone could then separate from him. On their arrival they were received by the Baroness, who enquired for Mary; and the Countess and Osbert were thrown into the utmost consternation, when they learned that she had not been seen at the castle. The nuptials were again deferred; the castle was a scene of universal confusion. The Earl returned home instantly to dispatch

his people in search of Mary. On enquiry, he learned that the servants who had attended her, had not been heard of since their departure with their lady. Still more alarmed by this intelligence he rode himself in pursuit, yet not knowing which course to take. Several days were employed in a fruitless search; no footstep of her flight could be traced.

CHAPTER XI I

MARY, in the mean time, suffered all the terror which her situation could excite. On her way to Dunbayne, she had been overtaken by a party of armed men, who seized her bridle, and after engaging her servants in a feigned resistance, carried her off senseless. On recovering, she found herself travelling through a forest, whose glooms were deepened by the shades of night. The moon, which was now up, glancing through the trees, served to shew the dreary aspect of the place, and the number of men who surrounded her; and she was seized with a terror that almost deprived her of reason. They travelled all night, during which a profound silence was observed. At the dawn of day she found herself on the skirts of a heath, to whose wide desolation her eye could discover no limits. Before they entered on the waste, they halted at the entrance of a cave, formed in a rock, which was overhung with pine and fir; where, spreading their breakfast on the grass, they offered refreshments to Mary, whose mind was too much distracted to suffer her to partake of them. She implored them in the most moving accents, to tell her from whom they came, and whither they were carrying her; but they were insensible to her tears and her entreaties, and she was compelled to await, in silent terror, the extremity of her fate. They pursued their journey over the wilds, and towards the close of day approached the ruins of an abbey, whose broken arches and lonely towers arose in gloomy grandeur through the obscurity of evening. It stood the solitary inhabitant of the waste,–a monument of mortality and of ancient superstition, and the frowning majesty of its aspect seemed to command silence and veneration. The chilly dews fell thick, and Mary, fatigued in body, and harassed in mind, lay almost expiring on her horse, when they stopped under an arch of the ruin. She was not so ill as to be insensible to the objects around her; the awful solitude of the place. and the solemn aspect of the fabric, whose effect was heightened by the falling glooms of evening, chilled her heart with horror; and when they took her from the horse, she shrieked in the agonies of a last despair. They bore her over loose stones to a part of the building, which had been formerly the cloisters of the abbey, but which was now fallen to decay, and overgrown with ivy. There was, however, at the extremity of these cloisters a nook,

which had withstood with hardier strength the ravages of time; the roof was here entire, and the shattered stanchions of the casements still remained. Hither they carried Mary, and laid her almost lifeless on the grassy pavement, while some of the ruffians hastened to light a fire of the heath and sticks they could pick up. They took out their provisions, and placed themselves round the fire, where they had not long been seated, when the sound of distant thunder foretold an approaching storm. A violent storm, accompanied with peals which shook the pile, came on. They were sheltered from the heaviness of the rain; but the long and vivid flashes of lightning which glanced through the casements, alarmed them all. The shrieks of Mary were loud and continued; and the fears of the ruffians did not prevent their uttering dreadful imprecations at her distress. One of them, in the fury of his resentment, swore she should be gagged; and seizing her resistless hands to execute the purpose, her cries redoubled. The servants who had betrayed her, were not yet so entirely lost to the feelings of humanity, as to stand regardless of her present distress; though they could not resist the temptations of a bribe, they were unwilling their lady should be loaded with unnecessary misery. They opposed the ruffians; a dispute ensued; and the violence of the contest arose so high, that they determined to fight for the decision. Amid the peals of thunder, the oaths and execrations of the combatants, added terror to the scene. The strength of the ruffians were superior to that of their opponents; and Mary; beholding victory deciding against herself, uttered a loud scream, when the attention of the whole party was surprized by the sound of a footstep in the cloister. Immediately after a man rushed into the place, and drawing his sword, demanded the cause of the tumult. Mary, who lay almost expiring on the ground, now raised her eyes; but what were her sensations, when she raised them to Alleyn–who now stood before her petrified with horror. Before he could fly to her assistance, the attacks of the ruffians obliged him to defend himself; he parried their blows for some time, but he must inevitably have yielded to the force of numbers, had not the trampling of feet, which fast approached, called off for a moment their attention. In an instant the place was filled with men. The astonishment of Alleyn was, if possible, now increased; for the Earl, followed by a party, now entered. The Earl, when he perceived Alleyn, stood at the entrance, aghast.–But resuming his firmness, he bade him defend himself. The loud

voice of Osbert recalled Mary, and observing their menacing attitudes, she collected just strength sufficient to throw herself between them. Alleyn dropped his sword, and raised her from the ground; when the Earl rudely pushed him away, and snatched her to his heart. “Hear me, Osbert,” was all she could say. “Declare who brought her hither,” said the Earl sternly to Alleyn. “I know not,” replied he, “you must ask those men whom your people have secured. If my life is hateful to you, strike! and spare me the anguish of defending it against the brother of Mary.” The Earl hesitated in surprize, and the generosity of Alleyn called a blush into his face. He was going to have replied, but was interrupted by some of his men, who had been engaged in a sharp contest with the ruffians, two of whom they had secured, and now brought to their lord; the rest were fled. In the person of one of them, the Earl discovered his own servant, who sinking in his presence with conscious guilt, fell on his knees imploring mercy. “Wretch,” said the Earl, seizing him, and holding his sword over his head, “declare by whose authority you have acted, and all you know of the affair;–remember your life depends on the truth of your assertions.” “I’ll tell the truth, my Lord,” replied the trembling wretch, “and nothing else as I hope for mercy. About three weeks ago,–no, it is not so much; about a fortnight ago, when I was sent on a message to the lady Malcolm, the Count de Santmorin’s gentleman–” “The Count de Santmorin!” re-echoed the whole company. “But proceed,” said Osbert. “The Count de Santmorin’s gentleman called me into a private room, where he told me to wait for his master, who would soon be there.” “Be quick,” said the Earl, “proceed to facts.” “I will, my lord; the Count came, and said to me, ‘Robert, I have observed you, and I think you can be faithful,’ he said so, my lord,–God forgive me!” “Well–well, proceed.” “Where was I?”–’Oh! he said, “I think you can be faithful.’”–”Good God! this is beyond endurance; you trifle, rascal, with my patience, to give your associates time for escape; be brief, or you die.” “I will, my lord, as I hope for life. He took from his pocket a handful of gold, which he gave me; –’can you be secret, Robert?’ said he,–’yes, my lord Count,’ said I, God forgive me!–’Then observe what I say to you. You often attend your young lady in her rides to Dunbayne.’”–”What, then it was the Count de Santmorin who commissioned you to undertake this scheme!” “Not me only, my lord.” “Answer my question; was the Count the author of this plot?” “He was, my

lord.” “And where is he?” said Osbert, in a stern voice. “I know not, as I am a living creature. He embarked, as you know, my lord, not far from the castle of Dunbayne, and we were travelling to a distant part of the coast to meet him, when we were all to have set sail for Switzerland.” “You cannot be ignorant of the place of your destination,” said the Earl, turning to the other prisoner; “where is your employer?” “That is not for me to tell,” said he, in a sullen tone. “Reveal the truth,” said the Earl, turning towards him the point of his sword, “or we will find a way to make you.” “The place where we were to meet the Count, had no name.” “You know the way to it.” “I do.” “Then lead me thither.” “Never!”–”Never! Your life shall answer the refusal,” said Osbert, pointing the sword to his breast. “Strike!” said the Count, throwing off the cloak which had concealed him; “strike! and rid me of a being which passion has made hateful to me;–strike!–and make the first moment of my entering this place, the last of my guilt.” A faint scream was uttered by Mary; the small remains of her strength forsook her, and she sunk on the pavement. The Earl started a few steps back, and stood suspended in wonder. The looks of the whole group defy description. “Take a sword,” said the Earl, recovering himself, “and defend your life.” “Never, my lord, never! Though I have been hurried by the force of passion to rob you of a sister, I will not aggravate my guilt by the murder of the brother. Your life has already been once endangered through my means, though not by my design; Heaven knows the anguish which that accident cost me. The impetuosity of passion impelled me onward with irresistible fury; it urged me to violate the sacred duties of gratitude, of friendship–and of humanity. To live in shame, and in the consciousness of guilt, is a living death. With your sword do justice to yourself and virtue; and spare me the misery of long comparing what I am, with what I was.” “Away, you trifle,” said the Earl, “defend yourself.” The Count repeated his refusal. “And you, villain,” said Osbert, turning to the man who had confessed the plot, “you pretended ignorance of the presence of the Count; your perfidy shall be rewarded.” “As I now plead for mercy, my lord, I knew not he was here.” “The fellow speaks truth,” said the Count, “he was ignorant of the place where he was to meet me. I was approaching this spot to discover myself to the dear object of my passion, when your people surprized and took me.” Mary confirmed the testimony of the Count, by declaring that she had not till that moment seen him since she

quitted the castle of Dunbayne. She pleaded for his life, and also for the servants, who had opposed the cruelty of their comrades. “I am no assassin,” said the Earl, “let the Count take a sword, and fight me on equal terms.”–”Shall virtue be reduced to an equality with vice?” said the Count, “No, my lord,–plunge your sword in my heart, and expiate my guilt.” The Earl still urged him to defence; and the Count still persisted in refusal. Touched by the recollection of past friendship, and grieved that a soul like the Count’s should ever be under the dominion of vice, Osbert threw down his sword, and, overcome with a sort of tenderness–”Go, my lord, your person is safe; and if it is necessary to your peace,–stretching forth his hand,–take my forgiveness.” The Count, overcome by his generosity, and by a sense of his own unworthiness, shrunk back: “Forbear, my lord, to wound by your goodness, a mind already too sensible of its own debasement; nor excite, by your generosity, a remorse too keen to be endured. Your reproaches I can bear,–your vengeance I solicit!–but your kindness inflicts a torture too exquisite for my soul.” “Never, my lord,” continued he, the big tear swelling in his eye, “never more shall your friendship be polluted by my unworthiness. Since you will not satisfy justice, by taking my life, I go to lose it in the obscurity of distant regions. Yet, ere I go, suffer me to make one last request to you, and to that dear lady whom I have thus injured, and on whom my eyes now gaze for the last time,–suffer me to hope that you will blot from your memory the existence of Santmorin.” He concluded the sentence with a groan, which vibrated upon the hearts of all present; and without waiting for a reply, hurried from the scene. The Earl had turned away his head in pity, and when he again looked round to reply, perceived that the Count was departed; he followed his steps through the cloister,–he called–but he was

Alleyn had observed the Count with a mixture of pity and admiration; and he sighed for the weakness of human nature. “How,” said the Earl, returning eagerly to Alleyn,–”how can I recompense you for my injurious suspicions, and my injurious treatment?–How can you forgive, or I forget, my injustice? But the mystery of this affair, and the doubtful appearance of circumstances, must speak for me.” “O! let us talk no more of this, my lord,” replied Alleyn; with emotion; “let us only rejoice at the safety of our dear lady, and offer her the comfort she is so much in want of.” The fire was rekindled, and the Earl’s servants laid before him some wine, and

other provisions. Mary, who had not tasted any food since she left the castle, now took some wine; it revived her, and enabled her to take other nourishment. She enquired, what happy circumstance had enabled the Earl to trace her route. “Ever since I discovered your flight,” said he, “I have been in pursuit of you. Chance directed me over these wilds, when I was driven by the storm to seek shelter among these ruins. The light, and an uproar of voices, drew me to the cloister, where, to my unutterable astonishment, I discovered you and Alleyn: Spare me the remembrance of what followed.” Mary wished to enquire what brought Alleyn to the place; but delicacy kept her silent. Osbert, however, whose anxiety for his sister had hitherto allowed him to attend only to her, now relieved her from the pain of lengthened suspense. “By what strange accident was you brought hither?” said he to Alleyn, “and what motive has induced you so long to absent yourself from the castle?” At the last question, Alleyn blushed, and an involuntary sigh escaped him. Mary understood the blush and the sigh, and awaited his reply in trembling emotion. “I fled, my lord, from your displeasure, and to tear myself from an object too dangerous, alas! for my peace. I sought to wear away in absence, a passion which must ever be hopeless, but which, I now perceive, is interwoven with my existence.–But forgive, my lord, the intrusion of a subject which is painful to us all. With some money, and a few provisions, I left my father’s cottage; and since that time have wandered over the country a forlorn and miserable being, passing my nights in the huts which chance threw in my way, and designing to travel onward, and to enlist myself in the service of my country. Night overtook me on these wastes, and as I walked on comfortless and bewildered, I was alarmed by distant cries of distress. I quickened my pace; but the sound which should have directed my steps was ceased, and chilling silence ensued. As I stood musing, and uncertain which course to take, I observed a feeble light break through the gloom; I endeavoured to follow its rays; it led me to these ruins, whose solemn appearance struck me with a momentary dread. A confused murmur of voices from within struck my ear; as I stood hesitating whether to enter, I again heard those shrieks which had alarmed me. I followed the sound; it led me to the entrance of this cloister, at the extremity of which I discovered a party of men engaged in fight; I drew my sword and rushed forward; and the sensations which I felt, on perceiving the lady Mary,

cannot be expressed!" "Still–still Heaven destines you the deliverer of Mary!" said the Earl, gratitude swelling in his eyes; "O! that I could remove that obstacle which withholds you from your just reward." A responsive sigh stole from Alleyn, and he remained silent. Never was the struggle of opposing feelings more violent, than that which now agitated the bosom of the Earl. The worth of Alleyn arose more conspicuously bright from every shade with which misfortune had veiled it. His noble and disinterested enthusiasm in the cause of justice, had attached him to the Earl, and had engaged him in a course of enterprizes and of dangers, which it required valour to undertake, and skill and perseverance to perform; and which had produced services for which no adequate reward could be found. He had rescued the Earl from captivity and death; and had twice preserved Mary in dangers. All these circumstances arose in strong reflection to the mind of Osbert; but the darkness of prejudice and ancient pride, opposed their influence, and weakened their effect.

The joy which Mary felt on seeing Alleyn in safety, and still worthy of the esteem she had ever bore him, was dashed by the bitterness of reflection; and reflection imparted a melancholy which added to the langour of illness. At the dawn of day they quitted the abbey, and set forward on their return to the castle; the Earl insisting upon Alleyn's accompanying them. On the way, the minds of the party were variously and silently engaged. The Earl ruminated on the conduct of Alleyn, and the late scene. Mary dwelt chiefly on the virtues of her lover, and on the dangers she had escaped; and Alleyn mused on his defeated purposes, and anticipated future trials. The Earl's thoughts, however, were not so wholly occupied, as to prevent his questioning the servant who had been employed by the Count, concerning the further particulars of his scheme. The words of the Count, importing that he had once already endangered his life, had not escaped the notice of the Earl; though they were uttered in a moment of too much distraction to suffer him to demand an explanation. He now enquired of the man, concerning the mysterious scene of the vaults. "You, I suppose, are not ignorant who were the persons from whom I received my wound." "I, my lord, had no concern in that affair; wicked as I am, I could not raise my hands against your life." "But you know who did." "I–I–ye–yes, my lord, I was afterwards told. But they did not mean to hurt your lordship." "Not mean to hurt me!–What then were their designs,

and who were the people?" "That accident happened long before the Count ever spoke to me of his purpose. Indeed, my lord, I had no hand in it; and Heaven knows how I grieved for your lordship; and–" "Well–well, inform me, who were the persons in the vaults, and what were their design." "I was told by a fellow servant; but he made me promise to be secret; but it is proper your lordship should know all; and I hope your lordship will forgive me for having listened to it,–'Robert,' said he, as we were talking one day of what had happened,–'Robert,' said he, 'there is more in this matter than you, or any body thinks; but it is not for me to tell all I know.' With that, I begged he would tell me what he knew; he still kept refusing. I promised him faithfully I would not tell; and so at last he told me–'Why, there is my lord Count there, he is in love with our young lady; and to be sure as sweet a lady she is, as ever eyes looked upon; but she don't like him; and so finding himself refused, he is determined to marry her at any rate; and means some night to get into the castle, and carry her off.'" "What, then!–was it the Count who wounded me?–Be quick in your relation." "No, my lord, it was not the Count himself–but two of his people, whom he had sent to examine the castle; and particularly the windows of my young lady's apartment, from whence he designed to have carried her, when every thing was ready for execution. Those men were let within the walls through a way under ground, which leads into the vaults, by my fellow servant, as I afterwards was told; and they escaped through the same way. Their meeting with your lordship was accidental, and they fought only in selfdefence; for they had no orders to attack any body." "And who is the villain that connived at this scheme!" "It was my fellow servant, who fled with the Count's people, whom he himself let within the ramparts. Forgive me, my lord; but I did not dare tell; he threatened my life, if I betrayed the secret."

After a journey of fatigue and unpleasant reflections, they arrived, on the second morning at the castle of Athlin. The Countess, during the absence of her son, had endured a state of dreadful suspense. The Baroness, in her friendship, had endeavoured to soothe her distress, by her constant presence; she was engaged in this amiable office when the trampling of horses in the court reached the ears of Matilda. "It is my son," said she, rising from her chair!–"it is my son; he brings me life or death!" She said no more, but rushed into the hall, and in a moment after

clasped her almost expiring daughter to her bosom. The transport of the scene repelled utterance; sobs and tears were all that could be given. The general joy, however, was suddenly interrupted by the Baroness, who had followed Matilda into the hall; and who now fell senseless to the ground; delight yielded to surprize, and to the business of assisting the object of it. On recovering, the Baroness looked wildly round her;–"Was it a vision that I saw, or a reality?" The whole company moved their eyes round the hall, but could discover nothing extraordinary. "It was himself; his very air, his features; that benign countenance which I have so often contemplated in imagination!" Her eyes still seemed in search of some ideal object; and they began to doubt whether a sudden phrenzy had not seized her brain. "Ah! again!" said she, and instantly relapsed. Their eyes were now turned towards the door, on which she had gazed; it was Alleyn who entered, with water which he had brought for the Countess, and on whom the attention of all present was centered. He approached ignorant of what had happened; and his surprize was great, when the Baroness, reviving, fixed her eyes mournfully upon him, and asked him to uncover his arm.–"It is,–it is my Philip!" said she, with strong emotion; "I have, indeed, found my long lost child; that strawberry on his arm confirms the decision. Send for the man who calls himself your father, and for my servant Patrick." The sensations of the mother and the son may be more easily conceived than described; those of Mary were little inferior to theirs; and the whole company awaited with trembling eagerness the arrival of the two persons whose testimony was to decide this interesting affair. They came. "This young man you call your son?" said the Baroness. "I do, an' please your ladyship," he replied, with a degree of confusion which belied his words. When Patrick came, his instant surprize on seeing the old man, declared the truth. "Do you know this person?" said the Baroness to Patrick. "Yes, my lady, I know him too well; it was to him I gave your infant son." The old man started with surprize–"Is that youth the son of your ladyship?" "Yes!" "Then God forgive me for having thus long detained him from you! but I was ignorant of his birth, and received him into my cottage as a foundling succoured by lord Malcolm's compassion." The whole company crowded round them. Alleyn fell at the feet of his mother, and bathed her hand with his tears.–"Gracious God; for what hast thou reserved me!" He could say no more. The Baroness raised him, and

again pressed him in transport to her heart. It was some time before either of them could speak; and all present were too much affected to interrupt the silence. At length, the Baroness presented Laura to her brother. “Such a mother! and have I such a sister!” said he. Laura wept silently upon his neck the joy of her heart. The Earl was the first who recovered composure sufficient to congratulate Alleyn; and embracing him–”O happy moment, when I can indeed embrace you as my brother!” The whole company now poured forth their joy and their congratulations;–all but Mary, whose emotions almost overcame her, and were too powerful for utterance.

The company now adjourned to the drawing-room; and Mary withdrew to take that repose she so much required. She was sufficiently recovered in a few hours to join her friends in the banquetting-room.

After the transports of the scene were subsided–”I have yet much to hope, and much to fear,” said Philip Malcolm, who was yet Alleyn in every thing but in name, “You madam,” addressing the Baroness,–”you will willingly become my advocate with her whom I have so long and so ardently loved.” “May I hope,” continued he, taking tenderly the hand of Mary, who stood trembling by,–”that you have not been insensible to my long attachment, and that you will confirm the happiness which is now offered me?” A smile of ineffable sweetness broke through the melancholy which had long clouded her features, and which even the present discovery had not been able entirely to dissipate, and her eye gave the consent which her tongue refused to utter.

The conversation, for the remainder of the day, was occupied by the subject of the discovery, and with a recital of Mary’s adventure. It was determined that on the morrow the marriage of the Earl should be concluded.

On this happy discovery, the Earl ordered the gates of the castle to be thrown open; mirth and festivity resounded through the walls, and the evening closed in universal rejoicings.

On the following morn, the chapel of the castle was decorated for the marriage of the Earl; who with Laura, came attended by Philip, now Baron Malcolm, by Mary, and the whole family. When they approached the altar, the Earl, addressing himself to his bride,–”Now, my Laura,” said he, “we may celebrate those nuptials which have twice been so painfully interrupted, and which are to crown me with felicity. This day shall unite

our families in a double marriage, and reward the worth of my friend. It is now seen, that those virtues which stimulated him to prosecute for another the cause of justice mysteriously urged him to the recovery of his rights. Virtue may for a time be pursued by misfortune,–and justice be obscured by the transient triumphs of vice,–but the power whose peculiar attributes they are, clears away the clouds of error, and even in this world reveals his THRONE OF JUSTICE."

The Earl stepped forward, and joining the hands of Philip and Mary,–"Surely," said he, "this is a moment of perfect happiness!–I can now reward those virtues which I have ever loved; and those services to which every gift must be inadequate, but this I now bestow."

FINIS

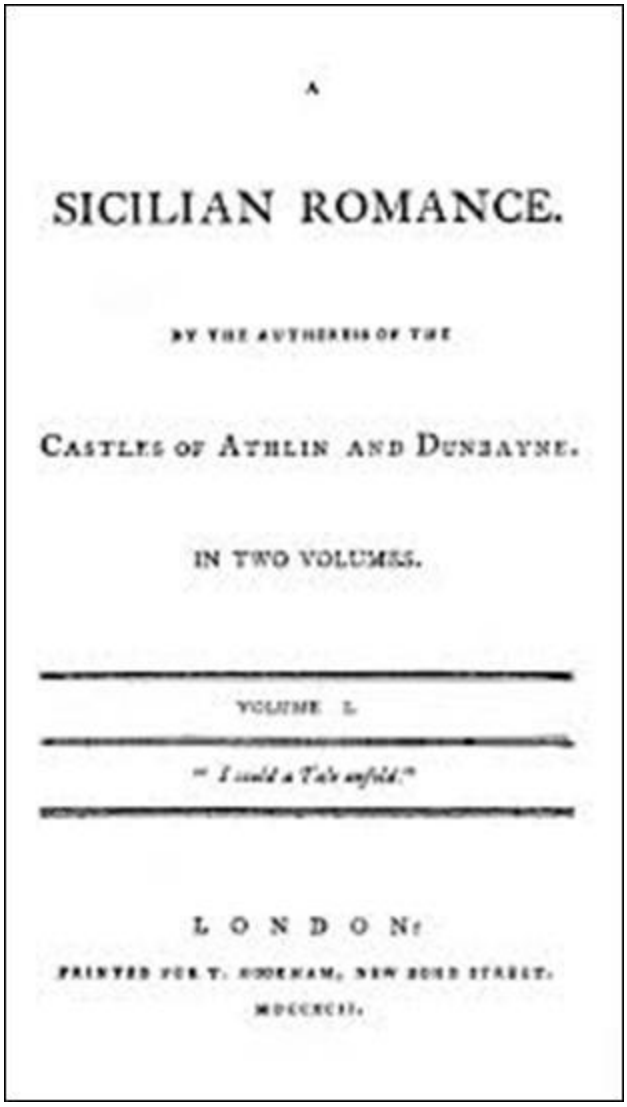
gone.

A SICILIAN ROMAN CE

Radcliffe's second novel was published anonymously in 1790, and like many Gothic tales, is set in a Southern European Catholic state with awe inspiring landscapes and corrupt aristocratic figures. At the time of writing, the criticism, or even vilification, of the aristocracy was very much a product of the middle-class nature of the novel reading public; the stories mirrored middle class morality. *A Sicilian Romance* conforms to other important characteristics of the Gothic genre, including being set in the past, secluded castles, haunted dungeons, elements of the supernatural, the threat of sexual violence, tyrannical paternal figures, female imprisonment, psychological terror and hidden secrets.

The plot centres on the Mazzini sisters Julia and Emilia; Julia the main character is a heroine of sensibility and of the Gothic tradition. She is beautiful, sensitive, refined and highly in tune and sympathetic to the beauty of the world. Emilia is the more reserved sister, who acts as a counterpoint to Julia's sensibility and livelier disposition and whose confinement within the castle interrupts Julia's narrative with the suggestion of the oppressive domestic sphere.

Radcliffe is famous for resolving the seemingly supernatural elements in her novels with rational explanations, but in *A Sicilian Romance* the reader is left with unanswered questions regarding Emilia's confinement, drawing the sense of the Gothic into the domestic. The central narrative revolves around Julia, who falls in love with Hippolitus, but is prevented from marrying him due to the wishes of her father and the villainous Duke de Luovo. She must attempt to escape a forced marriage which involves her spending time in an apparently haunted dungeon where secrets from the past emerge. The tangles of the plot unravel with revelations about family members and characters are suitably punished for any violent behaviour. However, like many Gothic tales it is possible to interpret the sinister, threatening and terrifying episodes as a reflection of the aggressive and oppressive patriarchal system of the contemporary period.



A

SICILIAN ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF THE

CASTLES OF ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

"I could a Tale unfold."

LONDON:

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The first edition's title page

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A Gothic convention - church ruin

On the northern shore of Sicily are still to be seen the magnificent remains of a castle, which formerly belonged to the noble house of Mazzini. It stands in the centre of a small bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on one side, slopes towards the sea, and on the other rises into an eminence crowned by dark woods. The situation is admirably beautiful and picturesque, and the ruins have an air of ancient grandeur, which, contrasted with the present solitude of the scene, impresses the traveller with awe and curiosity. During my travels abroad I visited this spot. As I walked over the loose fragments of stone, which lay scattered through the immense area of the fabrick, and surveyed the sublimity and grandeur of the ruins, I recurred, by a natural association of ideas, to the times when these walls stood proudly in their original splendour, when the halls were the scenes of hospitality and festive magnificence, and when they resounded with the voices of those whom death had long since swept from the earth. ‘Thus,’ said I, ‘shall the present generation — he who now sinks in misery — and he who now swims in pleasure, alike pass away and be forgotten.’ My heart swelled with the reflection; and, as I turned from the scene with a sigh, I fixed my eyes upon a friar, whose venerable figure, gently bending towards the earth, formed no uninteresting object in the picture. He observed my emotion; and, as my eye met his, shook his head and pointed to the ruin. ‘These walls,’ said he, ‘were once the seat of luxury and vice. They exhibited a singular instance of the retribution of Heaven, and were from that period forsaken, and abandoned to decay.’ His words excited my curiosity, and I enquired further concerning their meaning.

‘A solemn history belongs to this castle, said he, ‘which is too long and intricate for me to relate. It is, however, contained in a manuscript in our library, of which I could, perhaps, procure you a sight. A brother of our order, a descendant of the noble house of Mazzini, collected and recorded the most striking incidents relating to his family, and the history thus formed, he left as a legacy to our convent. If you please, we will walk thither.’

I accompanied him to the convent, and the friar introduced me to his superior, a man of an intelligent mind and benevolent heart, with whom I passed some hours in interesting conversation. I believe my sentiments pleased him; for, by his indulgence, I was permitted to take abstracts of

the history before me, which, with some further particulars obtained in conversation with the abate, I have arranged in the following pages.

CHAPTER I

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, this castle was in the possession of Ferdinand, fifth marquis of Mazzini, and was for some years the principal residence of his family. He was a man of a voluptuous and imperious character. To his first wife, he married Louisa Bernini, second daughter of the Count della Salario, a lady yet more distinguished for the sweetness of her manners and the gentleness of her disposition, than for her beauty. She brought the marquis one son and two daughters, who lost their amiable mother in early childhood. The arrogant and impetuous character of the marquis operated powerfully upon the mild and susceptible nature of his lady: and it was by many persons believed, that his unkindness and neglect put a period to her life. However this might be, he soon afterwards married Maria de Vellorno, a young lady eminently beautiful, but of a character very opposite to that of her predecessor. She was a woman of infinite art, devoted to pleasure, and of an unconquerable spirit. The marquis, whose heart was dead to paternal tenderness, and whose present lady was too volatile to attend to domestic concerns, committed the education of his daughters to the care of a lady, completely qualified for the undertaking, and who was distantly related to the late marchioness.

He quitted Mazzini soon after his second marriage, for the gaieties and splendour of Naples, whither his son accompanied him. Though naturally of a haughty and overbearing disposition, he was governed by his wife. His passions were vehement, and she had the address to bend them to her own purpose; and so well to conceal her influence, that he thought himself most independent when he was most enslaved. He paid an annual visit to the castle of Mazzini; but the marchioness seldom attended him, and he staid only to give such general directions concerning the education of his daughters, as his pride, rather than his affection, seemed to dictate.

Emilia, the elder, inherited much of her mother’s disposition. She had a mild and sweet temper, united with a clear and comprehensive mind. Her younger sister, Julia, was of a more lively cast. An extreme sensibility subjected her to frequent uneasiness; her temper was warm, but generous; she was quickly irritated, and quickly appeased; and to a reproof, however

gentle, she would often weep, but was never sullen. Her imagination was ardent, and her mind early exhibited symptoms of genius. It was the particular care of Madame de Menon to counteract those traits in the disposition of her young pupils, which appeared inimical to their future happiness; and for this task she had abilities which entitled her to hope for success. A series of early misfortunes had entendered her heart, without weakening the powers of her understanding. In retirement she had acquired tranquillity, and had almost lost the consciousness of those sorrows which yet threw a soft and not unpleasing shade over her character. She loved her young charge with maternal fondness, and their gradual improvement and respectful tenderness repaid all her anxiety. Madame excelled in music and drawing. She had often forgot her sorrows in these amusements, when her mind was too much occupied to derive consolation from books, and she was assiduous to impart to Emilia and Julia a power so valuable as that of beguiling the sense of affliction. Emilia's taste led her to drawing, and she soon made rapid advances in that art. Julia was uncommonly susceptible of the charms of harmony. She had feelings which trembled in unison to all its various and enchanting powers.

The instructions of madame she caught with astonishing quickness, and in a short time attained to a degree of excellence in her favorite study, which few persons have ever exceeded. Her manner was entirely her own. It was not in the rapid intricacies of execution, that she excelled so much in as in that delicacy of taste, and in those enchanting powers of expression, which seem to breathe a soul through the sound, and which take captive the heart of the hearer. The lute was her favorite instrument, and its tender notes accorded well with the sweet and melting tones of her voice.

The castle of Mazzini was a large irregular fabrick, and seemed suited to receive a numerous train of followers, such as, in those days, served the nobility, either in the splendour of peace, or the turbulence of war. Its present family inhabited only a small part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almost desolate from the spaciousness of the apartments, and the length of the galleries which led to them. A melancholy stillness reigned through the halls, and the silence of the courts, which were shaded by high turrets, was for many hours together

undisturbed by the sound of any footstep. Julia, who discovered an early taste for books, loved to retire in an evening to a small closet in which she had collected her favorite authors. This room formed the western angle of the castle: one of its windows looked upon the sea, beyond which was faintly seen, skirting the horizon, the dark rocky coast of Calabria; the other opened towards a part of the castle, and afforded a prospect of the neighbouring woods. Her musical instruments were here deposited, with whatever assisted her favorite amusements. This spot, which was at once elegant, pleasant, and retired, was embellished with many little ornaments of her own invention, and with some drawings executed by her sister. The cioset was adjoining her chamber, and was separated from the apartments of madame only by a short gallery. This gallery opened into another, long and winding, which led to the grand staircase, terminating in the north hall, with which the chief apartments of the north side of the edifice communicated.

Madame de Menon’s apartment opened into both galleries. It was in one of these rooms that she usually spent the mornings, occupied in the improvement of her young charge. The windows looked towards the sea, and the room was light and pleasant. It was their custom to dine in one of the lower apartments, and at table they were always joined by a dependant of the marquis’s, who had resided many years in the castle, and who instructed the young ladies in the Latin tongue, and in geography. During the fine evenings of summer, this little party frequently supped in a pavilion, which was built on an eminence in the woods belonging to the castle. From this spot the eye had an almost boundless range of sea and land. It commanded the straits of Messina, with the opposite shores of Calabria, and a great extent of the wild and picturesque scenery of Sicily. Mount Etna, crowned with eternal snows, and shooting from among the clouds, formed a grand and sublime picture in the background of the scene. The city of Palermo was also distinguishable; and Julia, as she gazed on its glittering spires; would endeavour in imagination to depicture its beauties, while she secretly sighed for a view of that world, from which she had hitherto been secluded by the mean jealousy of the marchioness, upon whose mind the dread of rival beauty operated strongly to the prejudice of Emilia and Julia. She employed all her influence over the marquis to detain them in retirement; and, though Emilia was now twenty,

and her sister eighteen, they had never passed the boundaries of their father's domains.

Vanity often produces unreasonable alarm; but the marchioness had in this instance just grounds for apprehension; the beauty of her lord's daughters has seldom been exceeded. The person of Emilia was finely proportioned. Her complexion was fair, her hair flaxen, and her dark blue eyes were full of sweet expression. Her manners were dignified and elegant, and in her air was a feminine softness, a tender timidity which irresistibly attracted the heart of the beholder. The figure of Julia was light and graceful — her step was airy — her mien animated, and her smile enchanting. Her eyes were dark, and full of fire, but tempered with modest sweetness. Her features were finely turned — every laughing grace played round her mouth, and her countenance quickly discovered all the various emotions of her soul. The dark auburn hair, which curled in beautiful profusion in her neck, gave a finishing charm to her appearance.

Thus lovely, and thus veiled in obscurity, were the daughters of the noble Mazzini. But they were happy, for they knew not enough of the world seriously to regret the want of its enjoyments, though Julia would sometimes sigh for the airy image which her fancies painted, and a painful curiosity would arise concerning the busy scenes from which she was excluded. A return to her customary amusements, however, would chase the ideal image from her mind, and restore her usual happy complacency. Books, music, and painting, divided the hours of her leisure, and many beautiful summer-evenings were spent in the pavilion, where the refined conversation of madame, the poetry of Tasso, the lute of Julia, and the friendship of Emilia, combined to form a species of happiness, such as elevated and highly susceptible minds are alone capable of receiving or communicating. Madame understood and practised all the graces of conversation, and her young pupils perceived its value, and caught the spirit of its character.

Conversation may be divided into two classes — the familiar and the sentimental. It is the province of the familiar, to diffuse cheerfulness and ease — to open the heart of man to man, and to beam a temperate sunshine upon the mind. — Nature and art must conspire to render us susceptible of the charms, and to qualify us for the practice of the second class of conversation, here termed sentimental, and in which Madame de Menon

particularly excelled. To good sense, lively feeling, and natural delicacy of taste, must be united an expansion of mind, and a refinement of thought, which is the result of high cultivation. To render this sort of conversation irresistibly attractive, a knowledge of the world is requisite, and that enchanting case, that elegance of manner, which is to be acquired only by frequenting the higher circles of polished life. In sentimental conversation, subjects interesting to the heart, and to the imagination, are brought forward; they are discussed in a kind of sportive way, with animation and refinement, and are never continued longer than politeness allows. Here fancy flourishes, — the sensibilities expand — and wit, guided by delicacy and embellished by taste — points to the heart.

Such was the conversation of Madame de Menon; and the pleasant gaiety of the pavilion seemed peculiarly to adapt it for the scene of social delights. On the evening of a very sultry day, having supped in their favorite spot, the coolness of the hour, and the beauty of the night, tempted this happy party to remain there later than usual. Returning home, they were surprised by the appearance of a light through the broken window-shutters of an apartment, belonging to a division of the castle which had for many years been shut up. They stopped to observe it, when it suddenly disappeared, and was seen no more. Madame de Menon, disturbed at this phaenomenon, hastened into the castle, with a view of enquiring into the cause of it, when she was met in the north hall by Vincent. She related to him what she had seen, and ordered an immediate search to be made for the keys of those apartments. She apprehended that some person had penetrated that part of the edifice with an intention of plunder; and, disdaining a paltry fear where her duty was concerned, she summoned the servants of the castle, with an intention of accompanying them thither. Vincent smiled at her apprehensions, and imputed what she had seen to an illusion, which the solemnity of the hour had impressed upon her fancy. Madame, however, persevered in her purpose; and, after along and repeated search, a massey key, covered with rust, was produced. She then proceeded to the southern side of the edifice, accompanied by Vincent, and followed by the servants, who were agitated with impatient wonder. The key was applied to an iron gate, which opened into a court that separated this division from the other parts of the castle. They entered this court, which was overgrown with grass and weeds, and ascended some steps that

led to a large door, which they vainly endeavoured to open. All the different keys of the castle were applied to the lock, without effect, and they were at length compelled to quit the place, without having either satisfied their curiosity, or quieted their fears. Everything, however, was still, and the light did not reappear. Madame concealed her apprehensions, and the family retired to rest.

This circumstance dwelt on the mind of Madame de Menon, and it was some time before she ventured again to spend an evening in the pavilion. After several months passed, without further disturbance or discovery, another occurrence renewed the alarm. Julia had one night remained in her closet later than usual. A favorite book had engaged her attention beyond the hour of customary repose, and every inhabitant of the castle, except herself, had long been lost in sleep. She was roused from her forgetfulness, by the sound of the castle clock, which struck one. Surprised at the lateness of the hour, she rose in haste, and was moving to her chamber, when the beauty of the night attracted her to the window. She opened it; and observing a fine effect of moonlight upon the dark woods, leaned forwards. In that situation she had not long remained, when she perceived a light faintly flash through a casement in the uninhabited part of the castle. A sudden tremor seized her, and she with difficulty supported herself. In a few moments it disappeared, and soon after a figure, bearing a lamp, proceeded from an obscure door belonging to the south tower; and stealing along the outside of the castle walls, turned round the southern angle, by which it was afterwards hid from the view. Astonished and terrified at what she had seen, she hurried to the apartment of Madame de Menon, and related the circumstance. The servants were immediately roused, and the alarm became general. Madame arose and descended into the north hall, where the domestics were already assembled. No one could be found of courage sufficient to enter into the courts; and the orders of madame were disregarded, when opposed to the effects of superstitious terror. She perceived that Vincent was absent, but as she was ordering him to be called, he entered the hall. Surprised to find the family thus assembled, he was told the occasion. He immediately ordered a party of the servants to attend him round the castle walls; and with some reluctance, and more fear, they obeyed him. They all returned to the hall, without having witnessed any extraordinary appearance; but though their

fears were not confirmed, they were by no means dissipated. The appearance of a light in a part of the castle which had for several years been shut up, and to which time and circumstance had given an air of singular desolation, might reasonably be supposed to excite a strong degree of surprise and terror. In the minds of the vulgar, any species of the wonderful is received with avidity; and the servants did not hesitate in believing the southern division of the castle to be inhabited by a supernatural power. Too much agitated to sleep, they agreed to watch for the remainder of the night. For this purpose they arranged themselves in the east gallery, where they had a view of the south tower from which the light had issued. The night, however, passed without any further disturbance; and the morning dawn, which they beheld with inexpressible pleasure, dissipated for a while the glooms of apprehension. But the return of evening renewed the general fear, and for several successive nights the domestics watched the southern tower. Although nothing remarkable was seen, a report was soon raised, and believed, that the southern side of the castle was haunted. Madame de Menon, whose mind was superior to the effects of superstition, was yet disturbed and perplexed, and she determined, if the light reappeared, to inform the marquis of the circumstance, and request the keys of those apartments.

The marquis, immersed in the dissipations of Naples, seldom remembered the castle, or its inhabitants. His son, who had been educated under his immediate care, was the sole object of his pride, as the marchioness was that of his affection. He loved her with romantic fondness, which she repaid with seeming tenderness, and secret perfidy. She allowed herself a free indulgence in the most licentious pleasures, yet conducted herself with an art so exquisite as to elude discovery, and even suspicion. In her amours she was equally inconstant as ardent, till the young Count Hippolitus de Vereza attracted her attention. The natural fickleness of her disposition seemed then to cease, and upon him she centered all her desires.

The count Vereza lost his father in early childhood. He was now of age, and had just entered upon the possession of his estates. His person was graceful, yet manly; his mind accomplished, and his manners elegant; his countenance expressed a happy union of spirit, dignity, and benevolence, which formed the principal traits of his character. He had a sublimity of

thought, which taught him to despise the voluptuous vices of the Neapolitans, and led him to higher pursuits. He was the chosen and early friend of young Ferdinand, the son of the marquis, and was a frequent visitor in the family. When the marchioness first saw him, she treated him with great distinction, and at length made such advances, as neither the honor nor the inclinations of the count permitted him to notice. He conducted himself toward her with frigid indifference, which served only to inflame the passion it was meant to chill. The favors of the marchioness had hitherto been sought with avidity, and accepted with rapture; and the repulsive insensibility which she now experienced, roused all her pride, and called into action every refinement of coquetry.

It was about this period that Vincent was seized with a disorder which increased so rapidly, as in a short time to assume the most alarming appearance. Despairing of life, he desired that a messenger might be dispatched to inform the marquis of his situation, and to signify his earnest wish to see him before he died. The progress of his disorder defied every art of medicine, and his visible distress of mind seemed to accelerate his fate. Perceiving his last hour approaching, he requested to have a confessor. The confessor was shut up with him a considerable time, and he had already received extreme unction, when Madame de Menon was summoned to his bedside. The hand of death was now upon him, cold damps hung upon his brows, and he, with difficulty, raised his heavy eyes to madame as she entered the apartment. He beckoned her towards him, and desiring that no person might be permitted to enter the room, was for a few moments silent. His mind appeared to labour under oppressive remembrances; he made several attempts to speak, but either resolution or strength failed him. At length, giving madame a look of unutterable anguish, ‘Alas, madam,’ said he, ‘Heaven grants not the prayer of such a wretch as I am. I must expire long before the marquis can arrive. Since I shall see him no more, I would impart to you a secret which lies heavy at my heart, and which makes my last moments dreadful, as they are without hope.’ ‘Be comforted,’ said madame, who was affected by the energy of his manner, ‘we are taught to believe that forgiveness is never denied to sincere repentance.’ ‘You, madam, are ignorant of the enormity of my crime, and of the secret — the horrid secret which labours at my breast. My guilt is beyond remedy in this world, and I fear will be without pardon

in the next; I therefore hope little from confession even to a priest. Yet some good it is still in my power to do; let me disclose to you that secret which is so mysteriously connected with the southern apartments of this castle.'— 'What of them!' exclaimed madame, with impatience. Vincent returned no answer; exhausted by the effort of speaking, he had fainted. Madame rung for assistance, and by proper applications, his senses were recalled. He was, however, entirely speechless, and in this state he remained till he expired, which was about an hour after he had conversed with madame.

The perplexity and astonishment of madame, were by the late scene heightened to a very painful degree. She recollected the various particulars relative to the southern division of the castle, the many years it had stood uninhabited — the silence which had been observed concerning it — the appearance of the light and the figure — the fruitless search for the keys, and the reports so generally believed; and thus remembrance presented her with a combination of circumstances, which served only to increase her wonder, and heighten her curiosity. A veil of mystery enveloped that part of the castle, which it now seemed impossible should ever be penetrated, since the only person who could have removed it, was no more.

The marquis arrived on the day after that on which Vincent had expired. He came attended by servants only, and alighted at the gates of the castle with an air of impatience, and a countenance expressive of strong emotion. Madame, with the young ladies, received him in the hall. He hastily saluted his daughters, and passed on to the oak parlour, desiring madame to follow him. She obeyed, and the marquis enquired with great agitation after Vincent. When told of his death, he paced the room with hurried steps, and was for some time silent. At length seating himself, and surveying madame with a scrutinizing eye, he asked some questions concerning the particulars of Vincent's death. She mentioned his earnest desire to see the marquis, and repeated his last words. The marquis remained silent, and madame proceeded to mention those circumstances relative to the southern division of the castle, which she thought it of so much importance to discover. He treated the affair very lightly, laughed at her conjectures, represented the appearances she described as the illusions of a weak and timid mind, and broke up the conversation, by going to visit the chamber of Vincent, in which he remained a considerable time.

On the following day Emilia and Julia dined with the marquis. He was gloomy and silent; their efforts to amuse him seemed to excite displeasure rather than kindness; and when the repast was concluded, he withdrew to his own apartment, leaving his daughters in a state of sorrow and surprise.

Vincent was to be interred, according to his own desire, in the church belonging to the convent of St Nicholas. One of the servants, after receiving some necessary orders concerning the funeral, ventured to inform the marquis of the appearance of the lights in the south tower. He mentioned the superstitious reports that prevailed amongst the household, and complained that the servants would not cross the courts after it was dark. ‘And who is he that has commissioned you with this story?’ said the marquis, in a tone of displeasure; ‘are the weak and ridiculous fancies of women and servants to be obtruded upon my notice? Away — appear no more before me, till you have learned to speak what it is proper for me to hear.’ Robert withdrew abashed, and it was some time before any person ventured to renew the subject with the marquis.

The majority of young Ferdinand now drew near, and the marquis determined to celebrate the occasion with festive magnificence at the castle of Mazzini. He, therefore, summoned the marchioness and his son from Naples, and very splendid preparations were ordered to be made. Emilia and Julia dreaded the arrival of the marchioness, whose influence they had long been sensible of, and from whose presence they anticipated a painful restraint. Beneath the gentle guidance of Madame de Menon, their hours had passed in happy tranquillity, for they were ignorant alike of the sorrows and the pleasures of the world. Those did not oppress, and these did not inflame them. Engaged in the pursuits of knowledge, and in the attainment of elegant accomplishments, their moments flew lightly away, and the flight of time was marked only by improvement. In madame was united the tenderness of the mother, with the sympathy of a friend; and they loved her with a warm and inviolable affection.

The purposed visit of their brother, whom they had not seen for several years, gave them great pleasure. Although their minds retained no very distinct remembrance of him, they looked forward with eager and delightful expectation to his virtues and his talents; and hoped to find in his company, a consolation for the uneasiness which the presence of the marchioness would excite. Neither did Julia contemplate with indifference

the approaching festival. A new scene was now opening to her, which her young imagination painted in the warm and glowing colours of delight. The near approach of pleasure frequently awakens the heart to emotions, which would fail to be excited by a more remote and abstracted observance. Julia, who, in the distance, had considered the splendid gaieties of life with tranquillity, now lingered with impatient hope through the moments which withheld her from their enjoyments. Emilia, whose feelings were less lively, and whose imagination was less powerful, beheld the approaching festival with calm consideration, and almost regretted the interruption of those tranquil pleasures, which she knew to be more congenial with her powers and disposition.

In a few days the marchioness arrived at the castle. She was followed by a numerous retinue, and accompanied by Ferdinand, and several of the Italian noblesse, whom pleasure attracted to her train. Her entrance was proclaimed by the sound of music, and those gates which had long rusted on their hinges, were thrown open to receive her. The courts and halls, whose aspect so lately expressed only gloom and desolation, now shone with sudden splendour, and echoed the sounds of gaiety and gladness. Julia surveyed the scene from an obscure window; and as the triumphal strains filled the air, her breast throbbed; her heart beat quick with joy, and she lost her apprehensions from the marchioness in a sort of wild delight hitherto unknown to her. The arrival of the marchioness seemed indeed the signal of universal and unlimited pleasure. When the marquis came out to receive her, the gloom that lately clouded his countenance, broke away in smiles of welcome, which the whole company appeared to consider as invitations to joy.

The tranquil heart of Emilia was not proof against a scene so alluring, and she sighed at the prospect, yet scarcely knew why. Julia pointed out to her sister, the graceful figure of a young man who followed the marchioness, and she expressed her wishes that he might be her brother. From the contemplation of the scene before them, they were summoned to meet the marchioness. Julia trembled with apprehension, and for a few moments wished the castle was in its former state. As they advanced through the saloon, in which they were presented, Julia was covered with blushes; but Emilia, tho’ equally timid, preserved her graceful dignity. The marchioness received them with a mingled smile of condescension and

politeness, and immediately the whole attention of the company was attracted by their elegance and beauty. The eager eyes of Julia sought in vain to discover her brother, of whose features she had no recollection in those of any of the persons then present. At length her father presented him, and she perceived, with a sigh of regret, that he was not the youth she had observed from the window. He advanced with a very engaging air, and she met him with an unfeigned welcome. His figure was tall and majestic; he had a very noble and spirited carriage; and his countenance expressed at once sweetness and dignity. Supper was served in the east hall, and the tables were spread with a profusion of delicacies. A band of music played during the repast, and the evening concluded with a concert in the saloon.

CHAPTER I I

The day of the festival, so long and so impatiently looked for by Julia, was now arrived. All the neighbouring nobility were invited, and the gates of the castle were thrown open for a general rejoicing. A magnificent entertainment, consisting of the most luxurious and expensive dishes, was served in the halls. Soft music floated along the vaulted roofs, the walls were hung with decorations, and it seemed as if the hand of a magician had suddenly metamorphosed this once gloomy fabric into the palace of a fairy. The marquis, notwithstanding the gaiety of the scene, frequently appeared abstracted from its enjoyments, and in spite of all his efforts at cheerfulness, the melancholy of his heart was visible in his countenance.

In the evening there was a grand ball: the marchioness, who was still distinguished for her beauty, and for the winning elegance of her manners, appeared in the most splendid attire. Her hair was ornamented with a profusion of jewels, but was so disposed as to give an air rather of voluptuousness than of grace, to her figure. Although conscious of her charms, she beheld the beauty of Emilia and Julia with a jealous eye, and was compelled secretly to acknowledge, that the simple elegance with which they were adorned, was more enchanting than all the studied artifice of splendid decoration. They were dressed alike in light Sicilian habits, and the beautiful luxuriance of their flowing hair was restrained only by bandellets of pearl. The ball was opened by Ferdinand and the lady Matilda Constanza. Emilia danced with the young Marquis della Fazelli, and acquitted herself with the ease and dignity so natural to her. Julia experienced a various emotion of pleasure and fear when the Count de Vereza, in whom she recollected the cavalier she had observed from the window, led her forth. The grace of her step, and the elegant symmetry of her figure, raised in the assembly a gentle murmur of applause, and the soft blush which now stole over her cheek, gave an additional charm to her appearance. But when the music changed, and she danced to the soft Sicilian measure, the airy grace of her movement, and the unaffected tenderness of her air, sunk attention into silence, which continued for some time after the dance had ceased. The marchioness observed the general admiration with seeming pleasure, and secret uneasiness. She had suffered

a very painful solicitude, when the Count de Vereza selected her for his partner in the dance, and she pursued him through the evening with an eye of jealous scrutiny. Her bosom, which before glowed only with love, was now torn by the agitation of other passions more violent and destructive. Her thoughts were restless, her mind wandered from the scene before her, and it required all her address to preserve an apparent ease. She saw, or fancied she saw, an impassioned air in the count, when he addressed himself to Julia, that corroded her heart with jealous fury.

At twelve the gates of the castle were thrown open, and the company quitted it for the woods, which were splendidly illuminated. Arcades of light lined the long vistas, which were terminated by pyramids of lamps that presented to the eye one bright column of flame. At irregular distances buildings were erected, hung with variegated lamps, disposed in the gayest and most fantastic forms. Collations were spread under the trees; and music, touched by unseen hands, breathed around. The musicians were placed in the most obscure and embowered spots, so as to elude the eye and strike the imagination. The scene appeared enchanting. Nothing met the eye but beauty and romantic splendour; the ear received no sounds but those of mirth and melody. The younger part of the company formed themselves into groups, which at intervals glanced through the woods, and were again unseen. Julia seemed the magic queen of the place. Her heart dilated with pleasure, and diffused over her features an expression of pure and complacent delight. A generous, frank, and exalted sentiment sparkled in her eyes, and animated her manner. Her bosom glowed with benevolent affections; and she seemed anxious to impart to all around her, a happiness as unmixed as that she experienced. Wherever she moved, admiration followed her steps. Ferdinand was as gay as the scene around him. Emilia was pleased; and the marquis seemed to have left his melancholy in the castle. The marchioness alone was wretched. She supped with a select party, in a pavilion on the seashore, which was fitted up with peculiar elegance. It was hung with white silk, drawn up in festoons, and richly fringed with gold. The sofas were of the same materials, and alternate wreaths of lamps and of roses entwined the columns. A row of small lamps placed about the cornice, formed an edge of light round the roof which, with the other numerous lights, was reflected in a blaze of splendour from the large mirrors that adorned the

room. The Count Muriani was of the party; — he complimented the marchioness on the beauty of her daughters; and after lamenting with gaiety the captives which their charms would enthral, he mentioned the Count de Vereza. ‘He is certainly of all others the man most deserving the lady Julia. As they danced, I thought they exhibited a perfect model of the beauty of either sex; and if I mistake not, they are inspired with a mutual admiration.’ The marchioness, endeavouring to conceal her uneasiness, said, ‘Yes, my lord, I allow the count all the merit you adjudge him, but from the little I have seen of his disposition, he is too volatile for a serious attachment.’ At that instant the count entered the pavilion: ‘Ah,’ said Muriani, laughingly, ‘you was the subject of our conversation, and seem to be come in good time to receive the honors allotted you. I was interceding with the marchioness for her interest in your favor, with the lady Julia; but she absolutely refuses it; and though she allows you merit, alleges, that you are by nature fickle and inconstant. What say you — would not the beauty of lady Julia bind your unsteady heart?’.

‘I know not how I have deserved that character of the marchioness,’ said the count with a smile, ‘but that heart must be either fickle or insensible in an uncommon degree, which can boast of freedom in the presence of lady Julia.’ The marchioness, mortified by the whole conversation, now felt the full force of Vereza’s reply, which she imagined he pointed with particular emphasis.

The entertainment concluded with a grand firework, which was exhibited on the margin of the sea, and the company did not part till the dawn of morning. Julia retired from the scene with regret. She was enchanted with the new world that was now exhibited to her, and she was not cool enough to distinguish the vivid glow of imagination from the colours of real bliss. The pleasure she now felt she believed would always be renewed, and in an equal degree, by the objects which first excited it. The weakness of humanity is never willingly perceived by young minds. It is painful to know, that we are operated upon by objects whose impressions are variable as they are indefinable — and that what yesterday affected us strongly, is to-day but imperfectly felt, and tomorrow perhaps shall be disregarded. When at length this unwelcome truth is received into the mind, we at first reject, with disgust, every appearance of good, we disdain to partake of a happiness which we cannot always command, and

we not unfrequently sink into a temporary despair. Wisdom or accident, at length, recal us from our error, and offers to us some object capable of producing a pleasing, yet lasting effect, which effect, therefore, we call happiness. Happiness has this essential difference from what is commonly called pleasure, that virtue forms its basis, and virtue being the offspring of reason, may be expected to produce uniformity of effect.

The passions which had hitherto lain concealed in Julia's heart, touched by circumstance, dilated to its power, and afforded her a slight experience of the pain and delight which flow from their influence. The beauty and accomplishments of Vereza raised in her a new and various emotion, which reflection made her fear to encourage, but which was too pleasing to be wholly resisted. Tremblingly alive to a sense of delight, and unchilled by disappointment, the young heart welcomes every feeling, not simply painful, with a romantic expectation that it will expand into bliss.

Julia sought with eager anxiety to discover the sentiments of Vereza towards her; she revolved each circumstance of the day, but they afforded her little satisfaction; they reflected only a glimmering and uncertain light, which instead of guiding, served only to perplex her. Now she remembered some instance of particular attention, and then some mark of apparent indifference. She compared his conduct with that of the other young noblesse; and thought each appeared equally desirous of the favor of every lady present. All the ladies, however, appeared to her to court the admiration of Vereza, and she trembled lest he should be too sensible of the distinction. She drew from these reflections no positive inference; and though distrust rendered pain the predominate sensation, it was so exquisitely interwoven with delight, that she could not wish it exchanged for her former ease. Thoughtful and restless, sleep fled from her eyes, and she longed with impatience for the morning, which should again present Vereza, and enable her to pursue the enquiry. She rose early, and adorned herself with unusual care. In her favorite closet she awaited the hour of breakfast, and endeavoured to read, but her thoughts wandered from the subject. Her lute and favorite airs lost half their power to please; the day seemed to stand still — she became melancholy, and thought the breakfast-hour would never arrive. At length the clock struck the signal, the sound vibrated on every nerve, and trembling she quitted the closet for her sister's apartment. Love taught her disguise. Till then Emilia had

shared all her thoughts; they now descended to the breakfast-room in silence, and Julia almost feared to meet her eye. In the breakfast-room they were alone. Julia found it impossible to support a conversation with Emilia, whose observations interrupting the course of her thoughts, became uninteresting and tiresome. She was therefore about to retire to her closet, when the marquis entered. His air was haughty, and his look severe. He coldly saluted his daughters, and they had scarcely time to reply to his general enquiries, when the marchioness entered, and the company soon after assembled. Julia, who had awaited with so painful an impatience for the moment which should present Vereza to her sight, now sighed that it was arrived. She scarcely dared to lift her timid eyes from the ground, and when by accident they met his, a soft tremour seized her; and apprehension lest he should discover her sentiments, served only to render her confusion conspicuous. At length, a glance from the marchioness recalled her bewildered thoughts; and other fears superseding those of love, her mind, by degrees, recovered its dignity. She could distinguish in the behaviour of Vereza no symptoms of particular admiration, and she resolved to conduct herself towards him with the most scrupulous care.

This day, like the preceding one, was devoted to joy. In the evening there was a concert, which was chiefly performed by the nobility. Ferdinand played the violoncello, Vereza the German flute, and Julia the piana-forte, which she touched with a delicacy and execution that engaged every auditor. The confusion of Julia may be easily imagined, when Ferdinand, selecting a beautiful duet, desired Vereza would accompany his sister. The pride of conscious excellence, however, quickly overcame her timidity, and enabled her to exert all her powers. The air was simple and pathetic, and she gave it those charms of expression so peculiarly her own. She struck the chords of her piana-forte in beautiful accompaniment, and towards the close of the second stanza, her voice resting on one note, swelled into a tone so exquisite, and from thence descended to a few simple notes, which she touched with such impassioned tenderness that every eye wept to the sounds. The breath of the flute trembled, and Hippolitus entranced, forgot to play. A pause of silence ensued at the conclusion of the piece, and continued till a general sigh seemed to awaken the audience from their enchantment. Amid the general applause,

Hippolitus was silent. Julia observed his behaviour, and gently raising her eyes to his, there read the sentiments which she had inspired. An exquisite emotion thrilled her heart, and she experienced one of those rare moments which illuminate life with a ray of bliss, by which the darkness of its general shade is contrasted. Care, doubt, every disagreeable sensation vanished, and for the remainder of the evening she was conscious only of delight. A timid respect marked the manner of Hippolitus, more flattering to Julia than the most ardent professions. The evening concluded with a ball, and Julia was again the partner of the count.

When the ball broke up, she retired to her apartment, but not to sleep. Joy is as restless as anxiety or sorrow. She seemed to have entered upon a new state of existence; — those fine springs of affection which had hitherto lain concealed, were now touched, and yielded to her a happiness more exalted than any her imagination had ever painted. She reflected on the tranquillity of her past life, and comparing it with the emotions of the present hour, exulted in the difference. All her former pleasures now appeared insipid; she wondered that they ever had power to affect her, and that she had endured with content the dull uniformity to which she had been condemned. It was now only that she appeared to live. Absorbed in the single idea of being beloved, her imagination soared into the regions of romantic bliss, and bore her high above the possibility of evil. Since she was beloved by Hippolitus, she could only be happy.

SONNET

Still is the night-breeze! — not a lonely sound
Steals through the silence of this dreary hour;
O’er these high battlements Sleep reigns profound,
And sheds on all, his sweet oblivious power.
On all but me — I vainly ask his dews
To steep in short forgetfulness my cares.
Th’ affrighted god still flies when Love pursues,
Still — still denies the wretched lover’s prayers.

An interval of silence followed, and the air was repeated; after which the music was heard no more. If before Julia believed that she was loved by Hippolitus, she was now confirmed in the sweet reality. But sleep at length fell upon her senses, and the airy forms of ideal bliss no longer fleeted before her imagination. Morning came, and she arose light and refreshed. How different were her present sensations from those of the preceding day. Her anxiety had now evaporated in joy, and she experienced that airy dance of spirits which accumulates delight from every object; and with a power like the touch of enchantment, can transform a gloomy desert into a smiling Eden. She flew to the breakfast-room, scarcely conscious of motion; but, as she entered it, a soft confusion overcame her; she blushed, and almost feared to meet the eyes of Vereza. She was presently relieved, however, for the Count was not there. The company assembled — Julia watched the entrance of every person with painful anxiety, but he for whom she looked did not appear. Surprised and uneasy, she fixed her eyes on the door, and whenever it opened, her heart beat with an expectation which was as often checked by disappointment. In spite of all her efforts, her vivacity sunk into languor, and she then perceived that love may produce other sensations than those of delight. She found it possible to be unhappy, though loved by Hippolitus; and acknowledged with a sigh of regret, which was yet new to her, how tremblingly her peace depended upon him. He neither appeared nor was mentioned at breakfast; but though delicacy prevented her enquiring after him, conversation soon became

irksome to her, and she retired to the apartment of Madame de Menon. There she employed herself in painting, and endeavoured to beguile the time till the hour of dinner, when she hoped to see Hippolitus. Madame was, as usual, friendly and cheerful, but she perceived a reserve in the conduct of Julia, and penetrated without difficulty into its cause. She was, however, ignorant of the object of her pupil's admiration. The hour so eagerly desired by Julia at length arrived, and with a palpitating heart she entered the hall. The Count was not there, and in the course of conversation, she learned that he had that morning sailed for Naples. The scene which so lately appeared enchanting to her eyes, now changed its hue; and in the midst of society, and surrounded by gaiety, she was solitary and dejected. She accused herself of having suffered her wishes to mislead her judgment; and the present conduct of Hippolitus convinced her, that she had mistaken admiration for a sentiment more tender. She believed, too, that the musician who had addressed her in his sonnet, was not the Count; and thus at once was dissolved all the ideal fabric of her happiness. How short a period often reverses the character of our sentiments, rendering that which yesterday we despised, to-day desirable. The tranquil state which she had so lately delighted to quit, she now reflected upon with regret. She had, however, the consolation of believing that her sentiments towards the Count were unknown, and the sweet consciousness that her conduct had been governed by a nice sense of propriety.

The public rejoicings at the castle closed with the week; but the gay spirit of the marchioness forbade a return to tranquillity; and she substituted diversions more private, but in splendour scarcely inferior to the preceding ones. She had observed the behaviour of Hippolitus on the night of the concert with chagrin, and his departure with sorrow; yet, disdaining to perpetuate misfortune by reflection, she sought to lose the sense of disappointment in the hurry of dissipation. But her efforts to erase him from her remembrance were ineffectual. Unaccustomed to oppose the bent of her inclinations, they now maintained unbounded sway; and she found too late, that in order to have a due command of our passions, it is necessary to subject them to early obedience. Passion, in its undue influence, produces weakness as well as injustice. The pain which now recoiled upon her heart from disappointment, she had not strength of mind to endure, and she sought relief from its pressure in afflicting the innocent.

Julia, whose beauty she imagined had captivated the count, and confirmed him in indifference towards herself, she incessantly tormented by the exercise of those various and splenetic little arts which elude the eye of the common observer, and are only to be known by those who have felt them. Arts, which individually are inconsiderable, but in the aggregate amount to a cruel and decisive effect.

From Julia's mind the idea of happiness was now faded. Pleasure had withdrawn her beam from the prospect, and the objects no longer illumined by her ray, became dark and colourless. As often as her situation would permit, she withdrew from society, and sought the freedom of solitude, where she could indulge in melancholy thoughts, and give a loose to that despair which is so apt to follow the disappointment of our first hopes.

Week after week elapsed, yet no mention was made of returning to Naples. The marquis at length declared it his intention to spend the remainder of the summer in the castle. To this determination the marchioness submitted with decent resignation, for she was here surrounded by a croud of flatterers, and her invention supplied her with continual diversions: that gaiety which rendered Naples so dear to her, glittered in the woods of Mazzini, and resounded through the castle.

The apartments of Madame de Menon were spacious and noble. The windows opened upon the sea, and commanded a view of the straits of Messina, bounded on one side by the beautiful shores of the isle of Sicily, and on the other by the high mountains of Calabria. The straits, filled with vessels whose gay streamers glittered to the sunbeam, presented to the eye an evermoving scene. The principal room opened upon a gallery that overhung the grand terrace of the castle, and it commanded a prospect which for beauty and extent has seldom been equalled. These were formerly considered the chief apartments of the castle; and when the Marquis quitted them for Naples, were allotted for the residence of Madame de Menon, and her young charge. The marchioness, struck with the prospect which the windows afforded, and with the pleasantness of the gallery, determined to restore the rooms to their former splendour. She signified this intention to madame, for whom other apartments were provided. The chambers of Emilia and Julia forming part of the suite, they were also claimed by the marchioness, who left Julia only her favorite

closet. The rooms to which they removed were spacious, but gloomy; they had been for some years uninhabited; and though preparations had been made for the reception of their new inhabitants, an air of desolation reigned within them that inspired melancholy sensations. Julia observed that her chamber, which opened beyond madame's, formed a part of the southern building, with which, however, there appeared no means of communication. The late mysterious circumstances relating to this part of the fabric, now arose to her imagination, and conjured up a terror which reason could not subdue. She told her emotions to madame, who, with more prudence than sincerity, laughed at her fears. The behaviour of the marquis, the dying words of Vincent, together with the preceding circumstances of alarm, had sunk deep in the mind of madame, but she saw the necessity of confining to her own breast doubts which time only could resolve.

Julia endeavoured to reconcile herself to the change, and a circumstance soon occurred which obliterated her present sensations, and excited others far more interesting. One day that she was arranging some papers in the small drawers of a cabinet that stood in her apartment, she found a picture which fixed all her attention. It was a miniature of a lady, whose countenance was touched with sorrow, and expressed an air of dignified resignation. The mournful sweetness of her eyes, raised towards Heaven with a look of supplication, and the melancholy languor that shaded her features, so deeply affected Julia, that her eyes were filled with involuntary tears. She sighed and wept, still gazing on the picture, which seemed to engage her by a kind of fascination. She almost fancied that the portrait breathed, and that the eyes were fixed on hers with a look of penetrating softness. Full of the emotions which the miniature had excited, she presented it to madame, whose mingled sorrow and surprise increased her curiosity. But what were the various sensations which pressed upon her heart, on learning that she had wept over the resemblance of her mother! Deprived of a mother's tenderness before she was sensible of its value, it was now only that she mourned the event which lamentation could not recall. Emilia, with an emotion as exquisite, mingled her tears with those of her sister. With eager impatience they pressed madame to disclose the cause of that sorrow which so emphatically marked the features of their mother.

‘Alas! my dear children,’ said madame, deeply sighing, ‘you engage me in a task too severe, not only for your peace, but for mine; since in giving you the information you require, I must retrace scenes of my own life, which I wish for ever obliterated. It would, however, be both cruel and unjust to withhold an explanation so nearly interesting to you, and I will sacrifice my own ease to your wishes.

‘Louisa de Bernini, your mother, was, as you well know, the only daughter of the Count de Bernini. Of the misfortunes of your family, I believe you are yet ignorant. The chief estates of the count were situated in the *Val di Demona* , a valley deriving its name from its vicinity to Mount AEtna, which vulgar tradition has peopled with devils. In one of those dreadful eruptions of AEtna, which deluged this valley with a flood of fire, a great part of your grandfather’s domains in that quarter were laid waste. The count was at that time with a part of his family at Messina, but the countess and her son, who were in the country, were destroyed. The remaining property of the count was proportionably inconsiderable, and the loss of his wife and son deeply affected him. He retired with Louisa, his only surviving child, who was then near fifteen, to a small estate near Cattania. There was some degree of relationship between your grandfather and myself; and your mother was attached to me by the ties of sentiment, which, as we grew up, united us still more strongly than those of blood. Our pleasures and our tastes were the same; and a similarity of misfortunes might, perhaps, contribute to cement our early friendship. I, like herself, had lost a parent in the eruption of AEtna. My mother had died before I understood her value; but my father, whom I revered and tenderly loved, was destroyed by one of those terrible events; his lands were buried beneath the lava, and he left an only son and myself to mourn his fate, and encounter the evils of poverty. The count, who was our nearest surviving relation, generously took us home to his house, and declared that he considered us as his children. To amuse his leisure hours, he undertook to finish the education of my brother, who was then about seventeen, and whose rising genius promised to reward the labours of the count. Louisa and myself often shared the instruction of her father, and at those hours Orlando was generally of the party. The tranquil retirement of the count’s situation, the rational employment of his time between his own studies, the education of those whom he called his children, and the

conversation of a few select friends, anticipated the effect of time, and softened the asperities of his distress into a tender complacent melancholy. As for Louisa and myself, who were yet new in life, and whose spirits possessed the happy elasticity of youth, our minds gradually shifted from suffering to tranquillity, and from tranquillity to happiness. I have sometimes thought that when my brother has been reading to her a delightful passage, the countenance of Louisa discovered a tender interest, which seemed to be excited rather by the reader than by the author. These days, which were surely the most enviable of our lives, now passed in serene enjoyments, and in continual gradations of improvement.

‘The count designed my brother for the army, and the time now drew nigh when he was to join the Sicilian regiment, in which he had a commission. The absent thoughts, and dejected spirits of my cousin, now discovered to me the secret which had long been concealed even from herself; for it was not till Orlando was about to depart, that she perceived how dear he was to her peace. On the eve of his departure, the count lamented, with fatherly yet manly tenderness, the distance which was soon to separate us. “But we shall meet again,” said he, “when the honors of war shall have rewarded the bravery of my son.” Louisa grew pale, a half suppressed sigh escaped her, and, to conceal her emotion, she turned to her harpsichord.

‘My brother had a favorite dog, which, before he set off, he presented to Louisa, and committing it to her care, begged she would be kind to it, and sometimes remember its master. He checked his rising emotion, but as he turned from her, I perceived the tear that wetted his cheek. He departed, and with him the spirit of our happiness seemed to evaporate. The scenes which his presence had formerly enlivened, were now forlorn and melancholy, yet we loved to wander in what were once his favorite haunts. Louisa forbore to mention my brother even to me, but frequently, when she thought herself unobserved, she would steal to her harpsichord, and repeat the strain which she had played on the evening before his departure.

‘We had the pleasure to hear from time to time that he was well: and though his own modesty threw a veil over his conduct, we could collect from other accounts that he had behaved with great bravery. At length the time of his return approached, and the enlivened spirits of Louisa declared the influence he retained in her heart. He returned, bearing public

testimony of his valour in the honors which had been conferred upon him. He was received with universal joy; the count welcomed him with the pride and fondness of a father, and the villa became again the seat of happiness. His person and manners were much improved; the elegant beauty of the youth was now exchanged for the graceful dignity of manhood, and some knowledge of the world was added to that of the sciences. The joy which illumined his countenance when he met Louisa, spoke at once his admiration and his love; and the blush which her observation of it brought upon her cheek, would have discovered, even to an uninterested spectator, that this joy was mutual.

‘Orlando brought with him a young Frenchman, a brother officer, who had rescued him from imminent danger in battle, and whom he introduced to the count as his preserver. The count received him with gratitude and distinction, and he was for a considerable time an inmate at the villa. His manners were singularly pleasing, and his understanding was cultivated and refined. He soon discovered a partiality for me, and he was indeed too pleasing to be seen with indifference. Gratitude for the valuable life he had preserved, was perhaps the groundwork of an esteem which soon increased into the most affectionate love. Our attachment grew stronger as our acquaintance increased; and at length the chevalier de Menon asked me of the count, who consulted my heart, and finding it favorable to the connection, proceeded to make the necessary enquiries concerning the family of the stranger. He obtained a satisfactory and pleasing account of it. The chevalier was the second son of a French gentleman of large estates in France, who had been some years deceased. He had left several sons; the family-estate, of course, devolved to the eldest, but to the two younger he had bequeathed considerable property. Our marriage was solemnized in a private manner at the villa, in the presence of the count, Louisa, and my brother. Soon after the nuptials, my husband and Orlando were remanded to their regiments. My brother’s affections were now unalterably fixed upon Louisa, but a sentiment of delicacy and generosity still kept him silent. He thought, poor as he was, to solicit the hand of Louisa, would be to repay the kindness of the count with ingratitude. I have seen the inward struggles of his heart, and mine has bled for him. The count and Louisa so earnestly solicited me to remain at the villa during the campaign, that at length my husband consented. We parted — O! let me forget that period!

— Had I accompanied him, all might have been well; and the long, long years of affliction which followed had been spared me.’

The horn now sounded the signal for dinner, and interrupted the narrative of Madame. Her beauteous auditors wiped the tears from their eyes, and with extreme reluctance descended to the hall. The day was occupied with company and diversions, and it was not till late in the evening that they were suffered to retire. They hastened to madame immediately upon their being released; and too much interested for sleep, and too importunate to be repulsed, solicited the sequel of her story. She objected the lateness of the hour, but at length yielded to their entreaties. They drew their chairs close to hers; and every sense being absorbed in the single one of hearing, followed her through the course of her narrative.

‘My brother again departed without disclosing his sentiments; the effort it cost him was evident, but his sense of honor surmounted every opposing consideration. Louisa again drooped, and pined in silent sorrow. I lamented equally for my friend and my brother; and have a thousand times accused that delicacy as false, which withheld them from the happiness they might so easily and so innocently have obtained. The behaviour of the count, at least to my eye, seemed to indicate the satisfaction which this union would have given him. It was about this period that the marquis Mazzini first saw and became enamoured of Louisa. His proposals were very flattering, but the count forbore to exert the undue authority of a father; and he ceased to press the connection, when he perceived that Louisa was really averse to it. Louisa was sensible of the generosity of his conduct, and she could scarcely reject the alliance without a sigh, which her gratitude paid to the kindness of her father.

‘But an event now happened which dissolved at once our happiness, and all our air-drawn schemes for futurity. A dispute, which it seems originated in a trifle, but soon increased to a serious degree, arose between the *Chevalier de Menon* and my brother. It was decided by the sword, and my dear brother fell by the hand of my husband. I shall pass over this period of my life. It is too painful for recollection. The effect of this event upon Louisa was such as may be imagined. The world was now become indifferent to her, and as she had no prospect of happiness for herself, she was unwilling to withhold it from the father who had deserved so much of her. After some time, when the marquis renewed his addresses, she gave

him her hand. The characters of the marquis and his lady were in their nature too opposite to form a happy union. Of this Louisa was very soon sensible; and though the mildness of her disposition made her tamely submit to the unfeeling authority of her husband, his behaviour sunk deep in her heart, and she pined in secret. It was impossible for her to avoid opposing the character of the marquis to that of him upon whom her affections had been so fondly and so justly fixed. The comparison increased her sufferings, which soon preyed upon her constitution, and very visibly affected her health. Her situation deeply afflicted the count, and united with the infirmities of age to shorten his life.

'Upon his death, I bade adieu to my cousin, and quitted Sicily for Italy, where the Chevalier de Menon had for some time expected me. Our meeting was very affecting. My resentment towards him was done away, when I observed his pale and altered countenance, and perceived the melancholy which preyed upon his heart. All the airy vivacity of his former manner was fled, and he was devoured by unavailing grief and remorse. He deplored with unceasing sorrow the friend he had murdered, and my presence seemed to open afresh the wounds which time had begun to close. His affliction, united with my own, was almost more than I could support, but I was doomed to suffer, and endure yet more. In a subsequent engagement my husband, weary of existence, rushed into the heat of battle, and there obtained an honorable death. In a paper which he left behind him, he said it was his intention to die in that battle; that he had long wished for death, and waited for an opportunity of obtaining it without staining his own character by the cowardice of suicide, or distressing me by an act of butchery. This event gave the finishing stroke to my afflictions; — yet let me retract; — another misfortune awaited me when I least expected one. The *Chevalier de Menon* died without a will, and his brothers refused to give up his estate, unless I could produce a witness of my marriage. I returned to Sicily, and, to my inexpressible sorrow, found that your mother had died during my stay abroad, a prey, I fear, to grief. The priest who performed the ceremony of my marriage, having been threatened with punishment for some ecclesiastical offences, had secretly left the country; and thus was I deprived of those proofs which were necessary to authenticate my claims to the estates of my husband. His brothers, to whom I was an utter stranger, were either too

prejudiced to believe, or believing, were too dishonorable to acknowledge the justice of my claims. I was therefore at once abandoned to sorrow and to poverty; a small legacy from the count de Bernini being all that now remained to me.

‘When the marquis married Maria de Vellorno, which was about this period, he designed to quit Mazzini for Naples. His son was to accompany him, but it was his intention to leave you, who were both very young, to the care of some person qualified to superintend your education. My circumstances rendered the office acceptable, and my former friendship for your mother made the duty pleasing to me. The marquis was, I believe, glad to be spared the trouble of searching further for what he had hitherto found it difficult to obtain — a person whom inclination as well as duty would bind to his interest.’

Madame ceased to speak, and Emilia and Julia wept to the memory of the mother, whose misfortunes this story recorded. The sufferings of madame, together with her former friendship for the late marchioness, endeared her to her pupils, who from this period endeavoured by every kind and delicate attention to obliterate the traces of her sorrows. Madame was sensible of this tenderness, and it was productive in some degree of the effect desired. But a subject soon after occurred, which drew off their minds from the consideration of their mother’s fate to a subject more wonderful and equally interesting.

One night that Emilia and Julia had been detained by company, in ceremonial restraint, later than usual, they were induced, by the easy conversation of madame, and by the pleasure which a return to liberty naturally produces, to defer the hour of repose till the night was far advanced. They were engaged in interesting discourse, when madame, who was then speaking, was interrupted by a low hollow sound, which arose from beneath the apartment, and seemed like the closing of a door. Chilled into a silence, they listened and distinctly heard it repeated. Deadly ideas crowded upon their imaginations, and inspired a terror which scarcely allowed them to breathe. The noise lasted only for a moment, and a profound silence soon ensued. Their feelings at length relaxed, and suffered them to move to Emilia’s apartment, when again they heard the same sounds. Almost distracted with fear, they rushed into madame’s apartment, where Emilia sunk upon the bed and fainted. It was a

considerable time ere the efforts of madame recalled her to sensation. When they were again tranquil, she employed all her endeavours to compose the spirits of the young ladies, and dissuade them from alarming the castle. Involved in dark and fearful doubts, she yet commanded her feelings, and endeavoured to assume an appearance of composure. The late behaviour of the marquis had convinced her that he was nearly connected with the mystery which hung over this part of the edifice; and she dreaded to excite his resentment by a further mention of alarms, which were perhaps only ideal, and whose reality she had certainly no means of proving.

Influenced by these considerations, she endeavoured to prevail on Emilia and Julia to await in silence some confirmation of their surmises; but their terror made this a very difficult task. They acquiesced, however, so far with her wishes, as to agree to conceal the preceding circumstances from every person but their brother, without whose protecting presence they declared it utterly impossible to pass another night in the apartments. For the remainder of this night they resolved to watch. To beguile the tediousness of the time they endeavoured to converse, but the minds of Emilia and Julia were too much affected by the late occurrence to wander from the subject. They compared this with the foregoing circumstance of the figure and the light which had appeared; their imaginations kindled wild conjectures, and they submitted their opinions to madame, entreating her to inform them sincerely, whether she believed that disembodied spirits were ever permitted to visit this earth.

‘My children,’ said she, ‘I will not attempt to persuade you that the existence of such spirits is impossible. Who shall say that any thing is impossible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied spirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied spirits. If we cannot understand how such spirits exist, we should consider the limited powers of our minds, and that we cannot understand many things which are indisputably true. No one yet knows why the magnetic needle points to the north; yet you, who have never seen a magnet, do not hesitate to believe that it has this tendency, because you have been well assured of it, both from books and in conversation. Since, therefore, we are sure that nothing is impossible to God, and that such beings *may* exist, though we cannot tell how, we ought to consider by what evidence their existence is supported. I

do not say that spirits *have* appeared; but if several discreet unprejudiced persons were to assure me that they had seen one, I should not be proud or bold enough to reply— ‘it is impossible.’ Let not, however, such considerations disturb your minds. I have said thus much, because I was unwilling to impose upon your understandings; it is now your part to exercise your reason, and preserve the unmoved confidence of virtue. Such spirits, if indeed they have ever been seen, can have appeared only by the express permission of God, and for some very singular purposes; be assured that there are no beings who act unseen by him; and that, therefore, there are none from whom innocence can ever suffer harm.’

No further sounds disturbed them for that time; and before the morning dawned, weariness insensibly overcame apprehension, and sunk them in repose.

When Ferdinand learned the circumstances relative to the southern side of the castle, his imagination seized with avidity each appearance of mystery, and inspired him with an irresistible desire to penetrate the secrets of his desolate part of the fabric. He very readily consented to watch with his sisters in Julia’s apartment; but as his chamber was in a remote part of the castle, there would be some difficulty in passing unobserved to her’s. It was agreed, however, that when all was hushed, he should make the attempt. Having thus resolved, Emilia and Julia waited the return of night with restless and fearful impatience.

At length the family retired to rest. The castle clock had struck one, and Julia began to fear that Ferdinand had been discovered, when a knocking was heard at the door of the outer chamber.

Her heart beat with apprehensions, which reason could not justify. Madame rose, and enquiring who was there, was answered by the voice of Ferdinand. The door was cheerfully opened. They drew their chairs round him, and endeavoured to pass the time in conversation; but fear and expectation attracted all their thoughts to one subject, and madame alone preserved her composure. The hour was now come when the sounds had been heard the preceding night, and every ear was given to attention. All, however, remained quiet, and the night passed without any new alarm.

The greater part of several succeeding nights were spent in watching, but no sounds disturbed their silence. Ferdinand, in whose mind the late circumstances had excited a degree of astonishment and curiosity superior

to common obstacles, determined, if possible, to gain admittance to those recesses of the castle, which had for so many years been hid from human eye. This, however, was a design which he saw little probability of accomplishing, for the keys of that part of the edifice were in the possession of the marquis, of whose late conduct he judged too well to believe he would suffer the apartments to be explored. He racked his invention for the means of getting access to them, and at length recollected that Julia’s chamber formed a part of these buildings, it occurred to him, that according to the mode of building in old times, there might formerly have been a communication between them. This consideration suggested to him the possibility of a concealed door in her apartment, and he determined to survey it on the following night with great care.

CHAPTER II I

The castle was buried in sleep when Ferdinand again joined his sisters in madame’s apartment. With anxious curiosity they followed him to the chamber. The room was hung with tapestry. Ferdinand carefully sounded the wall which communicated with the southern buildings. From one part of it a sound was returned, which convinced him there was something less solid than stone. He removed the tapestry, and behind it appeared, to his inexpressible satisfaction, a small door. With a hand trembling through eagerness, he undrew the bolts, and was rushing forward, when he perceived that a lock withheld his passage. The keys of madame and his sisters were applied in vain, and he was compelled to submit to disappointment at the very moment when he congratulated himself on success, for he had with him no means of forcing the door.

He stood gazing on the door, and inwardly lamenting, when a low hollow sound was heard from beneath. Emilia and Julia seized his arm; and almost sinking with apprehension, listened in profound silence. A footstep was distinctly heard, as if passing through the apartment below, after which all was still. Ferdinand, fired by this confirmation of the late report, rushed on to the door, and again tried to burst his way, but it resisted all the efforts of his strength. The ladies now rejoiced in that circumstance which they so lately lamented; for the sounds had renewed their terror, and though the night passed without further disturbance, their fears were very little abated.

Ferdinand, whose mind was wholly occupied with wonder, could with difficulty await the return of night. Emilia and Julia were scarcely less impatient. They counted the minutes as they passed; and when the family retired to rest, hastened with palpitating hearts to the apartment of madame. They were soon after joined by Ferdinand, who brought with him tools for cutting away the lock of the door. They paused a few moments in the chamber in fearful silence, but no sound disturbed the stillness of night. Ferdinand applied a knife to the door, and in a short time separated the lock. The door yielded, and disclosed a large and gloomy gallery. He took a light. Emilia and Julia, fearful of remaining in the chamber, resolved to accompany him, and each seizing an arm of madame, they

followed in silence. The gallery was in many parts falling to decay, the ceiling was broke, and the window-shutters shattered, which, together with the dampness of the walls, gave the place an air of wild desolation.

They passed lightly on, for their steps ran in whispering echoes through the gallery, and often did Julia cast a fearful glance around.

The gallery terminated in a large old staircase, which led to a hall below; on the left appeared several doors which seemed to lead to separate apartments. While they hesitated which course to pursue, a light flashed faintly up the staircase, and in a moment after passed away; at the same time was heard the sound of a distant footstep. Ferdinand drew his sword and sprang forward; his companions, screaming with terror, ran back to madame's apartment.

Ferdinand descended a large vaulted hall; he crossed it towards a low arched door, which was left half open, and through which streamed a ray of light. The door opened upon a narrow winding passage; he entered, and the light retiring, was quickly lost in the windings of the place. Still he went on. The passage grew narrower, and the frequent fragments of loose stone made it now difficult to proceed. A low door closed the avenue, resembling that by which he had entered. He opened it, and discovered a square room, from whence rose a winding staircase, which led up the south tower of the castle. Ferdinand paused to listen; the sound of steps was ceased, and all was profoundly silent. A door on the right attracted his notice; he tried to open it, but it was fastened. He concluded, therefore, that the person, if indeed a human being it was that bore the light he had seen, had passed up the tower. After a momentary hesitation, he determined to ascend the staircase, but its ruinous condition made this an adventure of some difficulty. The steps were decayed and broken, and the looseness of the stones rendered a footing very insecure. Impelled by an irresistible curiosity, he was undismayed, and began the ascent. He had not proceeded very far, when the stones of a step which his foot had just quitted, loosened by his weight, gave way; and dragging with them those adjoining, formed a chasm in the staircase that terrified even Ferdinand, who was left tottering on the suspended half of the steps, in momentary expectation of falling to the bottom with the stone on which he rested. In the terror which this occasioned, he attempted to save himself by catching at a kind of beam which projected over the stairs, when the lamp dropped

from his hand, and he was left in total darkness. Terror now usurped the place of every other interest, and he was utterly perplexed how to proceed. He feared to go on, lest the steps above, as infirm as those below, should yield to his weight; — to return was impracticable, for the darkness precluded the possibility of discovering a means. He determined, therefore, to remain in this situation till light should dawn through the narrow grates in the walls, and enable him to contrive some method of letting himself down to the ground.

He had remained here above an hour, when he suddenly heard a voice from below. It seemed to come from the passage leading to the tower, and perceptibly drew nearer. His agitation was now extreme, for he had no power of defending himself, and while he remained in this state of torturing expectation, a blaze of light burst upon the staircase beneath him. In the succeeding moment he heard his own name sounded from below. His apprehensions instantly vanished, for he distinguished the voices of madame and his sisters.

They had awaited his return in all the horrors of apprehension, till at length all fear for themselves was lost in their concern for him; and they, who so lately had not dared to enter this part of the edifice, now undauntedly searched it in quest of Ferdinand. What were their emotions when they discovered his perilous situation!

The light now enabled him to take a more accurate survey of the place. He perceived that some few stones of the steps which had fallen still remained attached to the wall, but he feared to trust to their support only. He observed, however, that the wall itself was partly decayed, and consequently rugged with the corners of half-worn stones. On these small projections he contrived, with the assistance of the steps already mentioned, to suspend himself, and at length gained the unbroken part of the stairs in safety. It is difficult to determine which individual of the party rejoiced most at this escape. The morning now dawned, and Ferdinand desisted for the present from farther enquiry.

EVENING

Evening veil’d in dewy shades,
Slowly sinks upon the main;
See th’empurpled glory fades,
Beneath her sober, chasten’d reign.

Around her car the pensive Hours,
In sweet illapses meet the sight,
Crown’d their brows with closing flow’rs
Rich with chrystal dews of night.

Her hands, the dusky hues arrange
O’er the fine tints of parting day;
Insensibly the colours change,
And languish into soft decay.

Wide o’er the waves her shadowy veil she draws.
As faint they die along the distant shores;
Through the still air I mark each solemn pause,
Each rising murmur which the wild wave pours.

A browner shadow spreads upon the air,
And o’er the scene a pensive grandeur throws;
The rocks — the woods a wilder beauty wear,
And the deep wave in softer music flows;

And now the distant view where vision fails,
Twilight and grey obscurity pervade;
Tint following tint each dark’ning object veils,
Till all the landscape sinks into the shade.

Oft from the airy steep of some lone hill,
While sleeps the scene beneath the purple glow:
And evening lives o’er all serene and still,
Wrapt let me view the magic world below!

And catch the dying gale that swells remote,
That steals the sweetness from the shepherd’s flute:
The distant torrent’s melancholy note
And the soft warblings of the lover’s lute.

Still through the deep’ning gloom of bow’ry shades
To Fancy’s eye fantastic forms appear;
Low whisp’ring echoes steal along the glades
And thrill the ear with wildly-pleasing fear.

Parent of shades! — of silence! — dewy airs!
Of solemn musing, and of vision wild!
To thee my soul her pensive tribute bears,
And hails thy gradual step, thy influence mild.

Having ceased to sing, her fingers wandered over the lute in melancholy symphony, and for some moments she remained lost in the sweet sensations which the music and the scenery had inspired. She was awakened from her reverie, by a sigh that stole from among the trees, and directing her eyes whence it came, beheld — Hippolitus! A thousand sweet and mingled emotions pressed upon her heart, yet she scarcely dared to trust the evidence of sight. He advanced, and throwing himself at her feet: ‘Suffer me,’ said he, in a tremulous voice, ‘to disclose to you the sentiments which you have inspired, and to offer you the effusions of a heart filled only with love and admiration.’ ‘Rise, my lord,’ said Julia, moving from her seat with an air of dignity, ‘that attitude is neither

becoming you to use, or me to suffer. The evening is closing, and Ferdinand will be impatient to see you.'

'Never will I rise, madam,' replied the count, with an impassioned air, 'till' — He was interrupted by the marchioness, who at this moment entered the grove. On observing the position of the count she was retiring. 'Stay, madam,' said Julia, almost sinking under her confusion. 'By no means,' replied the marchioness, in a tone of irony, 'my presence would only interrupt a very agreeable scene. The count, I see, is willing to pay you his earliest respects.' Saying this she disappeared, leaving Julia distressed and offended, and the count provoked at the intrusion. He attempted to renew the subject, but Julia hastily followed the steps of the marchioness, and entered the castle.

The scene she had witnessed, raised in the marchioness a tumult of dreadful emotions. Love, hatred, and jealousy, raged by turns in her heart, and defied all power of controul. Subjected to their alternate violence, she experienced a misery more acute than any she had yet known. Her imagination, invigorated by opposition, heightened to her the graces of Hippolitus; her bosom glowed with more intense passion, and her brain was at length exasperated almost to madness.

In Julia this sudden and unexpected interview excited a mingled emotion of love and vexation, which did not soon subside. At length, however, the delightful consciousness of Vereza's love bore her high above every other sensation; again the scene more brightly glowed, and again her fancy overcame the possibility of evil.

During the evening a tender and timid respect distinguished the behaviour of the count towards Julia, who, contented with the certainty of being loved, resolved to conceal her sentiments till an explanation of his abrupt departure from Mazzini, and subsequent absence, should have dissipated the shadow of mystery which hung over this part of his conduct. She observed that the marchioness pursued her with steady and constant observation, and she carefully avoided affording the count an opportunity of renewing the subject of the preceding interview, which, whenever he approached her, seemed to tremble on his lips.

Night returned, and Ferdinand repaired to the chamber of Julia to pursue his enquiry. Here he had not long remained, when the strange and alarming sounds which had been heard on the preceding night were repeated. The

circumstance that now sunk in terror the minds of Emilia and Julia, fired with new wonder that of Ferdinand, who seizing a light, darted through the discovered door, and almost instantly disappeared.

He descended into the same wild hall he had passed on the preceding night. He had scarcely reached the bottom of the staircase, when a feeble light gleamed across the hall, and his eye caught the glimpse of a figure retiring through the low arched door which led to the south tower. He drew his sword and rushed on. A faint sound died away along the passage, the windings of which prevented his seeing the figure he pursued. Of this, indeed, he had obtained so slight a view, that he scarcely knew whether it bore the impression of a human form. The light quickly disappeared, and he heard the door that opened upon the tower suddenly close. He reached it, and forcing it open, sprang forward; but the place was dark and solitary, and there was no appearance of any person having passed along it. He looked up the tower, and the chasm which the staircase exhibited, convinced him that no human being could have passed up. He stood silent and amazed; examining the place with an eye of strict enquiry, he perceived a door, which was partly concealed by hanging stairs, and which till now had escaped his notice. Hope invigorated curiosity, but his expectation was quickly disappointed, for this door also was fastened. He tried in vain to force it. He knocked, and a hollow sullen sound ran in echoes through the place, and died away at a distance. It was evident that beyond this door were chambers of considerable extent, but after long and various attempts to reach them, he was obliged to desist, and he quitted the tower as ignorant and more dissatisfied than he had entered it. He returned to the hall, which he now for the first time deliberately surveyed. It was a spacious and desolate apartment, whose lofty roof rose into arches supported by pillars of black marble. The same substance inlaid the floor, and formed the staircase. The windows were high and gothic. An air of proud sublimity, united with singular wildness, characterized the place, at the extremity of which arose several gothic arches, whose dark shade veiled in obscurity the extent beyond. On the left hand appeared two doors, each of which was fastened, and on the right the grand entrance from the courts. Ferdinand determined to explore the dark recess which terminated his view, and as he traversed the hall, his imagination, affected by the

surrounding scene, often multiplied the echoes of his footsteps into uncertain sounds of strange and fearful import.

He reached the arches, and discovered beyond a kind of inner hall, of considerable extent, which was closed at the farther end by a pair of massy folding-doors, heavily ornamented with carving. They were fastened by a lock, and defied his utmost strength.

As he surveyed the place in silent wonder, a sullen groan arose from beneath the spot where he stood. His blood ran cold at the sound, but silence returning, and continuing unbroken, he attributed his alarm to the illusion of a fancy, which terror had impregnated. He made another effort to force the door, when a groan was repeated more hollow, and more dreadful than the first. At this moment all his courage forsook him; he quitted the door, and hastened to the staircase, which he ascended almost breathless with terror.

He found Madame de Menon and his sisters awaiting his return in the most painful anxiety; and, thus disappointed in all his endeavours to penetrate the secret of these buildings, and fatigued with fruitless search, he resolved to suspend farther enquiry.

When he related the circumstances of his late adventure, the terror of Emilia and Julia was heightened to a degree that overcame every prudent consideration. Their apprehension of the marquis’s displeasure was lost in a stronger feeling, and they resolved no longer to remain in apartments which offered only terrific images to their fancy. Madame de Menon almost equally alarmed, and more perplexed, by this combination of strange and unaccountable circumstances, ceased to oppose their design. It was resolved, therefore, that on the following day madame should acquaint the marchioness with such particulars of the late occurrence as their purpose made it necessary she should know, concealing their knowledge of the hidden door, and the incidents immediately dependant on it; and that madame should entreat a change of apartments.

Madame accordingly waited on the marchioness. The marchioness having listened to the account at first with surprise, and afterwards with indifference, condescended to reprove madame for encouraging superstitious belief in the minds of her young charge. She concluded with ridiculing as fanciful the circumstances related, and with refusing, on

account of the numerous visitants at the castle, the request preferred to her.

It is true the castle was crowded with visitors; the former apartments of Madame de Menon were the only ones unoccupied, and these were in magnificent preparation for the pleasure of the marchioness, who was unaccustomed to sacrifice her own wishes to the comfort of those around her. She therefore treated lightly the subject, which, seriously attended to, would have endangered her new plan of delight.

But Emilia and Julia were too seriously terrified to obey the scruples of delicacy, or to be easily repulsed. They prevailed on Ferdinand to represent their situation to the marquis.

Meanwhile Hippolitus, who had passed the night in a state of sleepless anxiety, watched, with busy impatience, an opportunity of more fully disclosing to Julia the passion which glowed in his heart. The first moment in which he beheld her, had awakened in him an admiration which had since ripened into a sentiment more tender. He had been prevented formally declaring his passion by the circumstance which so suddenly called him to Naples. This was the dangerous illness of the Marquis de Lomelli, his near and much-valued relation. But it was a task too painful to depart in silence, and he contrived to inform Julia of his sentiments in the air which she heard so sweetly sung beneath her window.

When Hippolitus reached Naples, the marquis was yet living, but expired a few days after his arrival, leaving the count heir to the small possessions which remained from the extravagance of their ancestors.

The business of adjusting his rights had till now detained him from Sicily, whither he came for the sole purpose of declaring his love. Here unexpected obstacles awaited him. The jealous vigilance of the marchioness conspired with the delicacy of Julia, to withhold from him the opportunity he so anxiously sought.

When Ferdinand entered upon the subject of the southern buildings to the marquis, he carefully avoided mentioning the hidden door. The marquis listened for some time to the relation in gloomy silence, but at length assuming an air of displeasure, reprehended Ferdinand for yielding his confidence to those idle alarms, which he said were the suggestions of a timid imagination. ‘Alarms,’ continued he, ‘which will readily find admittance to the weak mind of a woman, but which the firmer nature of

man should disdain. — Degenerate boy! Is it thus you reward my care? Do I live to see my son the sport of every idle tale a woman may repeat? Learn to trust reason and your senses, and you will then be worthy of my attention.'

The marquis was retiring, and Ferdinand now perceived it necessary to declare, that he had himself witnessed the sounds he mentioned. 'Pardon me, my lord,' said he, 'in the late instance I have been just to your command — my senses have been the only evidences I have trusted. I have heard those sounds which I cannot doubt.' The marquis appeared shocked. Ferdinand perceived the change, and urged the subject so vigorously, that the marquis, suddenly assuming a look of grave importance, commanded him to attend him in the evening in his closet.

Ferdinand in passing from the marquis met Hippolitus. He was pacing the gallery in much seeming agitation, but observing Ferdinand, he advanced to him. 'I am ill at heart,' said he, in a melancholy tone, 'assist me with your advice. We will step into this apartment, where we can converse without interruption.'

'You are not ignorant,' said he, throwing himself into a chair, 'of the tender sentiments which your sister Julia has inspired. I entreat you by that sacred friendship which has so long united us, to afford me an opportunity of pleading my passion. Her heart, which is so susceptible of other impressions, is, I fear, insensible to love. Procure me, however, the satisfaction of certainty upon a point where the tortures of suspence are surely the most intolerable.'

'Your penetration,' replied Ferdinand, 'has for once forsaken you, else you would now be spared the tortures of which you complain, for you would have discovered what I have long observed, that Julia regards you with a partial eye.'

'Do not,' said Hippolitus, 'make disappointment more terrible by flattery; neither suffer the partiality of friendship to mislead your judgment. Your perceptions are affected by the warmth of your feelings, and because you think I deserve her distinction, you believe I possess it. Alas! you deceive yourself, but not me!'

'The very reverse,' replied Ferdinand; 'tis you who deceive yourself, or rather it is the delicacy of the passion which animates you, and which will ever operate against your clear perception of a truth in which your

happiness is so deeply involved. Believe me, I speak not without reason: — she loves you.'

At these words Hippolitus started from his seat, and clasping his hands in fervent joy, 'Enchanting sounds!' cried he, in a voice tenderly impassioned; '*could* I but believe ye! — could I *but* believe ye-this world were paradise!'

During this exclamation, the emotions of Julia, who sat in her closet adjoining, can with difficulty be imagined. A door which opened into it from the apartment where this conversation was held, was only half closed. Agitated with the pleasure this declaration excited, she yet trembled with apprehension lest she should be discovered. She hardly dared to breathe, much less to move across the closet to the door, which opened upon the gallery, whence she might probably have escaped unnoticed, lest the sound of her step should betray her. Compelled, therefore, to remain where she was, she sat in a state of fearful distress, which no colour of language can paint.

'Alas!' resumed Hippolitus, 'I too eagerly admit the possibility of what I wish. If you mean that I should really believe you, confirm your assertion by some proof.'— 'Readily,' rejoined Ferdinand.

The heart of Julia beat quick.

'When you was so suddenly called to Naples upon the illness of the Marquis Lomelli, I marked her conduct well, and in that read the sentiments of her heart. On the following morning, I observed in her countenance a restless anxiety which I had never seen before. She watched the entrance of every person with an eager expectation, which was as often succeeded by evident disappointment. At dinner your departure was mentioned: — she spilt the wine she was carrying to her lips, and for the remainder of the day was spiritless and melancholy. I saw her ineffectual struggles to conceal the oppression at her heart. Since that time she has seized every opportunity of withdrawing from company. The gaiety with which she was so lately charmed — charmed her no longer; she became pensive, retired, and I have often heard her singing in some lonely spot, the most moving and tender airs. Your return produced a visible and instantaneous alteration; she has now resumed her gaiety; and the soft confusion of her countenance, whenever you approach, might alone suffice to convince you of the truth of my assertion.'

‘O! talk for ever thus!’ sighed Hippolitus. ‘These words are so sweet, so soothing to my soul, that I could listen till I forgot I had a wish beyond them. Yes! — Ferdinand, these circumstances are not to be doubted, and conviction opens upon my mind a flow of extacy I never knew till now. O! lead me to her, that I may speak the sentiments which swell my heart.’

They arose, when Julia, who with difficulty had supported herself, now impelled by an irresistible fear of instant discovery, rose also, and moved softly towards the gallery. The sound of her step alarmed the count, who, apprehensive lest his conversation had been overheard, was anxious to be satisfied whether any person was in the closet. He rushed in, and discovered Julia! She caught at a chair to support her trembling frame; and overwhelmed with mortifying sensations, sunk into it, and hid her face in her robe. Hippolitus threw himself at her feet, and seizing her hand, pressed it to his lips in expressive silence. Some moments passed before the confusion of either would suffer them to speak. At length recovering his voice, ‘Can you, madam,’ said he, ‘forgive this intrusion, so unintentional? or will it deprive me of that esteem which I have but lately ventured to believe I possessed, and which I value more than existence itself. O! speak my pardon! Let me not believe that a single accident has destroyed my peace for ever.’— ‘If your peace, sir, depends upon a knowledge of my esteem,’ said Julia, in a tremulous voice, ‘that peace is already secure. If I wished even to deny the partiality I feel, it would now be useless; and since I no longer wish this, it would also be painful.’ Hippolitus could only weep his thanks over the hand he still held. ‘Be sensible, however, of the delicacy of my situation,’ continued she, rising, ‘and suffer me to withdraw.’ Saying this she quitted the closet, leaving Hippolitus overcome with this sweet confirmation of his wishes, and Ferdinand not yet recovered from the painful surprize which the discovery of Julia had excited. He was deeply sensible of the confusion he had occasioned her, and knew that apologies would not restore the composure he had so cruelly yet unwarily disturbed.

Ferdinand awaited the hour appointed by the marquis in impatient curiosity. The solemn air which the marquis assumed when he commanded him to attend, had deeply impressed his mind. As the time drew nigh, expectation increased, and every moment seemed to linger into hours. At length he repaired to the closet, where he did not remain long before the

marquis entered. The same chilling solemnity marked his manner. He locked the door of the closet, and seating himself, addressed Ferdinand as follows: —

‘I am now going to repose in you a confidence which will severely prove the strength of your honour. But before I disclose a secret, hitherto so carefully concealed, and now reluctantly told, you must swear to preserve on this subject an eternal silence. If you doubt the steadiness of your discretion — now declare it, and save yourself from the infamy, and the fatal consequences, which may attend a breach of your oath; — if, on the contrary, you believe yourself capable of a strict integrity — now accept the terms, and receive the secret I offer.’ Ferdinand was awed by this exordium — the impatience of curiosity was for a while suspended, and he hesitated whether he should receive the secret upon such terms. At length he signified his consent, and the marquis arising, drew his sword from the scabbard.— ‘Here,’ said he, offering it to Ferdinand, ‘seal your vows — swear by this sacred pledge of honor never to repeat what I shall now reveal.’ Ferdinand vowed upon the sword, and raising his eyes to heaven, solemnly swore. The marquis then resumed his seat, and proceeded.

‘You are now to learn that, about a century ago, this castle was in the possession of Vincent, third marquis of Mazzini, my grandfather. At that time there existed an inveterate hatred between our family and that of della Campo. I shall not now revert to the origin of the animosity, or relate the particulars of the consequent feuds — suffice it to observe, that by the power of our family, the della Campos were unable to preserve their former consequence in Sicily, and they have therefore quitted it for a foreign land to live in unmolested security. To return to my subject. — My grandfather, believing his life endangered by his enemy, planted spies upon him. He employed some of the numerous banditti who sought protection in his service, and after some weeks past in waiting for an opportunity, they seized Henry della Campo, and brought him secretly to this castle. He was for some time confined in a close chamber of the southern buildings, where he expired; by what means I shall forbear to mention. The plan had been so well conducted, and the secrecy so strictly preserved, that every endeavour of his family to trace the means of his disappearance proved ineffectual. Their conjectures, if they fell upon our

family, were supported by no proof; and the della Campos are to this day ignorant of the mode of his death. A rumour had prevailed long before the death of my father, that the southern buildings of the castle were haunted. I disbelieved the fact, and treated it accordingly. One night, when every human being of the castle, except myself, was retired to rest, I had such strong and dreadful proofs of the general assertion, that even at this moment I cannot recollect them without horror. Let me, if possible, forget them. From that moment I forsook those buildings; they have ever since been shut up, and the circumstance I have mentioned, is the true reason why I have resided so little at the castle.'

Ferdinand listened to this narrative in silent horror. He remembered the temerity with which he had dared to penetrate those apartments — the light, and figure he had seen — and, above all, his situation in the staircase of the tower. Every nerve thrilled at the recollection; and the terrors of remembrance almost equalled those of reality.

The marquis permitted his daughters to change their apartments, but he commanded Ferdinand to tell them, that, in granting their request, he consulted their ease only, and was himself by no means convinced of its propriety. They were accordingly reinstated in their former chambers, and the great room only of madame's apartments was reserved for the marchioness, who expressed her discontent to the marquis in terms of mingled censure and lamentation. The marquis privately reproved his daughters, for what he termed the idle fancies of a weak mind; and desired them no more to disturb the peace of the castle with the subject of their late fears. They received this reproof with silent submission — too much pleased with the success of their suit to be susceptible of any emotion but joy.

Ferdinand, reflecting on the late discovery, was shocked to learn, what was now forced upon his belief, that he was the descendant of a murderer. He now knew that innocent blood had been shed in the castle, and that the walls were still the haunt of an unquiet spirit, which seemed to call aloud for retribution on the posterity of him who had disturbed its eternal rest. Hippolitus perceived his dejection, and entreated that he might participate his uneasiness; but Ferdinand, who had hitherto been frank and ingenuous, was now inflexibly reserved. 'Forbear,' said he, 'to urge a discovery of what I am not permitted to reveal; this is the only point upon which I

conjure you to be silent, and this even to you, I cannot explain.’ Hippolitus was surprized, but pressed the subject no farther.

Julia, though she had been extremely mortified by the circumstances attendant on the discovery of her sentiments to Hippolitus, experienced, after the first shock had subsided, an emotion more pleasing than painful. The late conversation had painted in strong colours the attachment of her lover. His diffidence — his slowness to perceive the effect of his merit — his succeeding rapture, when conviction was at length forced upon his mind; and his conduct upon discovering Julia, proved to her at once the delicacy and the strength of his passion, and she yielded her heart to sensations of pure and unmixed delight. She was roused from this state of visionary happiness, by a summons from the marquis to attend him in the library. A circumstance so unusual surprized her, and she obeyed with trembling curiosity. She found him pacing the room in deep thought, and she had shut the door before he perceived her. The authoritative severity in his countenance alarmed her, and prepared her for a subject of importance. He seated himself by her, and continued a moment silent. At length, steadily observing her, ‘I sent for you, my child,’ said he, ‘to declare the honor which awaits you. The Duke de Luovo has solicited your hand. An alliance so splendid was beyond my expectation. You will receive the distinction with the gratitude it claims, and prepare for the celebration of the nuptials.’

This speech fell like the dart of death upon the heart of Julia. She sat motionless — stupified and deprived of the power of utterance. The marquis observed her consternation; and mistaking its cause, ‘I acknowledge,’ said he, ‘that there is somewhat abrupt in this affair; but the joy occasioned by a distinction so unmerited on your part, ought to overcome the little feminine weakness you might otherwise indulge. Retire and compose yourself; and observe,’ continued he, in a stern voice, ‘this is no time for finesse.’ These words roused Julia from her state of horrid stupefaction. ‘O! sir,’ said she, throwing herself at his feet, ‘forbear to enforce authority upon a point where to obey you would be worse than death; if, indeed, to obey you were possible.’— ‘Cease,’ said the marquis, ‘this affectation, and practice what becomes you.’— ‘Pardon me, my lord,’ she replied, ‘my distress is, alas! unfeigned. I cannot love the duke.’— ‘Away!’ interrupted the marquis, ‘nor tempt my rage with objections thus

childish and absurd.’— ‘Yet hear me, my lord,’ said Julia, tears swelling in her eyes, ‘and pity the sufferings of a child, who never till this moment has dared to dispute your commands.’

‘Nor shall she now,’ said the marquis. ‘What — when wealth, honor, and distinction, are laid at my feet, shall they be refused, because a foolish girl — a very baby, who knows not good from evil, cries, and says she cannot love! Let me not think of it — My just anger may, perhaps, out-run discretion, and tempt me to chastise your folly. — Attend to what I say — accept the duke, or quit this castle for ever, and wander where you will.’ Saying this, he burst away, and Julia, who had hung weeping upon his knees, fell prostrate upon the floor. The violence of the fall completed the effect of her distress, and she fainted. In this state she remained a considerable time. When she recovered her senses, the recollection of her calamity burst upon her mind with a force that almost again overwhelmed her. She at length raised herself from the ground, and moved towards her own apartment, but had scarcely reached the great gallery, when Hippolitus entered it. Her trembling limbs would no longer support her; she caught at a bannister to save herself; and Hippolitus, with all his speed, was scarcely in time to prevent her falling. The pale distress exhibited in her countenance terrified him, and he anxiously enquired concerning it. She could answer him only with her tears, which she found it impossible to suppress; and gently disengaging herself, tottered to her closet. Hippolitus followed her to the door, but desisted from further importunity. He pressed her hand to his lips in tender silence, and withdrew, surprized and alarmed.

Julia, resigning herself to despair, indulged in solitude the excess of her grief. A calamity, so dreadful as the present, had never before presented itself to her imagination. The union proposed would have been hateful to her, even if she had no prior attachment; what then must have been her distress, when she had given her heart to him who deserved all her admiration, and returned all her affection.

The Duke de Luovo was of a character very similar to that of the marquis. The love of power was his ruling passion; — with him no gentle or generous sentiment meliorated the harshness of authority, or directed it to acts of beneficence. He delighted in simple undisguised tyranny. He had been twice married, and the unfortunate women subjected to his power,

had fallen victims to the slow but corroding hand of sorrow. He had one son, who some years before had escaped the tyranny of his father, and had not been since heard of. At the late festival the duke had seen Julia; and her beauty made so strong an impression upon him, that he had been induced now to solicit her hand. The marquis, delighted with the prospect of a connection so flattering to his favorite passion, readily granted his consent, and immediately sealed it with a promise.

Julia remained for the rest of the day shut up in her closet, where the tender efforts of Madame and Emilia were exerted to soften her distress. Towards the close of evening Ferdinand entered. Hippolitus, shocked at her absence, had requested him to visit her, to alleviate her affliction, and, if possible, to discover its cause. Ferdinand, who tenderly loved his sister, was alarmed by the words of Hippolitus, and immediately sought her. Her eyes were swelled with weeping, and her countenance was but too expressive of the state of her mind. Ferdinand's distress, when told of his father's conduct, was scarcely less than her own. He had pleased himself with the hope of uniting the sister of his heart with the friend whom he loved. An act of cruel authority now dissolved the fairy dream of happiness which his fancy had formed, and destroyed the peace of those most dear to him. He sat for a long time silent and dejected; at length, starting from his melancholy reverie, he bad Julia good-night, and returned to Hippolitus, who was waiting for him with anxious impatience in the north hall.

Ferdinand dreaded the effect of that despair, which the intelligence he had to communicate would produce in the mind of Hippolitus. He revolved some means of softening the dreadful truth; but Hippolitus, quick to apprehend the evil which love taught him to fear, seized at once upon the reality. 'Tell me all,' said he, in a tone of assumed firmness. 'I am prepared for the worst.' Ferdinand related the decree of the marquis, and Hippolitus soon sunk into an excess of grief which defied, as much as it required, the powers of alleviation.

Julia, at length, retired to her chamber, but the sorrow which occupied her mind withheld the blessings of sleep. Distracted and restless she arose, and gently opened the window of her apartment. The night was still, and not a breath disturbed the surface of the waters. The moon shed a mild radiance over the waves, which in gentle undulations flowed upon the

sands. The scene insensibly tranquilized her spirits. A tender and pleasing melancholy diffused itself over her mind; and as she mused, she heard the dashing of distant oars. Presently she perceived upon the light surface of the sea a small boat. The sound of the oars ceased, and a solemn strain of harmony (such as fancy wafts from the abodes of the blessed) stole upon the silence of night. A chorus of voices now swelled upon the air, and died away at a distance. In the strain Julia recollected the midnight hymn to the virgin, and holy enthusiasm filled her heart. The chorus was repeated, accompanied by a solemn striking of oars. A sigh of exstacy stole from her bosom. Silence returned. The divine melody she had heard calmed the tumult of her mind, and she sunk in sweet repose.

She arose in the morning refreshed by light slumbers; but the recollection of her sorrows soon returned with new force, and sickening faintness overcame her. In this situation she received a message from the marquis to attend him instantly. She obeyed, and he bade her prepare to receive the duke, who that morning purposed to visit the castle. He commanded her to attire herself richly, and to welcome him with smiles. Julia submitted in silence. She saw the marquis was inflexibly resolved, and she withdrew to indulge the anguish of her heart, and prepare for this detested interview.

The clock had struck twelve, when a flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the duke. The heart of Julia sunk at the sound, and she threw herself on a sopha, overwhelmed with bitter sensations. Here she was soon disturbed by a message from the marquis. She arose, and tenderly embracing Emilia, their tears for some moments flowed together. At length, summoning all her fortitude, she descended to the hall, where she was met by the marquis. He led her to the saloon in which the duke sat, with whom having conversed a short time, he withdrew. The emotion of Julia at this instant was beyond any thing she had before suffered; but by a sudden and strange exertion of fortitude, which the force of desperate calamity sometimes affords us, but which inferior sorrow toils after in vain, she recovered her composure, and resumed her natural dignity. For a moment she wondered at herself, and she formed the dangerous resolution of throwing herself upon the generosity of the duke, by acknowledging her reluctance to the engagement, and soliciting him to withdraw his suit.

The duke approached her with an air of proud condescension; and taking her hand, placed himself beside her. Having paid some formal and general compliments to her beauty, he proceeded to profess himself her admirer. She listened for some time to his professions, and when he appeared willing to hear her, she addressed him— ‘I am justly sensible, my lord, of the distinction you offer me, and must lament that respectful gratitude is the only sentiment I can return. Nothing can more strongly prove my confidence in your generosity, than when I confess to you, that parental authority urges me to give my hand whither my heart cannot accompany it.’

She paused — the duke continued silent.— ‘‘Tis you only, my lord, who can release me from a situation so distressing; and to your goodness and justice I appeal, certain that necessity will excuse the singularity of my conduct, and that I shall not appeal in vain.’

The duke was embarrassed — a flush of pride overspread his countenance, and he seemed endeavouring to stifle the feelings that swelled his heart. ‘I had been prepared, madam,’ said he, ‘to expect a very different reception, and had certainly no reason to believe that the Duke de Luovo was likely to sue in vain. Since, however, madam, you acknowledge that you have already disposed of your affections, I shall certainly be very willing, if the marquis will release me from our mutual engagements, to resign you to a more favored lover.’

‘Pardon me, my lord,’ said Julia, blushing, ‘suffer me to’— ‘I am not easily deceived, madam,’ interrupted the duke,— ‘your conduct can be attributed only to the influence of a prior attachment; and though for so young a lady, such a circumstance is somewhat extraordinary, I have certainly no right to arraign your choice. Permit me to wish you a good morning.’ He bowed low, and quitted the room. Julia now experienced a new distress; she dreaded the resentment of the marquis, when he should be informed of her conversation with the duke, of whose character she now judged too justly not to repent the confidence she had reposed in him.

The duke, on quitting Julia, went to the marquis, with whom he remained in conversation some hours. When he had left the castle, the marquis sent for his daughter, and poured forth his resentment with all the violence of threats, and all the acrimony of contempt. So severely did he ridicule the idea of her disposing of her heart, and so dreadfully did he

denounce vengeance on her disobedience, that she scarcely thought herself safe in his presence. She stood trembling and confused, and heard his reproaches without the power to reply. At length the marquis informed her, that the nuptials would be solemnized on the third day from the present; and as he quitted the room, a flood of tears came to her relief, and saved her from fainting.

Julia passed the remainder of the day in her closet with Emilia. Night returned, but brought her no peace. She sat long after the departure of Emilia; and to beguile recollection, she selected a favorite author, endeavouring to revive those sensations his page had once excited. She opened to a passage, the tender sorrow of which was applicable to her own situation, and her tears flowed wean. Her grief was soon suspended by apprehension. Hitherto a deadly silence had reigned through the castle, interrupted only by the wind, whose low sound crept at intervals through the galleries. She now thought she heard a footstep near her door, but presently all was still, for she believed she had been deceived by the wind. The succeeding moment, however, convinced her of her error, for she distinguished the low whisperings of some persons in the gallery. Her spirits, already weakened by sorrow, deserted her: she was seized with an universal terror, and presently afterwards a low voice called her from without, and the door was opened by Ferdinand.

She shrieked, and fainted. On recovering, she found herself supported by Ferdinand and Hippolitus, who had stolen this moment of silence and security to gain admittance to her presence. Hippolitus came to urge a proposal which despair only could have suggested. ‘Fly,’ said he, ‘from the authority of a father who abuses his power, and assert the liberty of choice, which nature assigned you. Let the desperate situation of my hopes plead excuse for the apparent boldness of this address, and let the man who exists but for you be the means of saving you from destruction. Alas! madam, you are silent, and perhaps I have forfeited, by this proposal, the confidence I so lately flattered myself I possessed. If so, I will submit to my fate in silence, and will tomorrow quit a scene which presents only images of distress to my mind.’

Julia could speak but with her tears. A variety of strong and contending emotions struggled at her breast, and suppressed the power of utterance. Ferdinand seconded the proposal of the count. ‘It is unnecessary,’ my

sister, said he, ‘to point out the misery which awaits you here. I love you too well tamely to suffer you to be sacrificed to ambition, and to a passion still more hateful. I now glory in calling Hippolitus my friend — let me ere long receive him as a brother. I can give no stronger testimony of my esteem for his character, than in the wish I now express. Believe me he has a heart worthy of your acceptance — a heart noble and expansive as your own.’— ‘Ah, cease,’ said Julia, ‘to dwell upon a character of whose worth I am fully sensible. Your kindness and his merit can never be forgotten by her whose misfortunes you have so generously suffered to interest you.’ She paused in silent hesitation. A sense of delicacy made her hesitate upon the decision which her heart so warmly prompted. If she fled with Hippolitus, she would avoid one evil, and encounter another. She would escape the dreadful destiny awaiting her, but must, perhaps, sully the purity of that reputation, which was dearer to her than existence. In a mind like hers, exquisitely susceptible of the pride of honor, this fear was able to counteract every other consideration, and to keep her intentions in a state of painful suspense. She sighed deeply, and continued silent. Hippolitus was alarmed by the calm distress which her countenance exhibited. ‘O! Julia,’ said he, ‘relieve me from this dreadful suspense! — speak to me — explain this silence.’ She looked mournfully upon him — her lips moved, but no sounds were uttered. As he repeated his question, she waved her hand, and sunk back in her chair. She had not fainted, but continued some time in a state of stupor not less alarming. The importance of the present question, operating upon her mind, already harassed by distress, had produced a temporary suspension of reason. Hippolitus hung over her in an agony not to be described, and Ferdinand vainly repeated her name. At length uttering a deep sigh, she raised herself, and, like one awakened from a dream, gazed around her. Hippolitus thanked God fervently in his heart. ‘Tell me but that you are well,’ said he, ‘and that I may dare to hope, and we will leave you to repose.’— ‘My sister,’ said Ferdinand, ‘consult only your own wishes, and leave the rest to me. Suffer a confidence in me to dissipate the doubts with which you are agitated.’— ‘Ferdinand,’ said Julia, emphatically, ‘how shall I express the gratitude your kindness has excited?’— ‘Your gratitude,’ said he, ‘will be best shown in consulting your own wishes; for be assured, that whatever procures your happiness, will most effectually establish mine. Do not

suffer the prejudices of education to render you miserable. Believe me, that a choice which involves the happiness or misery of your whole life, ought to be decided only by yourself.'

'Let us forbear for the present,' said Hippolitus, 'to urge the subject. Repose is necessary for you,' addressing Julia, 'and I will not suffer a selfish consideration any longer to withhold you from it. — Grant me but this request — that at this hour tomorrow night, I may return hither to receive my doom.' Julia having consented to receive Hippolitus and Ferdinand, they quitted the closet. In turning into the grand gallery, they were surprised by the appearance of a light, which gleamed upon the wall that terminated their view. It seemed to proceed from a door which opened upon a back staircase. They pushed on, but it almost instantly disappeared, and upon the staircase all was still. They then separated, and retired to their apartments, somewhat alarmed by this circumstance, which induced them to suspect that their visit to Julia had been observed.

Julia passed the night in broken slumbers, and anxious consideration. On her present decision hung the crisis of her fate. Her consciousness of the influence of Hippolitus over her heart, made her fear to indulge its predilection, by trusting to her own opinion of its fidelity. She shrunk from the disgraceful idea of an elopement; yet she saw no means of avoiding this, but by rushing upon the fate so dreadful to her imagination.

On the following night, when the inhabitants of the castle were retired to rest, Hippolitus, whose expectation had lengthened the hours into ages, accompanied by Ferdinand, revisited the closet. Julia, who had known no interval of rest since they last left her, received them with much agitation. The vivid glow of health had fled her cheek, and was succeeded by a languid delicacy, less beautiful, but more interesting. To the eager enquiries of Hippolitus, she returned no answer, but faintly smiling through her tears, presented him her hand, and covered her face with her robe. 'I receive it,' cried he, 'as the pledge of my happiness; — yet — yet let your voice ratify the gift.' 'If the present concession does not sink me in your esteem,' said Julia, in a low tone, 'this hand is yours.'— 'The concession, my love, (for by that tender name I may now call you) would, if possible, raise you in my esteem; but since that has been long incapable of addition, it can only heighten my opinion of myself, and increase my gratitude to you: gratitude which I will endeavour to shew by an anxious

care of your happiness, and by the tender attentions of a whole life. From this blessed moment,' continued he, in a voice of rapture, 'permit me, in thought, to hail you as my wife. From this moment let me banish every vestige of sorrow; — let me dry those tears,' gently pressing her cheek with his lips, 'never to spring again.' — The gratitude and joy which Ferdinand expressed upon this occasion, united with the tenderness of Hippolitus to soothe the agitated spirits of Julia, and she gradually recovered her complacency.

They now arranged their plan of escape; in the execution of which, no time was to be lost, since the nuptials with the duke were to be solemnized on the day after the morrow. Their scheme, whatever it was that should be adopted, they, therefore, resolved to execute on the following night. But when they descended from the first warmth of enterprize, to minuter examination, they soon found the difficulties of the undertaking. The keys of the castle were kept by Robert, the confidential servant of the marquis, who every night deposited them in an iron chest in his chamber. To obtain them by stratagem seemed impossible, and Ferdinand feared to tamper with the honesty of this man, who had been many years in the service of the marquis. Dangerous as was the attempt, no other alternative appeared, and they were therefore compelled to rest all their hopes upon the experiment. It was settled, that if the keys could be procured, Ferdinand and Hippolitus should meet Julia in the closet; that they should convey her to the seashore, from whence a boat, which was to be kept in waiting, would carry them to the opposite coast of Calabria, where the marriage might be solemnized without danger of interruption. But, as it was necessary that Ferdinand should not appear in the affair, it was agreed that he should return to the castle immediately upon the embarkation of his sister. Having thus arranged their plan of operation, they separated till the following night, which was to decide the fate of Hippolitus and Julia.

Julia, whose mind was soothed by the fraternal kindness of Ferdinand, and the tender assurances of Hippolitus, now experienced an interval of repose. At the return of day she awoke refreshed, and tolerably composed. She selected a few clothes which were necessary, and prepared them for her journey. A sentiment of generosity justified her in the reserve she preserved to Emilia and Madame de Menon, whose faithfulness and attachment she could not doubt, but whom she disdained to involve in the

disgrace that must fall upon them, should their knowledge of her flight be discovered.

In the mean time the castle was a scene of confusion. The magnificent preparations which were making for the nuptials, engaged all eyes, and busied all hands. The marchioness had the direction of the whole; and the alacrity with which she acquitted herself, testified how much she was pleased with the alliance, and created a suspicion, that it had not been concerted without some exertion of her influence. Thus was Julia designed the joint victim of ambition and illicit love.

The composure of Julia declined with the day, whose hours had crept heavily along. As the night drew on, her anxiety for the success of Ferdinand's negociation with Robert increased to a painful degree. A variety of new emotions pressed at her heart, and subdued her spirits. When she bade Emilia good night, she thought she beheld her for the last time. The ideas of the distance which would separate them, of the dangers she was going to encounter, with a train of wild and fearful anticipations, crouded upon her mind, tears sprang in her eyes, and it was with difficulty she avoided betraying her emotions. Of madame, too, her heart took a tender farewell. At length she heard the marquis retire to his apartment, and the doors belonging to the several chambers of the guests successively close. She marked with trembling attention the gradual change from bustle to quiet, till all was still.

She now held herself in readiness to depart at the moment in which Ferdinand and Hippolitus, for whose steps in the gallery she eagerly listened, should appear. The castle clock struck twelve. The sound seemed to shake the pile. Julia felt it thrill upon her heart. 'I hear you,' sighed she, 'for the last time.' The stillness of death succeeded. She continued to listen; but no sound met her ear. For a considerable time she sat in a state of anxious expectation not to be described. The clock chimed the successive quarters; and her fear rose to each additional sound. At length she heard it strike one. Hollow was that sound, and dreadful to her hopes; for neither Hippolitus nor Ferdinand appeared. She grew faint with fear and disappointment. Her mind, which for two hours had been kept upon the stretch of expectation, now resigned itself to despair. She gently opened the door of her closet, and looked upon the gallery; but all was lonely and silent. It appeared that Robert had refused to be accessary to

their scheme; and it was probable that he had betrayed it to the marquis. Overwhelmed with bitter reflections, she threw herself upon the sopha in the first distraction of despair. Suddenly she thought she heard a noise in the gallery; and as she started from her posture to listen to the sound, the door of her closet was gently opened by Ferdinand. ‘Come, my love,’ said he, ‘the keys are ours, and we have not a moment to lose; our delay has been unavoidable; but this is no time for explanation.’ Julia, almost fainting, gave her hand to Ferdinand, and Hippolitus, after some short expression of his thankfulness, followed. They passed the door of madame’s chamber; and treading the gallery with slow and silent steps, descended to the hall. This they crossed towards a door, after opening which, they were to find their way, through various passages, to a remote part of the castle, where a private door opened upon the walls. Ferdinand carried the several keys. They fastened the hall door after them, and proceeded through a narrow passage terminating in a staircase.

They descended, and had hardly reached the bottom, when they heard a loud noise at the door above, and presently the voices of several people. Julia scarcely felt the ground she trod on, and Ferdinand flew to unlock a door that obstructed their way. He applied the different keys, and at length found the proper one; but the lock was rusted, and refused to yield. Their distress was not now to be conceived. The noise above increased; and it seemed as if the people were forcing the door. Hippolitus and Ferdinand vainly tried to turn the key. A sudden crash from above convinced them that the door had yielded, when making another desperate effort, the key broke in the lock. Trembling and exhausted, Julia gave herself up for lost. As she hung upon Ferdinand, Hippolitus vainly endeavoured to sooth her — the noise suddenly ceased. They listened, dreading to hear the sounds renewed; but, to their utter astonishment, the silence of the place remained undisturbed. They had now time to breathe, and to consider the possibility of effecting their escape; for from the marquis they had no mercy to hope. Hippolitus, in order to ascertain whether the people had quitted the door above, began to ascend the passage, in which he had not gone many steps when the noise was renewed with increased violence. He instantly retreated; and making a desperate push at the door below, which obstructed their passage, it seemed to yield, and by another effort of Ferdinand, burst open. They had not an instant to lose; for they now heard the steps of

persons descending the stairs. The avenue they were in opened into a kind of chamber, whence three passages branched, of which they immediately chose the first. Another door now obstructed their passage; and they were compelled to wait while Ferdinand applied the keys. ‘Be quick,’ said Julia, ‘or we are lost. O! if this lock too is rusted!’— ‘Hark!’ said Ferdinand. They now discovered what apprehension had before prevented them from perceiving, that the sounds of pursuit were ceased, and all again was silent. As this could happen only by the mistake of their pursuers, in taking the wrong *route* , they resolved to preserve their advantage, by concealing the light, which Ferdinand now covered with his cloak. The door was opened, and they passed on; but they were perplexed in the intricacies of the place, and wandered about in vain endeavour to find their way. Often did they pause to listen, and often did fancy give them sounds of fearful import. At length they entered on the passage which Ferdinand knew led directly to a door that opened on the woods. Rejoiced at this certainty, they soon reached the spot which was to give them liberty.

Ferdinand turned the key; the door unclosed, and, to their infinite joy, discovered to them the grey dawn. ‘Now, my love,’ said Hippolitus, ‘you are safe, and I am happy.’ — Immediately a loud voice from without exclaimed, ‘Take, villain, the reward of your perfidy!’ At the same instant Hippolitus received a sword in his body, and uttering a deep sigh, fell to the ground. Julia shrieked and fainted; Ferdinand drawing his sword, advanced towards the assassin, upon whose countenance the light of his lamp then shone, and discovered to him his father! The sword fell from his grasp, and he started back in an agony of horror. He was instantly surrounded, and seized by the servants of the marquis, while the marquis himself denounced vengeance upon his head, and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon of the castle. At this instant the servants of the count, who were awaiting his arrival on the seashore, hearing the tumult, hastened to the scene, and there beheld their beloved master lifeless and weltering in his blood. They conveyed the bleeding body, with loud lamentations, on board the vessel which had been prepared for him, and immediately set sail for Italy.

Julia, on recovering her senses, found herself in a small room, of which she had no remembrance, with her maid weeping over her. Recollection, when it returned, brought to her mind an energy of grief, which exceeded

even all former conceptions of sufferings. Yet her misery was heightened by the intelligence which she now received. She learned that Hippolitus had been borne away lifeless by his people, that Ferdinand was confined in a dungeon by order of the marquis, and that herself was a prisoner in a remote room, from which, on the day after the morrow, she was to be removed to the chapel of the castle, and there sacrificed to the ambition of her father, and the absurd love of the Duke de Luovo.

This accumulation of evil subdued each power of resistance, and reduced Julia to a state little short of distraction. No person was allowed to approach her but her maid, and the servant who brought her food. Emilia, who, though shocked by Julia's apparent want of confidence, severely sympathized in her distress, solicited to see her; but the pain of denial was so sharply aggravated by rebuke, that she dared not again to urge the request.

In the mean time Ferdinand, involved in the gloom of a dungeon, was resigned to the painful recollection of the past, and a horrid anticipation of the future. From the resentment of the marquis, whose passions were wild and terrible, and whose rank gave him an unlimited power of life and death in his own territories, Ferdinand had much to fear. Yet selfish apprehension soon yielded to a more noble sorrow. He mourned the fate of Hippolitus, and the sufferings of Julia. He could attribute the failure of their scheme only to the treachery of Robert, who had, however, met the wishes of Ferdinand with strong apparent sincerity, and generous interest in the cause of Julia. On the night of the intended elopement, he had consigned the keys to Ferdinand, who, immediately on receiving them, went to the apartment of Hippolitus. There they were detained till after the clock had struck one by a low noise, which returned at intervals, and convinced them that some part of the family was not yet retired to rest. This noise was undoubtedly occasioned by the people whom the marquis had employed to watch, and whose vigilance was too faithful to suffer the fugitives to escape. The very caution of Ferdinand defeated its purpose; for it is probable, that had he attempted to quit the castle by the common entrance, he might have escaped. The keys of the grand door, and those of the courts, remaining in the possession of Robert, the marquis was certain of the intended place of their departure; and was thus enabled to defeat their hopes at the very moment when they exulted in their success.

When the marchioness learned the fate of Hippolitus, the resentment of jealous passion yielded to emotions of pity. Revenge was satisfied, and she could now lament the sufferings of a youth whose personal charms had touched her heart as much as his virtues had disappointed her hopes. Still true to passion, and inaccessible to reason, she poured upon the defenceless Julia her anger for that calamity of which she herself was the unwilling cause. By a dextrous adaptation of her powers, she had worked upon the passions of the marquis so as to render him relentless in the pursuit of ambitious purposes, and insatiable in revenging his disappointment. But the effects of her artifices exceeded her intention in exerting them; and when she meant only to sacrifice a rival to her love, she found she had given up its object to revenge.

CHAPTER I V

The nuptial morn, so justly dreaded by Julia, and so impatiently awaited by the marquis, now arrived. The marriage was to be celebrated with a magnificence which demonstrated the joy it occasioned to the marquis. The castle was fitted up in a style of grandeur superior to any thing that had been before seen in it. The neighbouring nobility were invited to an entertainment which was to conclude with a splendid ball and supper, and the gates were to be thrown open to all who chose to partake of the bounty of the marquis. At an early hour the duke, attended by a numerous retinue, entered the castle. Ferdinand heard from his dungeon, where the rigour and the policy of the marquis still confined him, the loud clattering of hoofs in the courtyard above, the rolling of the carriage wheels, and all the tumultuous bustle which the entrance of the duke occasioned. He too well understood the cause of this uproar, and it awakened in him sensations resembling those which the condemned criminal feels, when his ears are assailed by the dreadful sounds that precede his execution. When he was able to think of himself, he wondered by what means the marquis would reconcile his absence to the guests. He, however, knew too well the dissipated character of the Sicilian nobility, to doubt that whatever story should be invented would be very readily believed by them; who, even if they knew the truth, would not suffer a discovery of their knowledge to interrupt the festivity which was offered them.

The marquis and marchioness received the duke in the outer hall, and conducted him to the saloon, where he partook of the refreshments prepared for him, and from thence retired to the chapel. The marquis now withdrew to lead Julia to the altar, and Emilia was ordered to attend at the door of the chapel, in which the priest and a numerous company were already assembled. The marchioness, a prey to the turbulence of succeeding passions, exulted in the near completion of her favorite scheme. — A disappointment, however, was prepared for her, which would at once crush the triumph of her malice and her pride. The marquis, on entering the prison of Julia, found it empty! His astonishment and indignation upon the discovery almost overpowered his reason. Of the servants of the castle, who were immediately summoned, he enquired

concerning her escape, with a mixture of fury and sorrow which left them no opportunity to reply. They had, however, no information to give, but that her woman had not appeared during the whole morning. In the prison were found the bridal habiliments which the marchioness herself had sent on the preceding night, together with a letter addressed to Emilia, which contained the following words:

‘Adieu, dear Emilia; never more will you see your wretched sister, who flies from the cruel fate now prepared for her, certain that she can never meet one more dreadful. — In happiness or misery — in hope or despair — whatever may be your situation — still remember me with pity and affection. Dear Emilia, adieu! — You will always be the sister of my heart — may you never be the partner of my misfortunes!’

While the marquis was reading this letter, the marchioness, who supposed the delay occasioned by some opposition from Julia, flew to the apartment. By her orders all the habitable parts of the castle were explored, and she herself assisted in the search. At length the intelligence was communicated to the chapel, and the confusion became universal. The priest quitted the altar, and the company returned to the saloon.

The letter, when it was given to Emilia, excited emotions which she found it impossible to disguise, but which did not, however, protect her from a suspicion that she was concerned in the transaction, her knowledge of which this letter appeared intended to conceal.

The marquis immediately dispatched servants upon the fleetest horses of his stables, with directions to take different routs, and to scour every corner of the island in pursuit of the fugitives. When these exertions had somewhat quieted his mind, he began to consider by what means Julia could have effected her escape. She had been confined in a small room in a remote part of the castle, to which no person had been admitted but her own woman and Robert, the confidential servant of the marquis. Even Lisette had not been suffered to enter, unless accompanied by Robert, in whose room, since the night of the fatal discovery, the keys had been regularly deposited. Without them it was impossible she could have escaped: the windows of the apartment being barred and grated, and opening into an inner court, at a prodigious height from the ground. Besides, who could she depend upon for protection — or whither could she intend to fly for concealment? — The associates of her former elopement

were utterly unable to assist her even with advice. Ferdinand himself a prisoner, had been deprived of any means of intercourse with her, and Hippolitus had been carried lifeless on board a vessel, which had immediately sailed for Italy.

Robert, to whom the keys had been entrusted, was severely interrogated by the marquis. He persisted in a simple and uniform declaration of his innocence; but as the marquis believed it impossible that Julia could have escaped without his knowledge, he was ordered into imprisonment till he should confess the fact.

The pride of the duke was severely wounded by this elopement, which proved the excess of Julia's aversion, and compleated the disgraceful circumstances of his rejection. The marquis had carefully concealed from him her prior attempt at elopement, and her consequent confinement; but the truth now burst from disguise, and stood revealed with bitter aggravation. The duke, fired with indignation at the duplicity of the marquis, poured forth his resentment in terms of proud and bitter invective; and the marquis, galled by recent disappointment, was in no mood to restrain the impetuosity of his nature. He retorted with acrimony; and the consequence would have been serious, had not the friends of each party interposed for their preservation. The disputants were at length reconciled; it was agreed to pursue Julia with united, and indefatigable search; and that whenever she should be found, the nuptials should be solemnized without further delay. With the character of the duke, this conduct was consistent. His passions, inflamed by disappointment, and strengthened by repulse, now defied the power of obstacle; and those considerations which would have operated with a more delicate mind to overcome its original inclination, served only to encrease the violence of his.

Madame de Menon, who loved Julia with maternal affection, was an interested observer of all that passed at the castle. The cruel fate to which the marquis destined his daughter she had severely lamented, yet she could hardly rejoice to find that this had been avoided by elopement. She trembled for the future safety of her pupil; and her tranquillity, which was thus first disturbed for the welfare of others, she was not soon suffered to recover.

The marchioness had long nourished a secret dislike to Madame de Menon, whose virtues were a silent reproof to her vices. The contrariety of their disposition created in the marchioness an aversion which would have amounted to contempt, had not that dignity of virtue which strongly characterized the manners of madame, compelled the former to fear what she wished to despise. Her conscience whispered her that the dislike was mutual; and she now rejoiced in the opportunity which seemed to offer itself of lowering the proud integrity of madame's character. Pretending, therefore, to believe that she had encouraged Ferdinand to disobey his father's commands, and had been accessary to the elopement, she accused her of these offences, and stimulated the marquis to reprehend her conduct. But the integrity of Madame de Menon was not to be questioned with impunity. Without deigning to answer the imputation, she desired to resign an office of which she was no longer considered worthy, and to quit the castle immediately. This the policy of the marquis would not suffer; and he was compelled to make such ample concessions to madame, as induced her for the present to continue at the castle.

The news of Julia's elopement at length reached the ears of Ferdinand, whose joy at this event was equalled only by his surprize. He lost, for a moment, the sense of his own situation, and thought only of the escape of Julia. But his sorrow soon returned with accumulated force when he recollected that Julia might then perhaps want that assistance which his confinement alone could prevent his affording her.

The servants, who had been sent in pursuit, returned to the castle without any satisfactory information. Week after week elapsed in fruitless search, yet the duke was strenuous in continuing the pursuit. Emissaries were dispatched to Naples, and to the several estates of the Count Vereza, but they returned without any satisfactory information. The count had not been heard of since he quitted Naples for Sicily.

During these enquiries a new subject of disturbance broke out in the castle of Mazzini. On the night so fatal to the hopes of Hippolitus and Julia, when the tumult was subsided, and all was still, a light was observed by a servant as he passed by the window of the great staircase in the way to his chamber, to glimmer through the casement before noticed in the southern buildings. While he stood observing it, it vanished, and presently reappeared. The former mysterious circumstances relative to these

buildings rushed upon his mind; and fired with wonder, he roused some of his fellow servants to come and behold this phenomenon.

As they gazed in silent terror, the light disappeared, and soon after, they saw a small door belonging to the south tower open, and a figure bearing a light issue forth, which gliding along the castle walls, was quickly lost to their view. Overcome with fear they hurried back to their chambers, and revolved all the late wonderful occurrences. They doubted not, that this was the figure formerly seen by the lady Julia. The sudden change of Madame de Menon’s apartments had not passed unobserved by the servants, but they now no longer hesitated to what to attribute the removal. They collected each various and uncommon circumstance attendant on this part of the fabric; and, comparing them with the present, their superstitious fears were confirmed, and their terror heightened to such a degree, that many of them resolved to quit the service of the marquis.

The marquis surprized at this sudden desertion, enquired into its cause, and learned the truth. Shocked by this discovery, he yet resolved to prevent, if possible, the ill effects which might be expected from a circulation of the report. To this end it was necessary to quiet the minds of his people, and to prevent their quitting his service. Having severely reprehended them for the idle apprehension they encouraged, he told them that, to prove the fallacy of their surmises, he would lead them over that part of the castle which was the subject of their fears, and ordered them to attend him at the return of night in the north hall. Emilia and Madame de Menon, surprised at this procedure, awaited the issue in silent expectation.

The servants, in obedience to the commands of the marquis, assembled at night in the north hall. The air of desolation which reigned through the south buildings, and the circumstance of their having been for so many years shut up, would naturally tend to inspire awe; but to these people, who firmly believed them to be the haunt of an unquiet spirit, terror was the predominant sentiment.

The marquis now appeared with the keys of these buildings in his hands, and every heart thrilled with wild expectation. He ordered Robert to precede him with a torch, and the rest of the servants following, he passed on. A pair of iron gates were unlocked, and they proceeded through a court, whose pavement was wildly overgrown with long grass, to the great

door of the south fabric. Here they met with some difficulty, for the lock, which had not been turned for many years, was rusted.

During this interval, the silence of expectation sealed the lips of all present. At length the lock yielded. That door which had not been passed for so many years, creaked heavily upon its hinges, and disclosed the hall of black marble which Ferdinand had formerly crossed. ‘Now,’ cried the marquis, in a tone of irony as he entered, ‘expect to encounter the ghosts of which you tell me; but if you fail to conquer them, prepare to quit my service. The people who live with me shall at least have courage and ability sufficient to defend me from these spiritual attacks. All I apprehend is, that the enemy will not appear, and in this case your valour will go untried.’

No one dared to answer, but all followed, in silent fear, the marquis, who ascended the great staircase, and entered the gallery. ‘Unlock that door,’ said he, pointing to one on the left, ‘and we will soon unhouse these ghosts.’ Robert applied the key, but his hand shook so violently that he could not turn it. ‘Here is a fellow,’ cried the marquis, ‘fit to encounter a whole legion of spirits. Do you, Anthony, take the key, and try your valour.’

‘Please you, my lord,’ replied Anthony, ‘I never was a good one at unlocking a door in my life, but here is Gregory will do it.’— ‘No, my lord, an’ please you,’ said Gregory, ‘here is Richard.’— ‘Stand off,’ said the marquis, ‘I will shame your cowardice, and do it myself.’

Saying this he turned the key, and was rushing on, but the door refused to yield; it shook under his hands, and seemed as if partially held by some person on the other side. The marquis was surprized, and made several efforts to move it, without effect. He then ordered his servants to burst it open, but, shrinking back with one accord, they cried, ‘For God’s sake, my lord, go no farther; we are satisfied here are no ghosts, only let us get back.’

‘It is now then my turn to be satisfied,’ replied the marquis, ‘and till I am, not one of you shall stir. Open me that door.’— ‘My lord!’— ‘Nay,’ said the marquis, assuming a look of stern authority— ‘dispute not my commands. I am not to be trifled with.’

They now stepped forward, and applied their strength to the door, when a loud and sudden noise burst from within, and resounded through the

hollow chambers! The men started back in affright, and were rushing headlong down the staircase, when the voice of the marquis arrested their flight. They returned, with hearts palpitating with terror. ‘Observe what I say,’ said the marquis, ‘and behave like men. Yonder door,’ pointing to one at some distance, ‘will lead us through other rooms to this chamber — unlock it therefore, for I will know the cause of these sounds.’ Shocked at this determination, the servants again supplicated the marquis to go no farther; and to be obeyed, he was obliged to exert all his authority. The door was opened, and discovered a long narrow passage, into which they descended by a few steps. It led to a gallery that terminated in a back staircase, where several doors appeared, one of which the marquis unclosed. A spacious chamber appeared beyond, whose walls, decayed and discoloured by the damps, exhibited a melancholy proof of desertion.

They passed on through a long suite of lofty and noble apartments, which were in the same ruinous condition. At length they came to the chamber whence the noise had issued. ‘Go first, Robert, with the light,’ said the marquis, as they approached the door; ‘this is the key.’ Robert trembled — but obeyed, and the other servants followed in silence. They stopped a moment at the door to listen, but all was still within. The door was opened, and disclosed a large vaulted chamber, nearly resembling those they had passed, and on looking round, they discovered at once the cause of the alarm. — A part of the decayed roof was fallen in, and the stones and rubbish of the ruin falling against the gallery door, obstructed the passage. It was evident, too, whence the noise which occasioned their terror had arisen; the loose stones which were piled against the door being shook by the effort made to open it, had given way, and rolled to the floor.

After surveying the place, they returned to the back stairs, which they descended, and having pursued the several windings of a long passage, found themselves again in the marble hall. ‘Now,’ said the marquis, ‘what think ye? What evil spirits infest these walls? Henceforth be cautious how ye credit the phantasms of idleness, for ye may not always meet with a master who will condescend to undeceive ye.’ — They acknowledged the goodness of the marquis, and professing themselves perfectly conscious of the error of their former suspicions, desired they might search no farther. ‘I chuse to leave nothing to your imagination,’ replied the marquis, ‘lest hereafter it should betray you into a similar error. Follow me, therefore;

you shall see the whole of these buildings.' Saying this, he led them to the south tower. They remembered, that from a door of this tower the figure which caused their alarm had issued; and notwithstanding the late assertion of their suspicions being removed, fear still operated powerfully upon their minds, and they would willingly have been excused from farther research. 'Would any of you chuse to explore this tower?' said the marquis, pointing to the broken staircase; 'for myself, I am mortal, and therefore fear to venture; but you, who hold communion with disembodied spirits, may partake something of their nature; if so, you may pass without apprehension where the ghost has probably passed before.' They shrunk at this reproof, and were silent.

The marquis turning to a door on his right hand, ordered it to be unlocked. It opened upon the country, and the servants knew it to be the same whence the figure had appeared. Having relocked it, 'Lift that trapdoor; we will desend into the vaults,' said the marquis. 'What trapdoor, my Lord?' said Robert, with encreased agitation; 'I see none.' The marquis pointed, and Robert, perceived a door, which lay almost concealed beneath the stones that had fallen from the staircase above. He began to remove them, when the marquis suddenly turning— 'I have already sufficiently indulged your folly,' said he, 'and am weary of this business. If you are capable of receiving conviction from truth, you must now be convinced that these buildings are not the haunt of a supernatural being; and if you are incapable, it would be entirely useless to proceed. You, Robert, may therefore spare yourself the trouble of removing the rubbish; we will quit this part of the fabric.'

The servants joyfully obeyed, and the marquis locking the several doors, returned with the keys to the habitable part of the castle.

Every enquiry after Julia had hitherto proved fruitless; and the imperious nature of the marquis, heightened by the present vexation, became intolerably oppressive to all around him. As the hope of recovering Julia declined, his opinion that Emilia had assisted her to escape strengthened, and he inflicted upon her the severity of his unjust suspicions. She was ordered to confine herself to her apartment till her innocence should be cleared, or her sister discovered. From Madame de Menon she received a faithful sympathy, which was the sole relief of her oppressed heart. Her anxiety concerning Julia daily encreased, and was

heightened into the most terrifying apprehensions for her safety. She knew of no person in whom her sister could confide, or of any place where she could find protection; the most deplorable evils were therefore to be expected.

One day, as she was sitting at the window of her apartment, engaged in melancholy reflection, she saw a man riding towards the castle on full speed. Her heart beat with fear and expectation; for his haste made her suspect he brought intelligence of Julia; and she could scarcely refrain from breaking through the command of the marquis, and rushing into the hall to learn something of his errand. She was right in her conjecture; the person she had seen was a spy of the marquis's, and came to inform him that the lady Julia was at that time concealed in a cottage of the forest of Marentino. The marquis, rejoiced at this intelligence, gave the man a liberal reward. He learned also, that she was accompanied by a young cavalier; which circumstance surprized him exceedingly; for he knew of no person except the Count de Vereza with whom she could have entrusted herself, and the count had fallen by his sword! He immediately ordered a party of his people to accompany the messenger to the forest of Marentino, and to suffer neither Julia nor the cavalier to escape them, on pain of death.

When the Duke de Luovo was informed of this discovery, he entreated and obtained permission of the marquis to join in the pursuit. He immediately set out on the expedition, armed, and followed by a number of his servants. He resolved to encounter all hazards, and to practice the most desperate extremes, rather than fail in the object of his enterprize. In a short time he overtook the marquis's people, and they proceeded together with all possible speed. The forest lay several leagues distant from the castle of Mazzini, and the day was closing when they entered upon the borders. The thick foliage of the trees spread a deeper shade around; and they were obliged to proceed with caution. Darkness had long fallen upon the earth when they reached the cottage, to which they were directed by a light that glimmered from afar among the trees. The duke left his people at some distance; and dismounted, and accompanied only by one servant, approached the cottage. When he reached it he stopped, and looking through the window, observed a man and woman in the habit of peasants seated at their supper. They were conversing with earnestness,

and the duke, hoping to obtain farther intelligence of Julia, endeavoured to listen to their discourse. They were praising the beauty of a lady, whom the duke did not doubt to be Julia, and the woman spoke much in praise of the cavalier. ‘He has a noble heart,’ said she; ‘and I am sure, by his look, belongs to some great family.’— ‘Nay,’ replied her companion, ‘the lady is as good as he. I have been at Palermo, and ought to know what great folks are, and if she is not one of them, never take my word again. Poor thing, how she does take on! It made my heart ache to see her.’

They were some time silent. The duke knocked at the door, and enquired of the man who opened it concerning the lady and cavalier then in his cottage. He was assured there were no other persons in the cottage than those he then saw. The duke persisted in affirming that the persons he enquired for were there concealed; which the man being as resolute in denying, he gave the signal, and his people approached, and surrounded the cottage. The peasants, terrified by this circumstance, confessed that a lady and cavalier, such as the duke described, had been for some time concealed in the cottage; but that they were now departed.

Suspicious of the truth of the latter assertion, the duke ordered his people to search the cottage, and that part of the forest contiguous to it. The search ended in disappointment. The duke, however, resolved to obtain all possible information concerning the fugitives; and assuming, therefore, a stern air, bade the peasant, on pain of instant death, discover all he knew of them.

The man replied, that on a very dark and stormy night, about a week before, two persons had come to the cottage, and desired shelter. That they were unattended; but seemed to be persons of consequence in disguise. That they paid very liberally for what they had; and that they departed from the cottage a few hours before the arrival of the duke.

The duke enquired concerning the course they had taken, and having received information, remounted his horse, and set forward in pursuit. The road lay for several leagues through the forest, and the darkness, and the probability of encountering banditti, made the journey dangerous. About the break of day they quitted the forest, and entered upon a wild and mountainous country, in which they travelled some miles without perceiving a hut, or a human being. No vestige of cultivation appeared, and no sounds reached them but those of their horses feet, and the roaring

of the winds through the deep forests that overhung the mountains. The pursuit was uncertain, but the duke resolved to persevere.

They came at length to a cottage, where he repeated his enquiries, and learned to his satisfaction that two persons, such as he described, had stopped there for refreshment about two hours before. He found it now necessary to stop for the same purpose. Bread and milk, the only provisions of the place, were set before him, and his attendants would have been well contented, had there been sufficient of this homely fare to have satisfied their hunger.

Having dispatched an hasty meal, they again set forward in the way pointed out to them as the route of the fugitives. The country assumed a more civilized aspect. Corn, vineyards, olives, and groves of mulberry-trees adorned the hills. The vallies, luxuriant in shade, were frequently embellished by the windings of a lucid stream, and diversified by clusters of half-seen cottages. Here the rising turrets of a monastery appeared above the thick trees with which they were surrounded; and there the savage wilds the travellers had passed, formed a bold and picturesque background to the scene.

To the questions put by the duke to the several persons he met, he received answers that encouraged him to proceed. At noon he halted at a village to refresh himself and his people. He could gain no intelligence of Julia, and was perplexed which way to chuse; but determined at length to pursue the road he was then in, and accordingly again set forward. He travelled several miles without meeting any person who could give the necessary information, and began to despair of success. The lengthened shadows of the mountains, and the fading light gave signals of declining day; when having gained the summit of a high hill, he observed two persons travelling on horseback in the plains below. On one of them he distinguished the habiliments of a woman; and in her air he thought he discovered that of Julia. While he stood attentively surveying them, they looked towards the hill, when, as if urged by a sudden impulse of terror, they set off on full speed over the plains. The duke had no doubt that these were the persons he sought; and he, therefore, ordered some of his people to pursue them, and pushed his horse into a full gallop. Before he reached the plains, the fugitives, winding round an abrupt hill, were lost to his view. The duke continued his course, and his people, who were a

considerable way before him, at length reached the hill, behind which the two persons had disappeared. No traces of them were to be seen, and they entered a narrow defile between two ranges of high and savage mountains; on the right of which a rapid stream rolled along, and broke with its deep resounding murmurs the solemn silence of the place. The shades of evening now fell thick, and the scene was soon enveloped in darkness; but to the duke, who was animated by a strong and impetuous passion, these were unimportant circumstances. Although he knew that the wilds of Sicily were frequently infested with banditti, his numbers made him fearless of attack. Not so his attendants, many of whom, as the darkness increased, testified emotions not very honourable to their courage: starting at every bush, and believing it concealed a murderer. They endeavoured to dissuade the duke from proceeding, expressing uncertainty of their being in the right route, and recommending the open plains. But the duke, whose eye had been vigilant to mark the flight of the fugitives, and who was not to be dissuaded from his purpose, quickly repressed their arguments. They continued their course without meeting a single person.

The moon now rose, and afforded them a shadowy imperfect view of the surrounding objects. The prospect was gloomy and vast, and not a human habitation met their eyes. They had now lost every trace of the fugitives, and found themselves bewildered in a wild and savage country. Their only remaining care was to extricate themselves from so forlorn a situation, and they listened at every step with anxious attention for some sound that might discover to them the haunts of men. They listened in vain; the stillness of night was undisturbed but by the wind, which broke at intervals in low and hollow murmurs from among the mountains.

As they proceeded with silent caution, they perceived a light break from among the rocks at some distance. The duke hesitated whether to approach, since it might probably proceed from a party of the banditti with which these mountains were said to be infested. While he hesitated, it disappeared; but he had not advanced many steps when it returned. He now perceived it to issue from the mouth of a cavern, and cast a bright reflection upon the overhanging rocks and shrubs.

He dismounted, and followed by two of his people, leaving the rest at some distance, moved with slow and silent steps towards the cave. As he drew near, he heard the sound of many voices in high carousal. Suddenly

the uproar ceased, and the following words were sung by a clear and manly voice:

SONG

Pour the rich libation high;
The sparkling cup to Bacchus fill;
His joys shall dance in ev’ry eye,
And chace the forms of future ill!

Quick the magic raptures steal
O’er the fancy-kindling brain.
Warm the heart with social zeal,
And song and laughter reign.

Then visions of pleasure shall float on our sight,
While light bounding our spirits shall flow;
And the god shall impart a fine sense of delight
Which in vain *sober* mortals would know.

The last verse was repeated in loud chorus. The duke listened with astonishment! Such social merriment amid a scene of such savage wildness, appeared more like enchantment than reality. He would not have hesitated to pronounce this a party of banditti, had not the delicacy of expression preserved in the song appeared unattainable by men of their class.

He had now a full view of the cave; and the moment which convinced him of his error served only to encrease his surprize. He beheld, by the light of a fire, a party of banditti seated within the deepest recess of the cave round a rude kind of table formed in the rock. The table was spread with provisions, and they were regaling themselves with great eagerness and joy. The countenances of the men exhibited a strange mixture of fierceness and sociality; and the duke could almost have imagined he beheld in these robbers a band of the early Romans before knowledge had civilized, or luxury had softened them. But he had not much time for

meditation; a sense of his danger bade him fly while to fly was yet in his power. As he turned to depart, he observed two saddle-horses grazing upon the herbage near the mouth of the cave. It instantly occurred to him that they belonged to Julia and her companion. He hesitated, and at length determined to linger awhile, and listen to the conversation of the robbers, hoping from thence to have his doubts resolved. They talked for some time in a strain of high conviviality, and recounted in exultation many of their exploits. They described also the behaviour of several people whom they had robbed, with highly ludicrous allusions, and with much rude humour, while the cave re-echoed with loud bursts of laughter and applause. They were thus engaged in tumultuous merriment, till one of them cursing the scanty plunder of their late adventure, but praising the beauty of a lady, they all lowered their voices together, and seemed as if debating upon a point uncommonly interesting to them. The passions of the duke were roused, and he became certain that it was Julia of whom they had spoken. In the first impulse of feeling he drew his sword; but recollecting the number of his adversaries, restrained his fury. He was turning from the cave with a design of summoning his people, when the light of the fire glittering upon the bright blade of his weapon, caught the eye of one of the banditti. He started from his seat, and his comrades instantly rising in consternation, discovered the duke. They rushed with loud vociferation towards the mouth of the cave. He endeavoured to escape to his people; but two of the banditti mounting the horses which were grazing near, quickly overtook and seized him. His dress and air proclaimed him to be a person of distinction; and, rejoicing in their prospect of plunder, they forced him towards the cave. Here their comrades awaited them; but what were the emotions of the duke, when he discovered in the person of the principal robber his own son! who, to escape the galling severity of his father, had fled from his castle some years before, and had not been heard of since.

He had placed himself at the head of a party of banditti, and, pleased with the liberty which till then he had never tasted, and with the power which his new situation afforded him, he became so much attached to this wild and lawless mode of life, that he determined never to quit it till death should dissolve those ties which now made his rank only oppressive. This event seemed at so great a distance, that he seldom allowed himself to

think of it. Whenever it should happen, he had no doubt that he might either resume his rank without danger of discovery, or might justify his present conduct as a frolic which a few acts of generosity would easily excuse. He knew his power would then place him beyond the reach of censure, in a country where the people are accustomed to implicit subordination, and seldom dare to scrutinize the actions of the nobility.

His sensations, however, on discovering his father, were not very pleasing; but proclaiming the duke, he protected him from farther outrage.

With the duke, whose heart was a stranger to the softer affections, indignation usurped the place of parental feeling. His pride was the only passion affected by the discovery; and he had the rashness to express the indignation, which the conduct of his son had excited, in terms of unrestrained invective. The banditti, inflamed by the opprobium with which he loaded their order, threatened instant punishment to his temerity; and the authority of Riccardo could hardly restrain them within the limits of forbearance.

The menaces, and at length entreaties of the duke, to prevail with his son to abandon his present way of life, were equally ineffectual. Secure in his own power, Riccardo laughed at the first, and was insensible to the latter; and his father was compelled to relinquish the attempt. The duke, however, boldly and passionately accused him of having plundered and secreted a lady and cavalier, his friends, at the same time describing Julia, for whose liberation he offered large rewards. Riccardo denied the fact, which so much exasperated the duke, that he drew his sword with an intention of plunging it in the breast of his son. His arm was arrested by the surrounding banditti, who half unsheathed their swords, and stood suspended in an attitude of menace. The fate of the father now hung upon the voice of the son. Riccardo raised his arm, but instantly dropped it, and turned away. The banditti sheathed their weapons, and stepped back.

Riccardo solemnly swearing that he knew nothing of the persons described, the duke at length became convinced of the truth of the assertion, and departing from the cave, rejoined his people. All the impetuous passions of his nature were roused and inflamed by the discovery of his son in a situation so wretchedly disgraceful. Yet it was his pride rather than his virtue that was hurt; and when he wished him dead, it was rather to save himself from disgrace, than his son from the real

indignity of vice. He had no means of reclaiming him; to have attempted it by force, would have been at this time the excess of temerity, for his attendants, though numerous, were undisciplined, and would have fallen certain victims to the power of a savage and dexterous banditti.

With thoughts agitated in fierce and agonizing conflict, he pursued his journey; and having lost all trace of Julia, sought only for an habitation which might shelter him from the night, and afford necessary refreshment for himself and his people. With this, however, there appeared little hope of meeting.

CHAPTER V

The night grew stormy. The hollow winds swept over the mountains, and blew bleak and cold around; the clouds were driven swiftly over the face of the moon, and the duke and his people were frequently involved in total darkness. They had travelled on silently and dejectedly for some hours, and were bewildered in the wilds, when they suddenly heard the bell of a monastery chiming for midnight-prayer. Their hearts revived at the sound, which they endeavoured to follow, but they had not gone far, when the gale wafted it away, and they were abandoned to the uncertain guide of their own conjectures.

They had pursued for some time the way which they judged led to the monastery, when the note of the bell returned upon the wind, and discovered to them that they had mistaken their route. After much wandering and difficulty they arrived, overcome with weariness, at the gates of a large and gloomy fabric. The bell had ceased, and all was still. By the moonlight, which through broken clouds now streamed upon the building, they became convinced it was the monastery they had sought, and the duke himself struck loudly upon the gate.

Several minutes elapsed, no person appeared, and he repeated the stroke. A step was presently heard within, the gate was unbarred, and a thin shivering figure presented itself. The duke solicited admission, but was refused, and reprimanded for disturbing the convent at the hour sacred to prayer. He then made known his rank, and bade the friar inform the Superior that he requested shelter from the night. The friar, suspicious of deceit, and apprehensive of robbers, refused with much firmness, and repeated that the convent was engaged in prayer; he had almost closed the gate, when the duke, whom hunger and fatigue made desperate, rushed by him, and passed into the court. It was his intention to present himself to the Superior, and he had not proceeded far when the sound of laughter, and of many voices in loud and mirthful jollity, attracted his steps. It led him through several passages to a door, through the crevices of which light appeared. He paused a moment, and heard within a wild uproar of merriment and song. He was struck with astonishment, and could scarcely credit his senses!

He unclosed the door, and beheld in a large room, well lighted, a company of friars, dressed in the habit of their order, placed round a table, which was profusely spread with wines and fruits. The Superior, whose habit distinguished him from his associates, appeared at the head of the table. He was lifting a large goblet of wine to his lips, and was roaring out, ‘Profusion and confusion,’ at the moment when the duke entered. His appearance caused a general alarm; that part of the company who were not too much intoxicated, arose from their seats; and the Superior, dropping the goblet from his hands, endeavoured to assume a look of austerity, which his rosy countenance belied. The duke received a reprimand, delivered in the lisping accents of intoxication, and embellished with frequent interjections of hiccup. He made known his quality, his distress, and solicited a night’s lodging for himself and his people. When the Superior understood the distinction of his guest, his features relaxed into a smile of joyous welcome; and taking him by the hand, he placed him by his side.

The table was quickly covered with luxurious provisions, and orders were given that the duke’s people should be admitted, and taken care of. He was regaled with a variety of the finest wines, and at length, highly elevated by monastic hospitality, he retired to the apartment allotted him, leaving the Superior in a condition which precluded all ceremony.

He departed in the morning, very well pleased with the accommodating principles of monastic religion. He had been told that the enjoyment of the good things of this life was the surest sign of our gratitude to Heaven; and it appeared, that within the walls of a Sicilian monastery, the precept and the practice were equally enforced.

He was now at a loss what course to chuse, for he had no clue to direct him towards the object of his pursuit; but hope still invigorated, and urged him to perseverance. He was not many leagues from the coast; and it occurred to him that the fugitives might make towards it with a design of escaping into Italy. He therefore determined to travel towards the sea and proceed along the shore.

At the house where he stopped to dine, he learned that two persons, such as he described, had halted there about an hour before his arrival, and had set off again in much seeming haste. They had taken the road towards the coast, whence it was obvious to the duke they designed to embark. He

stayed not to finish the repast set before him, but instantly remounted to continue the pursuit.

To the enquiries he made of the persons he chanced to meet, favorable answers were returned for a time, but he was at length bewildered in uncertainity, and travelled for some hours in a direction which chance, rather than judgment, prompted him to take.

The falling evening again confused his prospects, and unsettled his hopes. The shades were deepened by thick and heavy clouds that enveloped the horizon, and the deep sounding air foretold a tempest. The thunder now rolled at a distance, and the accumulated clouds grew darker. The duke and his people were on a wild and dreary heath, round which they looked in vain for shelter, the view being terminated on all sides by the same desolate scene. They rode, however, as hard as their horses would carry them; and at length one of the attendants spied on the skirts of the waste a large mansion, towards which they immediately directed their course.

They were overtaken by the storm, and at the moment when they reached the building, a peal of thunder, which seemed to shake the pile, burst over their heads. They now found themselves in a large and ancient mansion, which seemed totally deserted, and was falling to decay. The edifice was distinguished by an air of magnificence, which ill accorded with the surrounding scenery, and which excited some degree of surprize in the mind of the duke, who, however, fully justified the owner in forsaking a spot which presented to the eye only views of rude and desolated nature.

The storm increased with much violence, and threatened to detain the duke a prisoner in his present habitation for the night. The hall, of which he and his people had taken possession, exhibited in every feature marks of ruin and desolation. The marble pavement was in many places broken, the walls were mouldering in decay, and round the high and shattered windows the long grass waved to the lonely gale. Curiosity led him to explore the recesses of the mansion. He quitted the hall, and entered upon a passage which conducted him to a remote part of the edifice. He wandered through the wild and spacious apartments in gloomy meditation, and often paused in wonder at the remains of magnificence which he beheld.

The mansion was irregular and vast, and he was bewildered in its intricacies. In endeavouring to find his way back, he only perplexed himself more, till at length he arrived at a door, which he believed led into the hall he first quitted. On opening it he discovered, by the faint light of the moon, a large place which he scarcely knew whether to think a cloister, a chapel, or a hall. It retired in long perspective, in arches, and terminated in a large iron gate, through which appeared the open country.

The lighting flashed thick and blue around, which, together with the thunder that seemed to rend the wide arch of heaven, and the melancholy aspect of the place, so awed the duke, that he involuntarily called to his people. His voice was answered only by the deep echoes which ran in murmurs through the place, and died away at a distance; and the moon now sinking behind a cloud, left him in total darkness.

He repeated the call more loudly, and at length heard the approach of footsteps. A few moments relieved him from his anxiety, for his people appeared. The storm was yet loud, and the heavy and sulphureous appearance of the atmosphere promised no speedy abatement of it. The duke endeavoured to reconcile himself to pass the night in his present situation, and ordered a fire to be lighted in the place he was in. This with much difficulty was accomplished. He then threw himself on the pavement before it, and tried to endure the abstinence which he had so ill observed in the monastery on the preceding night. But to his great joy his attendants, more provident than himself, had not scrupled to accept a comfortable quantity of provisions which had been offered them at the monastery; and which they now drew forth from a wallet. They were spread upon the pavement; and the duke, after refreshing himself, delivered up the remains to his people. Having ordered them to watch by turns at the gate, he wrapt his cloak round him, and resigned himself to repose.

The night passed without any disturbance. The morning arose fresh and bright; the Heavens exhibited a clear and unclouded concave; even the wild heath, refreshed by the late rains, smiled around, and sent up with the morning gale a stream of fragrance.

The duke quitted the mansion, reanimated by the cheerfulness of morn, and pursued his journey. He could gain no intelligence of the fugitives. About noon he found himself in a beautiful romantic country; and having reached the summit of some wild cliffs, he rested, to view the picturesque

imagery of the scene below. A shadowy sequestered dell appeared buried deep among the rocks, and in the bottom was seen a lake, whose clear bosom reflected the impending cliffs, and the beautiful luxuriance of the overhanging shades.

But his attention was quickly called from the beauties of inanimate nature, to objects more interesting; for he observed two persons, whom he instantly recollected to be the same that he had formerly pursued over the plains. They were seated on the margin of the lake, under the shade of some high trees at the foot of the rocks, and seemed partaking of a repast which was spread upon the grass. Two horses were grazing near. In the lady the duke saw the very air and shape of Julia, and his heart bounded at the sight. They were seated with their backs to the cliffs upon which the duke stood, and he therefore surveyed them unobserved. They were now almost within his power, but the difficulty was how to descend the rocks, whose stupendous heights and craggy steeps seemed to render them impassable. He examined them with a scrutinizing eye, and at length espied, where the rock receded, a narrow winding sort of path. He dismounted, and some of his attendants doing the same, followed their lord down the cliffs, treading lightly, lest their steps should betray them. Immediately upon their reaching the bottom, they were perceived by the lady, who fled among the rocks, and was presently pursued by the duke's people. The cavalier had no time to escape, but drew his sword, and defended himself against the furious assault of the duke.

The combat was sustained with much vigour and dexterity on both sides for some minutes, when the duke received the point of his adversary's sword, and fell. The cavalier, endeavouring to escape, was seized by the duke's people, who now appeared with the fair fugitive; but what was the disappointment — the rage of the duke, when in the person of the lady he discovered a stranger! The astonishment was mutual, but the accompanying feelings were, in the different persons, of a very opposite nature. In the duke, astonishment was heightened by vexation, and embittered by disappointment: — in the lady, it was softened by the joy of unexpected deliverance.

This lady was the younger daughter of a Sicilian nobleman, whose avarice, or necessities, had devoted her to a convent. To avoid the threatened fate, she fled with the lover to whom her affections had long

been engaged, and whose only fault, even in the eye of her father, was inferiority of birth. They were now on their way to the coast, whence they designed to pass over to Italy, where the church would confirm the bonds which their hearts had already formed. There the friends of the cavalier resided, and with them they expected to find a secure retreat.

The duke, who was not materially wounded, after the first transport of his rage had subsided, suffered them to depart. Relieved from their fears, they joyfully set forward, leaving their late pursuer to the anguish of defeat, and fruitless endeavour. He was remounted on his horse; and having dispatched two of his people in search of a house where he might obtain some relief, he proceeded slowly on his return to the castle of Mazzini.

It was not long ere he recollected a circumstance which, in the first tumult of his disappointment, had escaped him, but which so essentially affected the whole tenour of his hopes, as to make him again irresolute how to proceed. He considered that, although these were the fugitives he had pursued over the plains, they might not be the same who had been secreted in the cottage, and it was therefore possible that Julia might have been the person whom they had for some time followed from thence. This suggestion awakened his hopes, which were however quickly destroyed; for he remembered that the only persons who could have satisfied his doubts, were now gone beyond the power of recall. To pursue Julia, when no traces of her flight remained, was absurd; and he was, therefore, compelled to return to the marquis, as ignorant and more hopeless than he had left him. With much pain he reached the village which his emissaries had discovered, when fortunately he obtained some medical assistance. Here he was obliged by indisposition to rest. The anguish of his mind equalled that of his body. Those impetuous passions which so strongly marked his nature, were roused and exasperated to a degree that operated powerfully upon his constitution, and threatened him with the most alarming consequences. The effect of his wound was heightened by the agitation of his mind; and a fever, which quickly assumed a very serious aspect, co-operated to endanger his life.

CHAPTER V I

The castle of Mazzini was still the scene of dissension and misery. The impatience and astonishment of the marquis being daily increased by the lengthened absence of the duke, he dispatched servants to the forest of Marentino, to enquire the occasion of this circumstance. They returned with intelligence that neither Julia, the duke, nor any of his people were there. He therefore concluded that his daughter had fled the cottage upon information of the approach of the duke, who, he believed, was still engaged in the pursuit. With respect to Ferdinand, who yet pined in sorrow and anxiety in his dungeon, the rigour of the marquis's conduct was unabated. He apprehended that his son, if liberated, would quickly discover the retreat of Julia, and by his advice and assistance confirm her in disobedience.

Ferdinand, in the stillness and solitude of his dungeon, brooded over the late calamity in gloomy ineffectual lamentation. The idea of Hippolitus — of Hippolitus murdered — arose to his imagination in busy intrusion, and subdued the strongest efforts of his fortitude. Julia too, his beloved sister — unprotected — unfriended — might, even at the moment he lamented her, be sinking under sufferings dreadful to humanity. The airy schemes he once formed of future felicity, resulting from the union of two persons so justly dear to him — with the gay visions of past happiness — floated upon his fancy, and the lustre they reflected served only to heighten, by contrast, the obscurity and gloom of his present views. He had, however, a new subject of astonishment, which often withdrew his thoughts from their accustomed object, and substituted a sensation less painful, though scarcely less powerful. One night as he lay ruminating on the past, in melancholy dejection, the stillness of the place was suddenly interrupted by a low and dismal sound. It returned at intervals in hollow sighings, and seemed to come from some person in deep distress. So much did fear operate upon his mind, that he was uncertain whether it arose from within or from without. He looked around his dungeon, but could distinguish no object through the impenetrable darkness. As he listened in deep amazement, the sound was repeated in moans more hollow. Terror now occupied his mind, and disturbed his reason; he started from his posture,

and, determined to be satisfied whether any person beside himself was in the dungeon, groped, with arms extended, along the walls. The place was empty; but coming to a particular spot, the sound suddenly arose more distinctly to his ear. He called aloud, and asked who was there; but received no answer. Soon after all was still; and after listening for some time without hearing the sounds renewed, he laid himself down to sleep. On the following day he mentioned to the man who brought him food what he had heard, and enquired concerning the noise. The servant appeared very much terrified, but could give no information that might in the least account for the circumstance, till he mentioned the vicinity of the dungeon to the southern buildings. The dreadful relation formerly given by the marquis instantly recurred to the mind of Ferdinand, who did not hesitate to believe that the moans he heard came from the restless spirit of the murdered Della Campo. At this conviction, horror thrilled his nerves; but he remembered his oath, and was silent. His courage, however, yielded to the idea of passing another night alone in his prison, where, if the vengeful spirit of the murdered should appear, he might even die of the horror which its appearance would inspire.

The mind of Ferdinand was highly superior to the general influence of superstition; but, in the present instance, such strong correlative circumstances appeared, as compelled even incredulity to yield. He had himself heard strange and awful sounds in the forsaken southern buildings; he received from his father a dreadful secret relative to them — a secret in which his honor, nay even his life, was bound up. His father had also confessed, that he had himself there seen appearances which he could never after remember without horror, and which had occasioned him to quit that part of the castle. All these recollections presented to Ferdinand a chain of evidence too powerful to be resisted; and he could not doubt that the spirit of the dead had for once been permitted to revisit the earth, and to call down vengeance on the descendants of the murderer.

This conviction occasioned him a degree of horror, such as no apprehension of mortal powers could have excited; and he determined, if possible, to prevail on Peter to pass the hours of midnight with him in his dungeon. The strictness of Peter’s fidelity yielded to the persuasions of Ferdinand, though no bribe could tempt him to incur the resentment of the marquis, by permitting an escape. Ferdinand passed the day in lingering

anxious expectation, and the return of night brought Peter to the dungeon. His kindness exposed him to a danger which he had not foreseen; for when seated in the dungeon alone with his prisoner, how easily might that prisoner have conquered him and left him to pay his life to the fury of the marquis. He was preserved by the humanity of Ferdinand, who instantly perceived his advantage, but disdained to involve an innocent man in destruction, and spurned the suggestion from his mind.

Peter, whose friendship was stronger than his courage, trembled with apprehension as the hour drew nigh in which the groans had been heard on the preceding night. He recounted to Ferdinand a variety of terrific circumstances, which existed only in the heated imaginations of his fellow-servants, but which were still admitted by them as facts. Among the rest, he did not omit to mention the light and the figure which had been seen to issue from the south tower on the night of Julia's intended elopement; a circumstance which he embellished with innumerable aggravations of fear and wonder. He concluded with describing the general consternation it had caused, and the consequent behaviour of the marquis, who laughed at the fears of his people, yet condescended to quiet them by a formal review of the buildings whence their terror had originated. He related the adventure of the door which refused to yield, the sounds which arose from within, and the discovery of the fallen roof; but declared that neither he, nor any of his fellow servants, believed the noise or the obstruction proceeded from that, 'because, my lord,' continued he, 'the door seemed to be held only in one place; and as for the noise — O! Lord! I never shall forget what a noise it was! — it was a thousand times louder than what any stones could make.'

Ferdinand listened to this narrative in silent wonder! wonder not occasioned by the adventure described, but by the hardihood and rashness of the marquis, who had thus exposed to the inspection of his people, that dreadful spot which he knew from experience to be the haunt of an injured spirit; a spot which he had hitherto scrupulously concealed from human eye, and human curiosity; and which, for so many years, he had not dared even himself to enter. Peter went on, but was presently interrupted by a hollow moan, which seemed to come from beneath the ground. 'Blessed virgin!' exclaimed he: Ferdinand listened in awful expectation. A groan longer and more dreadful was repeated, when Peter started from his seat,

and snatching up the lamp, rushed out of the dungeon. Ferdinand, who was left in total darkness, followed to the door, which the affrighted Peter had not stopped to fasten, but which had closed, and seemed held by a lock that could be opened only on the outside. The sensations of Ferdinand, thus compelled to remain in the dungeon, are not to be imagined. The horrors of the night, whatever they were to be, he was to endure alone. By degrees, however, he seemed to acquire the valour of despair. The sounds were repeated, at intervals, for near an hour, when silence returned, and remained undisturbed during the rest of the night. Ferdinand was alarmed by no appearance, and at length, overcome with anxiety and watching, he sunk to repose.

On the following morning Peter returned to the dungeon, scarcely knowing what to expect, yet expecting something very strange, perhaps the murder, perhaps the supernatural disappearance of his young lord. Full of these wild apprehensions, he dared not venture thither alone, but persuaded some of the servants, to whom he had communicated his terrors, to accompany him to the door. As they passed along he recollected, that in the terror of the preceding night he had forgot to fasten the door, and he now feared that his prisoner had made his escape without a miracle. He hurried to the door; and his surprize was extreme to find it fastened. It instantly struck him that this was the work of a supernatural power, when on calling aloud, he was answered by a voice from within. His absurd fear did not suffer him to recognize the voice of Ferdinand, neither did he suppose that Ferdinand had failed to escape, he, therefore, attributed the voice to the being he had heard on the preceding night; and starting back from the door, fled with his companions to the great hall. There the uproar occasioned by their entrance called together a number of persons, amongst whom was the marquis, who was soon informed of the cause of alarm, with a long history of the circumstances of the foregoing night. At this information, the marquis assumed a very stern look, and severely reprimanded Peter for his imprudence, at the same time reproaching the other servants with their undutifulness in thus disturbing his peace. He reminded them of the condescension he had practised to dissipate their former terrors, and of the result of their examination. He then assured them, that since indulgence had only encouraged intrusion, he would for the future be severe; and concluded with declaring, that the first

man who should disturb him with a repetition of such ridiculous apprehensions, or should attempt to disturb the peace of the castle by circulating these idle notions, should be rigorously punished, and banished his dominions. They shrunk back at his reproof, and were silent. ‘Bring a torch,’ said the marquis, ‘and shew me to the dungeon. I will once more condescend to confute you.’

They obeyed, and descended with the marquis, who, arriving at the dungeon, instantly threw open the door, and discovered to the astonished eyes of his attendants — Ferdinand! — He started with surprize at the entrance of his father thus attended. The marquis darted upon him a severe look, which he perfectly comprehended.— ‘Now,’ cried he, turning to his people, ‘what do you see? My son, whom I myself placed here, and whose voice, which answered to your calls, you have transformed into unknown sounds. Speak, Ferdinand, and confirm what I say.’ Ferdinand did so. ‘What dreadful spectre appeared to you last night?’ resumed the marquis, looking stedfastly upon him: ‘gratify these fellows with a description of it, for they cannot exist without something of the marvellous.’ ‘None, my lord,’ replied Ferdinand, who too well understood the manner of the marquis. ‘‘Tis well,’ cried the marquis, ‘and this is the last time,’ turning to his attendants, ‘that your folly shall be treated with so much lenity.’ He ceased to urge the subject, and forbore to ask Ferdinand even one question before his servants, concerning the nocturnal sounds described by Peter. He quitted the dungeon with eyes steadily bent in anger and suspicion upon Ferdinand. The marquis suspected that the fears of his son had inadvertently betrayed to Peter a part of the secret entrusted to him, and he artfully interrogated Peter with seeming carelessness, concerning the circumstances of the preceding night. From him he drew such answers as honorably acquitted Ferdinand of indiscretion, and relieved himself from tormenting apprehensions.

The following night passed quietly away; neither sound nor appearance disturbed the peace of Ferdinand. The marquis, on the next day, thought proper to soften the severity of his sufferings, and he was removed from his dungeon to a room strongly grated, but exposed to the light of day.

Meanwhile a circumstance occurred which increased the general discord, and threatened Emilia with the loss of her last remaining comfort — the advice and consolation of Madame de Menon. The marchioness,

whose passion for the Count de Vereza had at length yielded to absence, and the pressure of present circumstances, now bestowed her smiles upon a young Italian cavalier, a visitor at the castle, who possessed too much of the spirit of gallantry to permit a lady to languish in vain. The marquis, whose mind was occupied with other passions, was insensible to the misconduct of his wife, who at all times had the address to disguise her vices beneath the gloss of virtue and innocent freedom. The intrigue was discovered by madame, who, having one day left a book in the oak parlour, returned thither in search of it. As she opened the door of the apartment, she heard the voice of the cavalier in passionate exclamation; and on entering, discovered him rising in some confusion from the feet of the marchioness, who, darting at madame a look of severity, arose from her seat. Madame, shocked at what she had seen, instantly retired, and buried in her own bosom that secret, the discovery of which would most essentially have poisoned the peace of the marquis. The marchioness, who was a stranger to the generosity of sentiment which actuated Madame de Menon, doubted not that she would seize the moment of retaliation, and expose her conduct where most she dreaded it should be known. The consciousness of guilt tortured her with incessant fear of discovery, and from this period her whole attention was employed to dislodge from the castle the person to whom her character was committed. In this it was not difficult to succeed; for the delicacy of madame’s feelings made her quick to perceive, and to withdraw from a treatment unsuitable to the natural dignity of her character. She therefore resolved to depart from the castle; but disdaining to take an advantage even over a successful enemy, she determined to be silent on that subject which would instantly have transferred the triumph from her adversary to herself. When the marquis, on hearing her determination to retire, earnestly enquired for the motive of her conduct, she forbore to acquaint him with the real one, and left him to incertitude and disappointment.

To Emilia this design occasioned a distress which almost subdued the resolution of madame. Her tears and intreaties spoke the artless energy of sorrow. In madame she lost her only friend; and she too well understood the value of that friend, to see her depart without feeling and expressing the deepest distress. From a strong attachment to the memory of the mother, madame had been induced to undertake the education of her

daughters, whose engaging dispositions had perpetuated a kind of hereditary affection. Regard for Emilia and Julia had alone for some time detained her at the castle; but this was now succeeded by the influence of considerations too powerful to be resisted. As her income was small, it was her plan to retire to her native place, which was situated in a distant part of the island, and there take up her residence in a convent.

Emilia saw the time of madame's departure approach with increased distress. They left each other with a mutual sorrow, which did honour to their hearts. When her last friend was gone, Emilia wandered through the forsaken apartments, where she had been accustomed to converse with Julia, and to receive consolation and sympathy from her dear instructress, with a kind of anguish known only to those who have experienced a similar situation. Madame pursued her journey with a heavy heart. Separated from the objects of her fondest affections, and from the scenes and occupations for which long habit had formed claims upon her heart, she seemed without interest and without motive for exertion. The world appeared a wide and gloomy desert, where no heart welcomed her with kindness — no countenance brightened into smiles at her approach. It was many years since she quitted Calini — and in the interval, death had swept away the few friends she left there. The future presented a melancholy scene; but she had the retrospect of years spent in honorable endeavour and strict integrity, to cheer her heart and encouraged her hopes.

But her utmost endeavours were unable to express the anxiety with which the uncertain fate of Julia overwhelmed her. Wild and terrific images arose to her imagination. Fancy drew the scene; — she deepened the shades; and the terrific aspect of the objects she presented was heightened by the obscurity which involved them.

[End of Vol. I]

CHAPTER VI I

Towards the close of day Madame de Menon arrived at a small village situated among the mountains, where she purposed to pass the night. The evening was remarkably fine, and the romantic beauty of the surrounding scenery invited her to walk. She followed the windings of a stream, which was lost at some distance amongst luxuriant groves of chesnut. The rich colouring of evening glowed through the dark foliage, which spreading a pensive gloom around, offered a scene congenial to the present temper of her mind, and she entered the shades. Her thoughts, affected by the surrounding objects, gradually sunk into a pleasing and complacent melancholy, and she was insensibly led on. She still followed the course of the stream to where the deep shades retired, and the scene again opening to day, yielded to her a view so various and sublime, that she paused in thrilling and delightful wonder. A group of wild and grotesque rocks rose in a semicircular form, and their fantastic shapes exhibited Nature in her most sublime and striking attitudes. Here her vast magnificence elevated the mind of the beholder to enthusiasm. Fancy caught the thrilling sensation, and at her touch the towering steeps became shaded with unreal glooms; the caves more darkly frowned — the projecting cliffs assumed a more terrific aspect, and the wild overhanging shrubs waved to the gale in deeper murmurs. The scene inspired madame with reverential awe, and her thoughts involuntarily rose, ‘from Nature up to Nature’s God.’ The last dying gleams of day tinted the rocks and shone upon the waters, which retired through a rugged channel and were lost afar among the receding cliffs. While she listened to their distant murmur, a voice of liquid and melodious sweetness arose from among the rocks; it sung an air, whose melancholy expression awakened all her attention, and captivated her heart. The tones swelled and died faintly away among the clear, yet languishing echoes which the rocks repeated with an effect like that of enchantment. Madame looked around in search of the sweet warbler, and observed at some distance a peasant girl seated on a small projection of the rock, overshadowed by drooping sycamores. She moved slowly towards the spot, which she had almost reached, when the sound of her steps startled and silenced the syren, who, on perceiving a stranger, arose

in an attitude to depart. The voice of madame arrested her, and she approached. Language cannot paint the sensation of madame, when in the disguise of a peasant girl, she distinguished the features of Julia, whose eyes lighted up with sudden recollection, and who sunk into her arms overcome with joy. When their first emotions were subsided, and Julia had received answers to her enquiries concerning Ferdinand and Emilia, she led madame to the place of her concealment. This was a solitary cottage, in a close valley surrounded by mountains, whose cliffs appeared wholly inaccessible to mortal foot. The deep solitude of the scene dissipated at once madame's wonder that Julia had so long remained undiscovered, and excited surprize how she had been able to explore a spot thus deeply sequestered; but madame observed with extreme concern, that the countenance of Julia no longer wore the smile of health and gaiety. Her fine features had received the impressions not only of melancholy, but of grief. Madame sighed as she gazed, and read too plainly the cause of the change. Julia understood that sigh, and answered it with her tears. She pressed the hand of madame in mournful silence to her lips, and her cheeks were suffused with a crimson glow. At length, recovering herself, 'I have much, my dear madam, to tell,' said she, 'and much to explain, 'ere you will admit me again to that esteem of which I was once so justly proud. I had no resource from misery, but in flight; and of that I could not make you a confidant, without meanly involving you in its disgrace.'— 'Say no more, my love, on the subject,' replied madame; 'with respect to myself, I admired your conduct, and felt severely for your situation. Rather let me hear by what means you effected your escape, and what has since be fallen you.' — Julia paused a moment, as if to stifle her rising emotion, and then commenced her narrative.

'You are already acquainted with the secret of that night, so fatal to my peace. I recall the remembrance of it with an anguish which I cannot conceal; and why should I wish its concealment, since I mourn for one, whose noble qualities justified all my admiration, and deserved more than my feeble praise can bestow; the idea of whom will be the last to linger in my mind till death shuts up this painful scene.' Her voice trembled, and she paused. After a few moments she resumed her tale. 'I will spare myself the pain of recurring to scenes with which you are not unacquainted, and proceed to those which more immediately attract your

interest. Caterina, my faithful servant, you know, attended me in my confinement; to her kindness I owe my escape. She obtained from her lover, a servant in the castle, that assistance which gave me liberty. One night when Carlo, who had been appointed my guard, was asleep, Nicolo crept into his chamber, and stole from him the keys of my prison. He had previously procured a ladder of ropes. O! I can never forget my emotions, when in the dead hour of that night, which was meant to precede the day of my sacrifice, I heard the door of my prison unlock, and found myself half at liberty! My trembling limbs with difficulty supported me as I followed Caterina to the saloon, the windows of which being low and near to the terrace, suited our purpose. To the terrace we easily got, where Nicolo awaited us with the rope-ladder. He fastened it to the ground; and having climbed to the top of the parapet, quickly slided down on the other side. There he held it, while we ascended and descended; and I soon breathed the air of freedom again. But the apprehension of being retaken was still too powerful to permit a full enjoyment of my escape. It was my plan to proceed to the place of my faithful Caterina's nativity, where she had assured me I might find a safe asylum in the cottage of her parents, from whom, as they had never seen me, I might conceal my birth. This place, she said, was entirely unknown to the marquis, who had hired her at Naples only a few months before, without any enquiries concerning her family. She had informed me that the village was many leagues distant from the castle, but that she was very well acquainted with the road. At the foot of the walls we left Nicolo, who returned to the castle to prevent suspicion, but with an intention to leave it at a less dangerous time, and repair to Farrini to his good Caterina. I parted from him with many thanks, and gave him a small diamond cross, which, for that purpose, I had taken from the jewels sent to me for wedding ornaments.'

CHAPTER VII I

‘About a quarter of a league from the walls we stopped, and I assumed the habit in which you now see me. My own dress was fastened to some heavy stones, and Caterina threw it into the stream, near the almond grove, whose murmurings you have so often admired. The fatigue and hardship I endured in this journey, performed almost wholly on foot, at any other time would have overcome me; but my mind was so occupied by the danger I was avoiding that these lesser evils were disregarded. We arrived in safety at the cottage, which stood at a little distance from the village of Ferrini, and were received by Caterina’s parents with some surprise and more kindness. I soon perceived it would be useless, and even dangerous, to attempt to preserve the character I personated. In the eyes of Caterina’s mother I read a degree of surprise and admiration which declared she believed me to be of superior rank; I, therefore, thought it more prudent to win her fidelity by entrusting her with my secret than, by endeavouring to conceal it, leave it to be discovered by her curiosity or discernment. Accordingly, I made known my quality and my distress, and received strong assurances of assistance and attachment. For further security, I removed to this sequestered spot. The cottage we are now in belongs to a sister of Caterina, upon whose faithfulness I have been hitherto fully justified in relying. But I am not even here secure from apprehension, since for several days past horsemen of a suspicious appearance have been observed near Marcy, which is only half a league from hence.’

Here Julia closed her narration, to which madame had listened with a mixture of surprise and pity, which her eyes sufficiently discovered. The last circumstance of the narrative seriously alarmed her. She acquainted Julia with the pursuit which the duke had undertaken; and she did not hesitate to believe it a party of his people whom Julia had described. Madame, therefore, earnestly advised her to quit her present situation, and to accompany her in disguise to the monastery of St Augustin, where she would find a secure retreat; because, even if her place of refuge should be discovered, the superior authority of the church would protect her. Julia accepted the proposal with much joy. As it was necessary that madame should sleep at the village where she had left her servants and horses, it

was agreed that at break of day she should return to the cottage, where Julia would await her. Madame took all affectionate leave of Julia, whose heart, in spite of reason, sunk when she saw her depart, though but for the necessary interval of repose.

At the dawn of day madame arose. Her servants, who were hired for the journey, were strangers to Julia: from them, therefore, she had nothing to apprehend. She reached the cottage before sunrise, having left her people at some little distance. Her heart foreboded evil, when, on knocking at the door, no answer was returned. She knocked again, and still all was silent. Through the casement she could discover no object, amidst the grey obscurity of the dawn. She now opened the door, and, to her inexpressible surprise and distress, found the cottage empty. She proceeded to a small inner room, where lay a part of Julia's apparel. The bed had no appearance of having being slept in, and every moment served to heighten and confirm her apprehensions. While she pursued the search, she suddenly heard the trampling of feet at the cottage door, and presently after some people entered. Her fears for Julia now yielded to those for her own safety, and she was undetermined whether to discover herself, or remain in her present situation, when she was relieved from her irresolution by the appearance of Julia.

On the return of the good woman, who had accompanied madame to the village on the preceding night, Julia went to the cottage at Farrini. Her grateful heart would not suffer her to depart without taking leave of her faithful friends, thanking them for their kindness, and informing them of her future prospects. They had prevailed upon her to spend the few intervening hours at this cot, whence she had just risen to meet madame.

They now hastened to the spot where the horses were stationed, and commenced their journey. For some leagues they travelled in silence and thought, over a wild and picturesque country. The landscape was tinted with rich and variegated hues; and the autumnal lights, which streamed upon the hills, produced a spirited and beautiful effect upon the scenery. All the glories of the vintage rose to their view: the purple grapes flushed through the dark green of the surrounding foliage, and the prospect glowed with luxuriance.

They now descended into a deep valley, which appeared more like a scene of airy enchantment than reality. Along the bottom flowed a clear

majestic stream, whose banks were adorned with thick groves of orange and citron trees. Julia surveyed the scene in silent complacency, but her eye quickly caught an object which changed with instantaneous shock the tone of her feelings. She observed a party of horsemen winding down the side of a hill behind her. Their uncommon speed alarmed her, and she pushed her horse into a gallop. On looking back Madame de Menon clearly perceived they were in pursuit. Soon after the men suddenly appeared from behind a dark grove within a small distance of them; and, upon their nearer approach, Julia, overcome with fatigue and fear, sunk breathless from her horse. She was saved from the ground by one of the pursuers, who caught her in his arms. Madame, with the rest of the party, were quickly overtaken; and as soon as Julia revived, they were bound, and reconducted to the hill from whence they had descended. Imagination only can paint the anguish of Julia's mind, when she saw herself thus delivered up to the power of her enemy. Madame, in the surrounding troop, discovered none of the marquis's people, and they were therefore evidently in the hands of the duke. After travelling for some hours, they quitted the main road, and turned into a narrow winding dell, overshadowed by high trees, which almost excluded the light. The gloom of the place inspired terrific images. Julia trembled as she entered; and her emotion was heightened, when she perceived at some distance, through the long perspective of the trees, a large ruinous mansion. The gloom of the surrounding shades partly concealed it from her view; but, as she drew near, each forlorn and decaying feature of the fabric was gradually disclosed, and struck upon her heart a horror such as she had never before experienced. The broken battlements, enwreathed with ivy, proclaimed the fallen grandeur of the place, while the shattered vacant window-frames exhibited its desolation, and the high grass that overgrew the threshold seemed to say how long it was since mortal foot had entered. The place appeared fit only for the purposes of violence and destruction: and the unfortunate captives, when they stopped at its gates, felt the full force of its horrors.

They were taken from their horses, and conveyed to an interior part of the building, which, if it had once been a chamber, no longer deserved the name. Here the guard said they were directed to detain them till the arrival of their lord, who had appointed this the place of rendezvous. He was

expected to meet them in a few hours, and these were hours of indescribable torture to Julia and madame. From the furious passions of the duke, exasperated by frequent disappointment, Julia had every evil to apprehend; and the loneliness of the spot he had chosen, enabled him to perpetrate any designs, however violent. For the first time, she repented that she had left her father's house. Madame wept over her, but comfort she had none to give. The day closed — the duke did not appear, and the fate of Julia yet hung in perilous uncertainty. At length, from a window of the apartment she was in, she distinguished a glimmering of torches among the trees, and presently after the clattering of hoofs convinced her the duke was approaching. Her heart sunk at the sound; and throwing her arms round madame's neck, she resigned herself to despair. She was soon roused by some men, who came to announce the arrival of their lord. In a few moments the place, which had lately been so silent, echoed with tumult; and a sudden blaze of light illumining the fabric, served to exhibit more forcibly its striking horrors. Julia ran to the window; and, in a sort of court below, perceived a group of men dismounting from their horses. The torches shed a partial light; and while she anxiously looked round for the person of the duke, the whole party entered the mansion. She listened to a confused uproar of voices, which sounded from the room beneath, and soon after it sunk into a low murmur, as if some matter of importance was in agitation. For some moments she sat in lingering terror, when she heard footsteps advancing towards the chamber, and a sudden gleam of torchlight flashed upon the walls. 'Wretched girl! I have at least secured you!' said a cavalier, who now entered the room. He stopped as he perceived Julia; and turning to the men who stood without, 'Are these,' said he, 'the fugitives you have taken?'— 'Yes, my lord.'— 'Then you have deceived yourselves, and misled me; this is not my daughter.' These words struck the sudden light of truth and joy upon the heart of Julia, whom terror had before rendered almost lifeless; and who had not perceived that the person entering was a stranger. Madame now stepped forward, and an explanation ensued, when it appeared that the stranger was the Marquis Murani, the father of the fair fugitive whom the duke had before mistaken for Julia.

The appearance and the evident flight of Julia had deceived the banditti employed by this nobleman, into a belief that she was the object of their

search, and had occasioned her this unnecessary distress. But the joy she now felt, on finding herself thus unexpectedly at liberty, surpassed, if possible, her preceding terrors. The marquis made madame and Julia all the reparation in his power, by offering immediately to reconduct them to the main road, and to guard them to some place of safety for the night. This offer was eagerly and thankfully accepted; and though faint from distress, fatigue, and want of sustenance, they joyfully remounted their horses, and by torchlight quitted the mansion. After some hours travelling they arrived at a small town, where they procured the accommodation so necessary to their support and repose. Here their guides quitted them to continue their search.

They arose with the dawn, and continued their journey, continually terrified with the apprehension of encountering the duke's people. At noon they arrived at Azulia, from whence the monastery, or abbey of St Augustin, was distant only a few miles. Madame wrote to the *Padre Abate* , to whom she was somewhat related, and soon after received an answer very favourable to her wishes. The same evening they repaired to the abbey; where Julia, once more relieved from the fear of pursuit, offered up a prayer of gratitude to heaven, and endeavoured to calm her sorrows by devotion. She was received by the abbot with a sort of paternal affection, and by the nuns with officious kindness. Comforted by these circumstances, and by the tranquil appearance of every thing around her, she retired to rest, and passed the night in peaceful slumbers.

In her present situation she found much novelty to amuse, and much serious matter to interest her mind. Entendered by distress, she easily yielded to the pensive manners of her companions and to the serene uniformity of a monastic life. She loved to wander through the lonely cloisters, and high-arched aisles, whose long perspectives retired in simple grandeur, diffusing a holy calm around. She found much pleasure in the conversation of the nuns, many of whom were uncommonly amiable, and the dignified sweetness of whose manners formed a charm irresistibly attractive. The soft melancholy impressed upon their countenances, pourtrayed the situation of their minds, and excited in Julia a very interesting mixture of pity and esteem. The affectionate appellation of sister, and all that endearing tenderness which they so well know how to

display, and of which they so well understand the effect, they bestowed on Julia, in the hope of winning her to become one of their order.

Soothed by the presence of madame, the assiduity of the nuns, and by the stillness and sanctity of the place, her mind gradually recovered a degree of complacency to which it had long been a stranger. But notwithstanding all her efforts, the idea of Hippolitus would at intervals return upon her memory with a force that at once subdued her fortitude, and sunk her in a temporary despair.

Among the holy sisters, Julia distinguished one, the singular fervor of whose devotion, and the pensive air of whose countenance, softened by the languor of illness, attracted her curiosity, and excited a strong degree of pity. The nun, by a sort of sympathy, seemed particularly inclined towards Julia, which she discovered by innumerable acts of kindness, such as the heart can quickly understand and acknowledge, although description can never reach them. In conversation with her, Julia endeavoured, as far as delicacy would permit, to prompt an explanation of that more than common dejection which shaded those features, where beauty, touched by resignation and sublimed by religion, shone forth with mild and lambent lustre.

The Duke de Luovo, after having been detained for some weeks by the fever which his wounds had produced, and his irritated passions had much prolonged, arrived at the castle of Mazzini.

When the marquis saw him return, and recollected the futility of those exertions, by which he had boastingly promised to recover Julia, the violence of his nature spurned the disguise of art, and burst forth in contemptuous impeachment of the valour and discernment of the duke, who soon retorted with equal fury. The consequence might have been fatal, had not the ambition of the marquis subdued the sudden irritation of his inferior passions, and induced him to soften the severity of his accusations, by subsequent concessions. The duke, whose passion for Julia was heightened by the difficulty which opposed it, admitted such concessions as in other circumstances he would have rejected; and thus each, conquered by the predominant passion of the moment, submitted to be the slave of his adversary.

Emilia was at length released from the confinement she had so unjustly suffered. She had now the use of her old apartments, where, solitary and

dejected, her hours moved heavily along, embittered by incessant anxiety for Julia, by regret for the lost society of madame. The marchioness, whose pleasures suffered a temporary suspense during the present confusion at the castle, exercised the ill-humoured caprice, which disappointment and lassitude inspired, upon her remaining subject. Emilia was condemned to suffer, and to endure without the privilege of complaining. In reviewing the events of the last few weeks, she saw those most dear to her banished, or imprisoned by the secret influence of a woman, every feature of whose character was exactly opposite to that of the amiable mother she had been appointed to succeed.

The search after Julia still continued, and was still unsuccessful. The astonishment of the marquis increased with his disappointments; for where could Julia, ignorant of the country, and destitute of friends, have possibly found an asylum? He swore with a terrible oath to revenge on her head, whenever she should be found, the trouble and vexation she now caused him. But he agreed with the duke to relinquish for a while the search; till Julia, gaining confidence from the observation of this circumstance, might gradually suppose herself secure from molestation, and thus be induced to emerge from concealment.

CHAPTER I X

Meanwhile Julia, sheltered in the obscure recesses of St Augustin, endeavoured to attain a degree of that tranquillity which so strikingly characterized the scenes around her. The abbey of St Augustin was a large magnificent mass of Gothic architecture, whose gloomy battlements, and majestic towers arose in proud sublimity from amid the darkness of the surrounding shades. It was founded in the twelfth century, and stood a proud monument of monkish superstition and princely magnificence. In the times when Italy was agitated by internal commotions, and persecuted by foreign invaders, this edifice afforded an asylum to many noble Italian emigrants, who here consecrated the rest of their days to religion. At their death they enriched the monastery with the treasures which it had enabled them to secure.

The view of this building revived in the mind of the beholder the memory of past ages. The manners and characters which distinguished them arose to his fancy, and through the long lapse of years he discriminated those customs and manners which formed so striking a contrast to the modes of his own times. The rude manners, the boisterous passions, the daring ambition, and the gross indulgences which formerly characterized the priest, the nobleman, and the sovereign, had now begun to yield to learning — the charms of refined conversation — political intrigue and private artifices. Thus do the scenes of life vary with the predominant passions of mankind, and with the progress of civilization. The dark clouds of prejudice break away before the sun of science, and gradually dissolving, leave the brightening hemisphere to the influence of his beams. But through the present scene appeared only a few scattered rays, which served to shew more forcibly the vast and heavy masses that concealed the form of truth. Here prejudice, not reason, suspended the influence of the passions; and scholastic learning, mysterious philosophy, and crafty sanctity supplied the place of wisdom, simplicity, and pure devotion.

At the abbey, solitude and stillness conspired with the solemn aspect of the pile to impress the mind with religious awe. The dim glass of the high-arched windows, stained with the colouring of monkish fictions, and

shaded by the thick trees that environed the edifice, spread around a sacred gloom, which inspired the beholder with congenial feelings.

As Julia mused through the walks, and surveyed this vast monument of barbarous superstition, it brought to her recollection an ode which she often repeated with melancholy pleasure, as the composition of Hippolitus.

SUPERSTITION AN ODE

High mid Alverna’s awful steeps,
Eternal shades, and silence dwell.
Save, when the gale resounding sweeps,
Sad strains are faintly heard to swell:

Enthron’d amid the wild impending rocks,
Involved in clouds, and brooding future woe,
The demon Superstition Nature shocks,
And waves her sceptre o’er the world below.

Around her throne, amid the mingling glooms,
Wild — hideous forms are slowly seen to glide,
She bids them fly to shade earth’s brightest blooms,
And spread the blast of Desolation wide.

See! in the darkened air their fiery course!
The sweeping ruin settles o’er the land,
Terror leads on their steps with madd’ning force,
And Death and Vengeance close the ghastly band!

Mark the purple streams that flow!
Mark the deep empassioned woe!
Frantic Fury’s dying groan!
Virtue’s sigh, and Sorrow’s moan!

Wide — wide the phantoms swell the loaded air
With shrieks of anguish — madness and despair!

Cease your ruin! spectres dire!
Cease your wild terrific sway!
Turn your steps — and check your ire,
Yield to peace the mourning day!

She wept to the memory of times past, and there was a romantic sadness in her feelings, luxurious and indefinable. Madame behaved to Julia with the tenderest attention, and endeavoured to withdraw her thoughts from their mournful subject by promoting that taste for literature and music, which was so suitable to the powers of her mind.

But an object seriously interesting now obtained that regard, which those of mere amusement failed to attract. Her favorite nun, for whom her love and esteem daily increased, seemed declining under the pressure of a secret grief. Julia was deeply affected with her situation, and though she was not empowered to administer consolation to her sorrows, she endeavoured to mitigate the sufferings of illness. She nursed her with unremitting care, and seemed to seize with avidity the temporary opportunity of escaping from herself. The nun appeared perfectly reconciled to her fate, and exhibited during her illness so much sweetness, patience, and resignation as affected all around her with pity and love. Her angelic mildness, and steady fortitude characterized the beatification of a saint, rather than the death of a mortal. Julia watched every turn of her disorder with the utmost solicitude, and her care was at length rewarded by the amendment of Cornelia. Her health gradually improved, and she attributed this circumstance to the assiduity and tenderness of her young friend, to whom her heart now expanded in warm and unreserved affection. At length Julia ventured to solicit what she had so long and so earnestly wished for, and Cornelia unfolded the history of her sorrows.

‘Of the life which your care has prolonged,’ said she, ‘it is but just that you should know the events; though those events are neither new, or striking, and possess little power of interesting persons unconnected with them. To me they have, however, been unexpectedly dreadful in effect, and my heart assures me, that to you they will not be indifferent.

‘I am the unfortunate descendant of an ancient and illustrious Italian family. In early childhood I was deprived of a mother’s care, but the

tenderness of my surviving parent made her loss, as to my welfare, almost unfelt. Suffer me here to do justice to the character of my noble father. He united in an eminent degree the mild virtues of social life, with the firm unbending qualities of the noble Romans, his ancestors, from whom he was proud to trace his descent. Their merit, indeed, continually dwelt on his tongue, and their actions he was always endeavouring to imitate, as far as was consistent with the character of his times, and with the limited sphere in which he moved. The recollection of his virtue elevates my mind, and fills my heart with a noble pride, which even the cold walls of a monastery have not been able to subdue.

‘My father’s fortune was unsuitable to his rank. That his son might hereafter be enabled to support the dignity of his family, it was necessary for me to assume the veil. Alas! that heart was unfit to be offered at an heavenly shrine, which was already devoted to an earthly object. My affections had long been engaged by the younger son of a neighbouring nobleman, whose character and accomplishments attracted my early love, and confirmed my latest esteem. Our families were intimate, and our youthful intercourse occasioned an attachment which strengthened and expanded with our years. He solicited me of my father, but there appeared an insuperable barrier to our union. The family of my lover laboured under a circumstance of similar distress with that of my own — it was noble — but poor! My father, who was ignorant of the strength of my affection, and who considered a marriage formed in poverty as destructive to happiness, prohibited his suit.

‘Touched with chagrin and disappointment, he immediately entered into the service of his Neapolitan majesty, and sought in the tumultuous scenes of glory, a refuge from the pangs of disappointed passion.

‘To me, whose hours moved in one round of full uniformity — who had no pursuit to interest — no variety to animate my drooping spirits — to me the effort of forgetfulness was ineffectual. The loved idea of Angelo still rose upon my fancy, and its powers of captivation, heightened by absence, and, perhaps even by despair, pursued me with incessant grief. I concealed in silence the anguish that preyed upon my heart, and resigned myself a willing victim to monastic austerity. But I was now threatened with a new evil, terrible and unexpected. I was so unfortunate as to attract the admiration of the Marquis Marinelli, and he applied to my father. He

was illustrious at once in birth and fortune, and his visits could only be unwelcome to me. Dreadful was the moment in which my father disclosed to me the proposal. My distress, which I vainly endeavoured to command, discovered the exact situation of my heart, and my father was affected.

‘After along and awful pause, he generously released me from my sufferings by leaving it to my choice to accept the marquis, or to assume the veil. I fell at his feet, overcome by the noble disinterestedness of his conduct, and instantly accepted the latter.

‘This affair removed entirely the disguise with which I had hitherto guarded my heart; — my brother — my generous brother! learned the true state of its affections. He saw the grief which prayed upon my health; he observed it to my father, and he nobly — oh how nobly! to restore my happiness, desired to resign apart of the estate which had already descended to him in right of his mother. Alas! Hippolitus,’ continued Cornelia, deeply sighing, ‘thy virtues deserved a better fate.’

‘Hippolitus!’ said Julia, in a tremulous accent, ‘Hippolitus, Count de Vereza!’— ‘The same,’ replied the nun, in a tone of surprize. Julia was speechless; tears, however, came to her relief. The astonishment of Cornelia for some moment surpassed expression; at length a gleam of recollection crossed her mind, and she too well understood the scene before her. Julia, after some time revived, when Cornelia tenderly approaching her, ‘Do I then embrace my sister!’ said she. ‘United in sentiment, are we also united in misfortune?’ Julia answered with her sighs, and their tears flowed in mournful sympathy together. At length Cornelia resumed her narrative.

‘My father, struck with the conduct of Hippolitus, paused upon the offer. The alteration in my health was too obvious to escape his notice; the conflict between pride and parental tenderness, held him for some time in indecision, but the latter finally subdued every opposing feeling, and he yielded his consent to my marriage with Angelo. The sudden transition from grief to joy was almost too much for my feeble frame; judge then what must have been the effect of the dreadful reverse, when the news arrived that Angelo had fallen in a foreign engagement! Let me obliterate, if possible, the impression of sensations so dreadful. The sufferings of my brother, whose generous heart could so finely feel for another’s woe, were on this occasion inferior only to my own.

‘After the first excess of my grief was subsided, I desired to retire from a world which had tempted me only with illusive visions of happiness, and to remove from those scenes which prompted recollection, and perpetuated my distress. My father applauded my resolution, and I immediately was admited a noviciate into this monastery, with the Superior of which my father had in his youth been acquainted.

‘At the expiration of the year I received the veil. Oh! I well remember with what perfect resignation, with what comfortable complacency I took those vows which bound me to a life of retirement, and religious rest.

‘The high importance of the moment, the solemnity of the ceremony, the sacred glooms which surrounded me, and the chilling silence that prevailed when I uttered the irrevocable vow — all conspired to impress my imagination, and to raise my views to heaven. When I knelt at the altar, the sacred flame of pure devotion glowed in my heart, and elevated my soul to sublimity. The world and all its recollections faded from my mind, and left it to the influence of a serene and, holy enthusiasm which no words can describe.

‘Soon after my noviciation, I had the misfortune to lose my dear father. In the tranquillity of this monastery, however, in the soothing kindness of my companions, and in devotional exercises, my sorrows found relief, and the sting of grief was blunted. My repose was of short continuance. A circumstance occurred that renewed the misery, which, can now never quit me but in the grave, to which I look with no fearful apprehension, but as a refuge from calamity, trusting that the power who has seen good to afflict me, will pardon the imperfectness of my devotion, and the too frequent wandering of my thoughts to the object once so dear to me.’

As she spoke she raised her eyes, which beamed with truth and meek assurance to heaven; and the fine devotional suffusion of her countenance seemed to characterize the beauty of an inspired saint.

‘One day, Oh! never shall I forget it, I went as usual to the confessional to acknowledge my sins. I knelt before the father with eyes bent towards the earth, and in a low voice proceeded to confess. I had but one crime to deplore, and that was the too tender remembrance of him for whom I mourned, and whose idea, impressed upon my heart, made it a blemished offering to God.

‘I was interrupted in my confession by a sound of deep sobs, and rising my eyes, Oh God, what were my sensations, when in the features of the holy father I discovered Angelo! His image faded like a vision from my sight, and I sunk at his feet. On recovering I found myself on my matrass, attended by a sister, who I discovered by her conversation had no suspicion of the occasion of my disorder. Indisposition confined me to my bed for several days; when I recovered, I saw Angelo no more, and could almost have doubted my senses, and believed that an illusion had crossed my sight, till one day I found in my cell a written paper. I distinguished at the first glance the handwriting of Angelo, that wellknown hand which had so often awakened me to other emotions. I trembled at the sight; my beating heart acknowledged the beloved characters; a cold tremor shook my frame, and half breathless I seized the paper. But recollecting myself, I paused — I hesitated: duty at length yielded to the strong temptation, and I read the lines! Oh! those lines prompted by despair, and bathed in my tears! every word they offered gave a new pang to my heart, and swelled its anguish almost beyond endurance. I learned that Angelo, severely wounded in a foreign engagement, had been left for dead upon the field; that his life was saved by the humanity of a common soldier of the enemy, who perceiving signs of existence, conveyed him to a house. Assistance was soon procured, but his wounds exhibited the most alarming symptoms. During several months he languished between life and death, till at length his youth and constitution surmounted the conflict, and he returned to Naples. Here he saw my brother, whose distress and astonishment at beholding him occasioned a relation of past circumstances, and of the vows I had taken in consequence of the report of his death. It is unnecessary to mention the immediate effect of this narration; the final one exhibited a very singular proof of his attachment and despair; — he devoted himself to a monastic life, and chose this abbey for the place of his residence, because it contained the object most dear to his affections. His letter informed me that he had purposely avoided discovering himself, endeavouring to be contented with the opportunities which occurred of silently observing me, till chance had occasioned the foregoing interview. — But that since its effects had been so mutually painful, he would relieve me from the apprehension of a similar distress, by assuring me, that I should see him no more. He was faithful to his

promise; from that day I have never seen him, and am even ignorant whether he yet inhabits this asylum; the efforts of religious fortitude, and the just fear of exciting curiosity, having withheld me from enquiry. But the moment of our last interview has been equally fatal to my peace and to my health, and I trust I shall, ere very long, be released from the agonizing ineffectual struggles occasioned by the consciousness of sacred vows imperfectly performed, and by earthly affections not wholly subdued.'

Cornelia ceased, and Julia, who had listened to the narrative in deep attention, at once admired, loved, and pitied her. As the sister of Hippolitus, her heart expanded towards her, and it was now inviolably attached by the fine ties of sympathetic sorrow. Similarity of sentiment and suffering united them in the firmest bonds of friendship; and thus, from reciprocation of thought and feeling, flowed a pure and sweet consolation.

Julia loved to indulge in the mournful pleasure of conversing of Hippolitus, and when thus engaged, the hours crept unheeded by. A thousand questions she repeated concerning him, but to those most interesting to her, she received no consolatory answer. Cornelia, who had heard of the fatal transaction at the castle of Mazzini, deplored with her its too certain consequence.

CHAPTER X

Julia accustomed herself to walk in the fine evenings under the shade of the high trees that environed the abbey. The dewy coolness of the air refreshed her. The innumerable roseate tints which the parting sunbeams reflected on the rocks above, and the fine vermil glow diffused over the romantic scene beneath, softly fading from the eye, as the nightshades fell, excited sensations of a sweet and tranquil nature, and soothed her into a temporary forgetfulness of her sorrows.

The deep solitude of the place subdued her apprehension, and one evening she ventured with Madame de Menon to lengthen her walk. They returned to the abbey without having seen a human being, except a friar of the monastery, who had been to a neighbouring town to order provision. On the following evening they repeated their walk; and, engaged in conversation, rambled to a considerable distance from the abbey. The distant bell of the monastery sounding for vespers, reminded them of the hour, and looking round, they perceived the extremity of the wood. They were returning towards the abbey, when struck by the appearance of some majestic columns which were distinguishable between the trees, they paused. Curiosity tempted them to examine to what edifice pillars of such magnificent architecture could belong, in a scene so rude, and they went on.

There appeared on a point of rock impending over the valley the reliques of a palace, whose beauty time had impaired only to heighten its sublimity. An arch of singular magnificence remained almost entire, beyond which appeared wild cliffs retiring in grand perspective. The sun, which was now setting, threw a trembling lustre upon the ruins, and gave a finishing effect to the scene. They gazed in mute wonder upon the view; but the fast fading light, and the dewy chillness of the air, warned them to return. As Julia gave a last look to the scene, she perceived two men leaning upon a part of the ruin at some distance, in earnest conversation. As they spoke, their looks were so attentively bent on her, that she could have no doubt she was the subject of their discourse. Alarmed at this circumstance, madame and Julia immediately retreated towards the abbey. They walked swiftly through the woods, whose shades, deepened by the

gloom of evening, prevented their distinguishing whether they were pursued. They were surprized to observe the distance to which they had strayed from the monastery, whose dark towers were now obscurely seen rising among the trees that closed the perspective. They had almost reached the gates, when on looking back, they perceived the same men slowly advancing, without any appearance of pursuit, but clearly as if observing the place of their retreat.

This incident occasioned Julia much alarm. She could not but believe that the men whom she had seen were spies of the marquis; — if so, her asylum was discovered, and she had every thing to apprehend. Madame now judged it necessary to the safety of Julia, that the *Abate* should be informed of her story, and of the sanctuary she had sought in his monastery, and also that he should be solicited to protect her from parental tyranny. This was a hazardous, but a necessary step, to provide against the certain danger which must ensue, should the marquis, if he demanded his daughter of the *Abate* , be the first to acquaint him with her story. If she acted otherwise, she feared that the *Abate* , in whose generosity she had not confided, and whose pity she had not solicited, would, in the pride of his resentment, deliver her up, and thus would she become a certain victim to the Duke de Luovo.

Julia approved of this communication, though she trembled for the event; and requested madame to plead her cause with the *Abate* . On the following morning, therefore, madame solicited a private audience of the *Abate* ; she obtained permission to see him, and Julia, in trembling anxiety, watched her to the door of his apartment. This conference was long, and every moment seemed an hour to Julia, who, in fearful expectation, awaited with Cornelia the sentence which would decide her destiny. She was now the constant companion of Cornelia, whose declining health interested her pity, and strengthened her attachment.

Meanwhile madame developed to the *Abate* the distressful story of Julia. She praised her virtues, commended her accomplishments, and deplored her situation. She described the characters of the marquis and the duke, and concluded with pathetically representing, that Julia had sought in this monastery, a last asylum from injustice and misery, and with entreating that the *Abate* would grant her his pity and protection.

The *Abate* during this discourse preserved a sullen silence; his eyes were bent to the ground, and his aspect was thoughful and solemn. When madame ceased to speak, a pause of profound silence ensued, and she sat in anxious expectation. She endeavoured to anticipate in his countenance the answer preparing, but she derived no comfort from thence. At length raising his head, and awakening from his deep reverie, he told her that her request required deliberation, and that the protection she solicited for Julia, might involve him in serious consequences, since, from a character so determined as the marquis's, much violence might reasonably be expected. 'Should his daughter be refused him,' concluded the *Abate* , 'he may even dare to violate the sanctuary.'

Madame, shocked by the stern indifference of this reply, was a moment silent. The *Abate* went on. 'Whatever I shall determine upon, the young lady has reason to rejoice that she is admitted into this holy house; for I will even now venture to assure her, that if the marquis fails to demand her, she shall be permitted to remain in this sanctuary unmolested. You, Madam, will be sensible of this indulgence, and of the value of the sacrifice I make in granting it; for, in thus concealing a child from her parent, I encourage her in disobedience, and consequently sacrifice my sense of duty, to what may be justly called a weak humanity.'

Madame listened to pompous declamation in silent sorrow and indignation. She made another effort to interest the *Abate* in favor of Julia, but he preserved his stern inflexibility, and repeating that he would deliberate upon the matter, and acquaint her with the result, he arose with great solemnity, and quitted the room.

She now half repented of the confidence she had reposed in him, and of the pity she had solicited, since he discovered a mind incapable of understanding the first, and a temper inaccessible to the influence of the latter. With an heavy heart she returned to Julia, who read in her countenance, at the moment she entered the room, news of no happy import. When madame related the particulars of the conference, Julia presaged from it only misery, and giving herself up for lost — she burst into tears. She severely deplored the confidence she had been induced to yield; for she now saw herself in the power of a man, stern and unfeeling in his nature: and from whom, if he thought it fit to betray her, she had no

means of escaping. But she concealed the anguish of her heart; and to console madame, affected to hope where she could only despair.

Several days elapsed, and no answer was returned from the *Abate* .
Julia too well understood this silence.

One morning Cornelia entering her room with a disturbed and impatient air, informed her that some emissaries from the marquis were then in the monastery, having enquired at the gate for the *Abate* , with whom, they said, they had business of importance to transact. The *Abate* had granted them immediate audience, and they were now in close conference.

At this intelligence the spirits of Julia forsook her; she trembled, grew pale, and stood fixed in mute despair. Madame, though scarcely less distressed, retained a presence of mind. She understood too justly the character of the Superior to doubt that he would hesitate in delivering Julia to the hands of the marquis. On this moment, therefore, turned the crisis of her fate! — this moment she might escape — the next she was a prisoner. She therefore advised Julia to seize the instant, and fly from the monastery before the conference was concluded, when the gates would most probably be closed upon her, assuring her, at the same time, she would accompany her in flight.

The generous conduct of madame called tears of gratitude into the eyes of Julia, who now awoke from the state of stupefaction which distress had caused. But before she could thank her faithful friend, a nun entered the room with a summons for madame to attend the *Abate* immediately. The distress which this message occasioned can not easily be conceived. Madame advised Julia to escape while she detained the *Abate* in conversation, as it was not probable that he had yet issued orders for her detention. Leaving her to this attempt, with an assurance of following her from the abbey as soon as possible, madame obeyed the summons. The coolness of her fortitude forsook her as she approached the *Abate* 's apartment, and she became less certain as to the occasion of this summons.

The *Abate* was alone. His countenance was pale with anger, and he was pacing the room with slow but agitated steps. The stern authority of his

look startled her. ‘Read this letter,’ said he, stretching forth his hand which held a letter, ‘and tell me what that mortal deserves, who dares insult our holy order, and set our sacred prerogative at defiance.’ Madame distinguished the handwriting of the marquis, and the words of the Superior threw her into the utmost astonishment. She took the letter. It was dictated by that spirit of proud vindictive rage, which so strongly marked the character of the marquis. Having discovered the retreat of Julia, and believing the monastery afforded her a willing sanctuary from his pursuit, he accused the *Abate* of encouraging his child in open rebellion to his will. He loaded him and his sacred order with opprobrium, and threatened, if she was not immediately resigned to the emissaries in waiting, he would in person lead on a force which should compel the church to yield to the superior authority of the father.

The spirit of the *Abate* was roused by this menace; and Julia obtained from his pride, that protection which neither his principle or his humanity would have granted. ‘The man shall tremble,’ cried he, ‘who dares defy our power, or question our sacred authority. The lady Julia is safe. I will protect her from this proud invader of our rights, and teach him at least to venerate the power he cannot conquer. I have dispatched his emissaries with my answer.’

These words struck sudden joy upon the heart of Madame de Menon, but she instantly recollected, that ere this time Julia had quitted the abbey, and thus the very precaution which was meant to ensure her safety, had probably precipitated her into the hand of her enemy. This thought changed her joy to anguish; and she was hurrying from the apartment in a sort of wild hope, that Julia might not yet be gone, when the stern voice of the *Abate* arrested her. ‘Is it thus,’ cried he, ‘that you receive the knowledge of our generous resolution to protect your friend? Does such condescending kindness merit no thanks — demand no gratitude?’ Madame returned in an agony of fear, lest one moment of delay might prove fatal to Julia, if haply she had not yet quitted the monastery. She was conscious of her deficiency in apparent gratitude, and of the strange appearance of her abrupt departure from the *Abate* , for which it was impossible to apologize, without betraying the secret, which would kindle all his resentment. Yet some atonement his present anger demanded, and these circumstances caused her a very painful embarrassment. She formed

a hasty excuse; and expressing her sense of his goodness, again attempted to retire, when the *Abate* frowning in deep resentment, his features inflamed with pride, arose from his seat. ‘Stay,’ said he; ‘whence this impatience to fly from the presence of a benefactor? — If my generosity fails to excite gratitude, my resentment shall not fail to inspire awe. — Since the lady Julia is insensible of my condescension, she is unworthy of my protection, and I will resign her to the tyrant who demands her.’

To this speech, in which the offended pride of the *Abate* overcoming all sense of justice, accused and threatened to punish Julia for the fault of her friend, madame listened in dreadful impatience. Every word that detained her struck torture to her heart, but the concluding sentence occasioned new terror, and she started at its purpose. She fell at the feet of the *Abate* in an agony of grief. ‘Holy father,’ said she, ‘punish not Julia for the offence which I only have committed; her heart will bless her generous protector, and for myself, suffer me to assure you that I am fully sensible of your goodness.’

‘If this is true,’ said the *Abate* , ‘arise, and bid the lady Julia attend me.’ This command increased the confusion of madame, who had no doubt that her detention had proved fatal to Julia. At length she was suffered to depart, and to her infinite joy found Julia in her own room. Her intention of escaping had yielded, immediately after the departure of madame, to the fear of being discovered by the marquis’s people. This fear had been confirmed by the report of Cornelia, who informed her, that at that time several horsemen were waiting at the gates for the return of their companions. This was a dreadful circumstance to Julia, who perceived it was utterly impossible to quit the monastery, without rushing upon certain destruction. She was lamenting her destiny, when madame recited the particulars of the late interview, and delivered the summons of the *Abate* .

They had now to dread the effect of that tender anxiety, which had excited his resentment; and Julia, suddenly elated to joy by his first determination, was as suddenly sunk to despair by his last. She trembled with apprehension of the coming interview, though each moment of delay which her fear solicited, would, by heightening the resentment of the *Abate* , only increase the danger she dreaded.

At length, by a strong effort, she reanimated her spirits, and went to the Abate’s closet to receive her sentence. He was seated in his chair, and his

frowning aspect chilled her heart. ‘Daughter,’ said he, ‘you have been guilty of heinous crimes. You have dared to dispute — nay openly to rebel, against the lawful authority of your father. You have disobeyed the will of him whose prerogative yields only to ours. You have questioned his right upon a point of all others the most decided — the right of a father to dispose of his child in marriage. You have even fled from his protection — and you have dared — insidiously, and meanly have dared, to screen your disobedience beneath this sacred roof. You have prophaned our sanctuary with your crime. You have brought insult upon our sacred order, and have caused bold and impious defiance of our high prerogative. What punishment is adequate to guilt like this?’

The father paused — his eyes sternly fixed on Julia, who, pale and trembling, could scarcely support herself, and who had no power to reply. ‘I will be merciful, and not just,’ resumed he,— ‘I will soften the punishment you deserve, and will only deliver you to your father.’ At these dreadful words, Julia bursting into tears, sunk at the feet of the *Abate* , to whom she raised her eyes in supplicating expression, but was unable to speak. He suffered her to remain in this posture. ‘Your duplicity,’ he resumed, ‘is not the least of your offences. — Had you relied upon our generosity for forgiveness and protection, an indulgence might have been granted; — but under the disguise of virtue you concealed your crimes, and your necessities were hid beneath the mask of devotion.’

These false aspersions roused in Julia the spirit of indignant virtue; she arose from her knees with an air of dignity, that struck even the *Abate* . ‘Holy father,’ said she, ‘my heart abhors the crime you mention, and disclaims all union with it. Whatever are my offences, from the sin of hypocrisy I am at least free; and you will pardon me if I remind you, that my confidence has already been such, as fully justifies my claim to the protection I solicit. When I sheltered myself within these walls, it was to be presumed that they would protect me from injustice; and with what other term than injustice would you, Sir, distinguish the conduct of the marquis, if the fear of his power did not overcome the dictates of truth?’

The *Abate* felt the full force of this reproof; but disdaining to appear sensible to it, restrained his resentment. His wounded pride thus exasperated, and all the malignant passions of his nature thus called into action, he was prompted to that cruel surrender which he had never before

seriously intended. The offence which Madame de Menon had unintentionally given his haughty spirit urged him to retaliate in punishment. He had, therefore, pleased himself with exciting a terror which he never meant to confirm, and he resolved to be further solicited for that protection which he had already determined to grant. But this reproof of Julia touched him where he was most conscious of defect; and the temporary triumph which he imagined it afforded her, kindled his resentment into flame. He mused in his chair, in a fixed attitude. — She saw in his countenance the deep workings of his mind — she revolved the fate preparing for her, and stood in trembling anxiety to receive her sentence. The *Abate* considered each aggravating circumstance of the marquis's menace, and each sentence of Julia's speech; and his mind experienced that vice is not only inconsistent with virtue, but with itself — for to gratify his malignity, he now discovered that it would be necessary to sacrifice his pride — since it would be impossible to punish the object of the first without denying himself the gratification of the latter. This reflection suspended his mind in a state of torture, and he sat wrapt in gloomy silence.

The spirit which lately animated Julia had vanished with her words — each moment of silence increased her apprehension; the deep brooding of his thoughts confirmed her in the apprehension of evil, and with all the artless eloquence of sorrow she endeavoured to soften him to pity. He listened to her pleadings in sullen stillness. But each instant now cooled the fervour of his resentment to her, and increased his desire of opposing the marquis. At length the predominant feature of his character resumed its original influence, and overcame the workings of subordinate passion. Proud of his religious authority, he determined never to yield the prerogative of the church to that of the father, and resolved to oppose the violence of the marquis with equal force.

He therefore condescended to relieve Julia from her terrors, by assuring her of his protection; but he did this in a manner so ungracious, as almost to destroy the gratitude which the promise demanded. She hastened with the joyful intelligence to Madame de Menon, who wept over her tears of thankfulness.

CHAPTER X I

Near a fortnight had elapsed without producing any appearance of hostility from the marquis, when one night, long after the hour of repose, Julia was awakened by the bell of the monastery. She knew it was not the hour customary for prayer, and she listened to the sounds, which rolled through the deep silence of the fabric, with strong surprise and terror. Presently she heard the doors of several cells creak on their hinges, and the sound of quick footsteps in the passages — and through the crevices of her door she distinguished passing lights. The whispering noise of steps increased, and every person of the monastery seemed to have awakened. Her terror heightened; it occurred to her that the marquis had surrounded the abbey with his people, in the design of forcing her from her retreat; and she arose in haste, with an intention of going to the chamber of Madame de Menon, when she heard a gentle tap at the door. Her enquiry of who was there, was answered in the voice of madame, and her fears were quickly dissipated, for she learned the bell was a summons to attend a dying nun, who was going to the high altar, there to receive extreme unction.

She quitted the chamber with madame. In her way to the church, the gleam of tapers on the walls, and the glimpse which her eye often caught of the friars in their long black habits, descending silently through the narrow winding passages, with the solemn toll of the bell, conspired to kindle imagination, and to impress her heart with sacred awe. But the church exhibited a scene of solemnity, such as she had never before witnessed. Its gloomy aisles were imperfectly seen by the rays of tapers from the high altar, which shed a solitary gleam over the remote parts of the fabric, and produced large masses of light and shade, striking and sublime in their effect.

While she gazed, she heard a distant chanting rise through the aisles; the sounds swelled in low murmurs on the ear, and drew nearer and nearer, till a sudden blaze of light issued from one of the portals, and the procession entered. The organ instantly sounded a high and solemn peal, and the voices rising altogether swelled the sacred strain. In front appeared the *Padre Abate* , with slow and measured steps, bearing the holy cross. Immediately followed a litter, on which lay the dying person covered with

a white veil, borne along and surrounded by nuns veiled in white, each carrying in her hand a lighted taper. Last came the friars, two and two, cloathed in black, and each bearing a light.

When they reached the high altar, the bier was rested, and in a few moments the anthem ceased. ‘The *Abate* now approached to perform the unction; the veil of the dying nun was lifted — and Julia discovered her beloved Cornelia! Her countenance was already impressed with the image of death, but her eyes brightened with a faint gleam of recollection, when they fixed upon Julia, who felt a cold thrill run through her frame, and leaned for support on madame. Julia now for the first time distinguished the unhappy lover of Cornelia, on whose features was depictured the anguish of his heart, and who hung pale and silent over the bier. The ceremony being finished, the anthem struck up; the bier was lifted, when Cornelia faintly moved her hand, and it was again rested upon the steps of the altar. In a few minutes the music ceased, when lifting her heavy eyes to her lover, with an expression of ineffable tenderness and grief, she attempted to speak, but the sounds died on her closing lips. A faint smile passed over her countenance, and was succeeded by a fine devotional glow; she folded her hands upon her bosom, and with a look of meek resignation, raising towards heaven her eyes, in which now sunk the last sparkles of expiring life — her soul departed in a short deep sigh.

Her lover sinking back, endeavoured to conceal his emotions, but the deep sobs which agitated his breast betrayed his anguish, and the tears of every spectator bedewed the sacred spot where beauty, sense, and innocence expired.

The organ now swelled in mournful harmony; and the voices of the assembly chanted in choral strain, a low and solemn requiem to the spirit of the departed.

Madame hurried Julia, who was almost as lifeless as her departed friend, from the church. A death so sudden heightened the grief which separation would otherwise have occasioned. It was the nature of Cornelia’s disorder to wear a changeful but flattering aspect. Though she had long been declining, her decay was so gradual and imperceptible as to lull the apprehensions of her friends into security. It was otherwise with herself; she was conscious of the change, but forbore to afflict them with the knowledge of the truth. The hour of her dissolution was sudden, even

to herself; but it was composed, and even happy. In the death of Cornelia, Julia seemed to mourn again that of Hippolitus. Her decease appeared to dissolve the last tie which connected her with his memory.

In one of the friars of the convent, madame was surprized to find the father who had confessed the dying Vincent. His appearance revived the remembrance of the scene she had witnessed at the castle of Mazzini; and the last words of Vincent, combined with the circumstances which had since occurred, renewed all her curiosity and astonishment. But his appearance excited more sensations than those of wonder. She dreaded lest he should be corrupted by the marquis, to whom he was known, and thus be induced to use his interest with the *Abate* for the restoration of Julia.

From the walls of the monastery, Julia now never ventured to stray. In the gloom of evening she sometimes stole into the cloisters, and often lingered at the grave of Cornelia, where she wept for Hippolitus, as well as for her friend. One evening, during vespers, the bell of the convent was suddenly rang out; the *Abate* , whose countenance expressed at once astonishment and displeasure, suspended the service, and quitted the altar. The whole congregation repaired to the hall, where they learned that a friar, retiring to the convent, had seen a troop of armed men advancing through the wood; and not doubting they were the people of the marquis, and were approaching with hostile intention, had thought it necessary to give the alarm. The *Abate* ascended a turret, and thence discovered through the trees a glittering of arms, and in the succeeding moment a band of men issued from a dark part of the wood, into a long avenue which immediately fronted the spot where he stood. The clattering of hoofs was now distinctly heard; and Julia, sinking with terror, distinguished the marquis heading the troops, which, soon after separating in two divisions, surrounded the monastery. The gates were immediately secured; and the *Abate* , descending from the turret, assembled the friars in the hall, where his voice was soon heard above every other part of the tumult. The terror of Julia made her utterly forgetful of the *Padre* 's promise, and she wished to fly for concealment to the deep caverns belonging to the monastery, which wound under the woods. Madame, whose penetration furnished her with a just knowledge of the *Abate* 's character, founded her security on his pride. She therefore dissuaded Julia from attempting to tamper with the honesty of a servant who had the keys of the vaults, and advised her to

rely entirely on the effect of the *Abate* ’s resentment towards the marquis. While madame endeavoured to soothe her to composure, a message from the *Abate* required her immediate attendance. She obeyed, and he bade her follow him to a room which was directly over the gates of the monastery. From thence she saw her father, accompanied by the Duke de Luovo; and as her spirits died away at the sight, the marquis called furiously to the *Abate* to deliver her instantly into his hands, threatening, if she was detained, to force the gates of the monastery. At this threat the countenance of the *Abate* grew dark: and leading Julia forcibly to the window, from which she had shrunk back, ‘Impious menacer!’ said he, ‘eternal vengeance be upon thee! From this moment we expel thee from all the rights and communities of our church. Arrogant and daring as you are, your threats I defy — Look here,’ said he, pointing to Julia, ‘and learn that you are in my power; for if you dare to violate these sacred walls, I will proclaim aloud, in the face of day, a secret which shall make your heart’s blood run cold; a secret which involves your honour, nay, your very existence. Now triumph and exult in impious menace!’ The marquis started involuntarily at this speech, and his features underwent a sudden change, but he endeavoured to recover himself, and to conceal his confusion. He hesitated for a few moments, uncertain how to act — to desist from violence was to confess himself conscious of the threatened secret; yet he dreaded to inflame the resentment of the *Abate* , whose menaces his own heart too surely seconded. At length— ‘All that you have uttered,’ said he, ‘I despise as the dastardly subterfuge of monkish cunning. Your new insults add to the desire of recovering my daughter, that of punishing you. I would proceed to instant violence, but that would now be an imperfect revenge. I shall, therefore, withdraw my forces, and appeal to a higher power. Thus shall you be compelled at once to restore my daughter and retract your scandalous impeachment of my honor.’ Saying this, the turned his horse from the gates, and his people following him, quickly withdrew, leaving the *Abate* exulting in conquest, and Julia lost in astonishment and doubtful joy. When she recounted to madame the particulars of the conference, she dwelt with emphasis on the threats of the *Abate* ; but madame, though her amazement was heightened at every word, very well understood how the secret, whatever it was, had been obtained. The confessor of Vincent she had already observed in the monastery, and

there was no doubt that he had disclosed whatever could be collected from the dying words of Vincent. She knew, also, that the secret would never be published, unless as a punishment for immediate violence, it being one of the first principles of monastic duty, to observe a religious secrecy upon all matters entrusted to them in confession.

When the first tumult of Julia's emotions subsided, the joy which the sudden departure of the marquis occasioned yielded to apprehension. He had threatened to appeal to a higher power, who would compel the *Abate* to surrender her. This menace excited a just terror, and there remained no means of avoiding the tyranny of the marquis but by quitting the monastery. She therefore requested an audience of the *Abate* ; and having represented the danger of her present situation, she intreated his permission to depart in quest of a safer retreat. The *Abate* , who well knew the marquis was wholly in his power, smiled at the repetition of his menaces, and denied her request, under pretence of his having now become responsible for her to the church. He bade her be comforted, and promised her his protection; but his assurances were given in so distant and haughty a manner, that Julia left him with fears rather increased than subdued. In crossing the hall, she observed a man hastily enter it, from an opposite door. He was not in the habit of the order, but was muffled up in a cloak, and seemed to wish concealment. As she passed he raised his head, and Julia discovered — her father! He darted at her a look of vengeance; but before she had time even to think, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he covered his face, and rushed by her. Her trembling frame could scarcely support her to the apartment of madame, where she sunk speechless upon a chair, and the terror of her look alone spoke the agony of her mind. When she was somewhat recovered, she related what she had seen, and her conversation with the *Abate* . But madame was lost in equal perplexity with herself, when she attempted to account for the marquis's appearance. Why, after his late daring menace, should he come secretly to visit the *Abate* , by whose connivance alone he could have gained admission to the monastery? And what could have influenced the *Abate* to such a conduct? These circumstances, though equally inexplicable, united to confirm a fear of treachery and surrender. To escape from the abbey was now inpracticable, for the gates were constantly guarded; and even was it possible to pass them, certain detection awaited Julia without from the

marquis’s people, who were stationed in the woods. Thus encompassed with danger, she could only await in the monastery the issue of her destiny.

While she was lamenting with madame her unhappy fate, she was summoned once more to attend the *Abate* . At this moment her spirits entirely forsook her; the crisis of her fate seemed arrived; for she did not doubt that the *Abate* intended to surrender her to the marquis, with whom she supposed he had negotiated the terms of accommodation. It was some time before she could recover composure sufficient to obey the summons; and when she did, every step that bore her towards the *Abate* ’s room increased her dread. She paused a moment at the door, ‘ere she had courage to open it; the idea of her father’s immediate resentment arose to her mind, and she was upon the point of retreating to her chamber, when a sudden step within, near the door, destroyed her hesitation, and she entered the closet. The marquis was not there, and her spirits revived. The flush of triumph was diffused over the features of the *Abate* , though a shade of unappeased resentment yet remained visible. ‘Daughter,’ said he, ‘the intelligence we have to communicate may rejoice you. Your safety now depends solely on yourself. I give your fate into your own hands, and its issue be upon your head.’ He paused, and she was suspended in wondering expectation of the coming sentence. ‘I here solemnly assure you of my protection, but it is upon one condition only — that you renounce the world, and dedicate your days to God.’ Julia listened with a mixture of grief and astonishment. ‘Without this concession on your part, I possess not the power, had I even the inclination, to protect you. If you assume the veil, you are safe within the pale of the church from temporal violence. If you neglect or refuse to do this, the marquis may apply to a power from whom I have no appeal, and I shall be compelled at last to resign you.

‘But to ensure your safety, should the veil be your choice, we will procure a dispensation from the usual forms of noviciation, and a few days shall confirm your vows.’ He ceased to speak; but Julia, agitated with the most cruel distress, knew not what to reply. ‘We grant you three days to decide upon this matter,’ continued he, ‘at the expiration of which, the veil, or the Duke de Luovo, awaits you.’ Julia quitted the closet in mute despair, and repaired to madame, who could now scarcely offer her the humble benefit of consolation.

Meanwhile the *Abate* exulted in successful vengeance, and the marquis smarted beneath the stings of disappointment. The menace of the former was too seriously alarming to suffer the marquis to prosecute violent measures; and he had therefore resolved, by opposing avarice to pride, to soothe the power which he could not subdue. But he was unwilling to entrust the *Abate* with a proof of his compliance and his fears by offering a bribe in a letter, and preferred the more humiliating, but safer method, of a private interview. His magnificent offers created a temporary hesitation in the mind of the *Abate* , who, secure of his advantage, shewed at first no disposition to be reconciled, and suffered the marquis to depart in anxious uncertainty. After maturely deliberating upon the proposals, the pride of the *Abate* surmounted his avarice, and he determined to prevail upon Julia effectually to destroy the hopes of the marquis, by consecrating her life to religion. Julia passed the night and the next day in a state of mental torture exceeding all description. The gates of the monastery beset with guards, and the woods surrounded by the marquis’s people, made escape impossible. From a marriage with the duke, whose late conduct had confirmed the odious idea which his character had formerly impressed, her heart recoiled in horror, and to be immured for life within the walls of a convent, was a fate little less dreadful. Yet such was the effect of that sacred love she bore the memory of Hippolitus, and such her aversion to the duke, that she soon resolved to adopt the veil. On the following evening she informed the *Abate* of her determination. His heart swelled with secret joy; and even the natural severity of his manner relaxed at the intelligence. He assured her of his approbation and protection, with a degree of kindness which he had never before manifested, and told her the ceremony should be performed on the second day from the present. Her emotion scarcely suffered her to hear his last words. Now that her fate was fixed beyond recall, she almost repented of her choice. Her fancy attached to it a horror not its own; and that evil, which, when offered to her decision, she had accepted with little hesitation, she now paused upon in dubious regret; so apt we are to imagine that the calamity most certain, is also the most intolerable!

When the marquis read the answer of the *Abate* , all the baleful passions of his nature were roused and inflamed to a degree which bordered upon distraction. In the first impulse of his rage, he would have forced the gates

of the monastery, and defied the utmost malice of his enemy. But a moment's reflection revived his fear of the threatened secret, and he saw that he was still in the power of the Superior.

The *Abate* procured the necessary dispensation, and preparations were immediately began for the approaching ceremony. Julia watched the departure of those moments which led to her fate with the calm fortitude of despair. She had no means of escaping from the coming evil, without exposing herself to a worse; she surveyed it therefore with a steady eye, and no longer shrunk from its approach.

On the morning preceding the day of her consecration, she was informed that a stranger enquired for her at the grate. Her mind had been so long accustomed to the vicissitudes of apprehension, that fear was the emotion which now occurred; she suspected, yet scarcely knew why, that the marquis was below, and hesitated whether to descend. A little reflection determined her, and she went to the parlour — where, to her equal joy and surprise, she beheld — Ferdinand!

During the absence of the marquis from his castle, Ferdinand, who had been informed of the discovery of Julia, effected his escape from imprisonment, and had hastened to the monastery in the design of rescuing her. He had passed the woods in disguise, with much difficulty eluding the observation of the marquis's people, who were yet dispersed round the abbey. To the monastery, as he came alone, he had been admitted without difficulty.

When he learned the conditions of the *Abate* 's protection, and that the following day was appointed for the consecration of Julia, he was shocked, and paused in deliberation. A period so short as was this interval, afforded little opportunity for contrivance, and less for hesitation. The night of the present day was the only time that remained for the attempt and execution of a plan of escape, which if it then failed of success, Julia would not only be condemned for life to the walls of a monastery, but would be subjected to whatever punishment the severity of the *Abate* , exasperated by the detection, should think fit to inflict. The danger was desperate, but the occasion was desperate also.

The nobly disinterested conduct of her brother, struck Julia with gratitude and admiration; but despair of success made her now hesitate whether she should accept his offer. She considered that his generosity

would most probably involve him in destruction with herself; and she paused in deep deliberation, when Ferdinand informed her of a circumstance which, till now, he had purposely concealed, and which at once dissolved every doubt and every fear. ‘Hippolitus,’ said Ferdinand, ‘yet lives.’— ‘Lives!’ repeated Julia faintly,— ‘lives, Oh! tell me where — how.’ — Her breath refused to aid her, and she sunk in her chair overcome with the strong and various sensations that pressed upon her heart. Ferdinand, whom the grate withheld from assisting her, observed her situation with extreme distress. When she recovered, he informed her that a servant of Hippolitus, sent no doubt by his lord to enquire concerning Julia, had been lately seen by one of the marquis’s people in the neighbourhood of the castle. From him it was known that the Count de Vereza was living, but that his life had been despaired of; and he was still confined, by dangerous wounds, in an obscure town on the coast of Italy. The man had steadily refused to mention the place of his lord’s abode. Learning that the marquis was then at the abbey of St Augustin, whither he pursued his daughter, the man disappeared from Mazzini, and had not since been heard of.

It was enough for Julia to know that Hippolitus lived; her fears of detection, and her scruples concerning Ferdinand, instantly vanished; she thought only of escape — and the means which had lately appeared so formidable — so difficult in contrivance, and so dangerous in execution, now seemed easy, certain, and almost accomplished.

They consulted on the plan to be adopted, and agreed, that in attempting to bribe a servant of the monastery to their interest, they should incur a danger too imminent, yet it appeared scarcely practicable to succeed in their scheme without risquing this. After much consideration, they determined to entrust their secret to no person but to madame. Ferdinand was to contrive to conceal himself till the dead of night in the church, between which and the monastery were several doors of communication. When the inhabitants of the abbey were sunk in repose, Julia might without difficulty pass to the church, where Ferdinand awaiting her, they might perhaps escape either through an outer door of the fabric, or through a window, for which latter attempt Ferdinand was to provide ropes.

A couple of horses were to be stationed among the rocks beyond the woods, to convey the fugitives to a seaport, whence they could easily pass

over to Italy. Having arranged this plan, they separated in the anxious hope of meeting on the ensuing night.

Madame warmly sympathized with Julia in her present expectations, and was now somewhat relieved from the pressure of that self-reproach, with which the consideration of having withdrawn her young friend from a secure asylum, had long tormented her. In learning that Hippolitus lived, Julia experienced a sudden renovation of life and spirits. From the languid stupefaction which despair had occasioned she revived as from a dream, and her sensations resembled those of a person suddenly awakened from a frightful vision, whose thoughts are yet obscured in the fear and uncertainty which the passing images have impressed on his fancy. She emerged from despair; joy illumined her countenance; yet she doubted the reality of the scene which now opened to her view. The hours rolled heavily along till the evening, when expectation gave way to fear, for she was once more summoned by the *Abate* . He sent for her to administer the usual necessary exhortation on the approaching solemnity; and having detained her a considerable time in tedious and severe discourse, dismissed her with a formal benediction.

CHAPTER XI I

The evening now sunk in darkness, and the hour was fast approaching which would decide the fate of Julia. Trembling anxiety subdued every other sensation; and as the minutes passed, her fears increased. At length she heard the gates of the monastery fastened for the night; the bell rang the signal for repose; and the passing footsteps of the nuns told her they were hastening to obey it. After some time, all was silent. Julia did not yet dare to venture forth; she employed the present interval in interesting and affectionate conversation with Madame de Menon, to whom, notwithstanding her situation, her heart bade a sorrowful adieu.

The clock struck twelve, when she arose to depart. Having embraced her faithful friend with tears of mingled grief and anxiety, she took a lamp in her hand, and with cautious, fearful steps, descended through the long winding passages to a private door, which opened into the church of the monastery. The church was gloomy and desolate; and the feeble rays of the lamp she bore, gave only light enough to discover its chilling grandeur. As she passed silently along the aisles, she cast a look of anxious examination around — but Ferdinand was no where to be seen. She paused in timid hesitation, fearful to penetrate the gloomy obscurity which lay before her, yet dreading to return.

As she stood examining the place, vainly looking for Ferdinand, yet fearing to call, lest her voice should betray her, a hollow groan arose from apart of the church very near her. It chilled her heart, and she remained fixed to the spot. She turned her eyes a little to the left, and saw light appear through the chinks of a sepulchre at some distance. The groan was repeated — a low murmuring succeeded, and while she yet gazed, an old man issued from the vault with a lighted taper in his hand. Terror now subdued her, and she utterred an involuntary shriek. In the succeeding moment, a noise was heard in a remote part of the fabric; and Ferdinand rushing forth from his concealment, ran to her assistance. The old man, who appeared to be a friar, and who had been doing penance at the monument of a saint, now approached. His countenance expressed a degree of surprise and terror almost equal to that of Julia’s, who knew him to be the confessor of Vincent. Ferdinand seized the father; and laying his

hand upon his sword, threatened him with death if he did not instantly swear to conceal for ever his knowledge of what he then saw, and also assist them to escape from the abbey.

‘Ungracious boy!’ replied the father, in a calm voice, ‘desist from this language, nor add to the follies of youth the crime of murdering, or terrifying a defenceless old man. Your violence would urge me to become your enemy, did not previous inclination tempt me to be your friend. I pity the distresses of the lady Julia, to whom I am no stranger, and will cheerfully give her all the assistance in my power.’

At these words Julia revived, and Ferdinand, reproved by the generosity of the father, and conscious of his own inferiority, shrunk back. ‘I have no words to thank you,’ said he, ‘or to entreat your pardon for the impetuosity of my conduct; your knowledge of my situation must plead my excuse.’— ‘It does,’ replied the father, ‘but we have no time to lose; — follow me.’

They followed him through the church to the cloisters, at the extremity of which was a small door, which the friar unlocked. It opened upon the woods.

‘This path,’ said he, ‘leads thro’ an intricate part of the woods, to the rocks that rise on the right of the abbey; in their recesses you may secrete yourselves till you are prepared for a longer journey. But extinguish your light; it may betray you to the marquis’s people, who are dispersed about this spot. Farewell! my children, and God’s blessing be upon ye.’

Julia’s tears declared her gratitude; she had no time for words. They stepped into the path, and the father closed the door. They were now liberated from the monastery, but danger awaited them without, which it required all their caution to avoid. Ferdinand knew the path which the friar had pointed out to be the same that led to the rocks where his horses were stationed, and he pursued it with quick and silent steps. Julia, whose fears conspired with the gloom of night to magnify and transform every object around her, imagined at each step that she took, she perceived the figures of men, and fancied every whisper of the breeze the sound of pursuit.

They proceeded swiftly, till Julia, breathless and exhausted, could go no farther. They had not rested many minutes, when they heard a rustling among the bushes at some distance, and soon after distinguished a low sound of voices. Ferdinand and Julia instantly renewed their flight, and thought they still heard voices advance upon the wind. This thought was

soon confirmed, for the sounds now gained fast upon them, and they distinguished words which served only to heighten their apprehensions, when they reached the extremity of the woods. The moon, which was now up, suddenly emerging from a dark cloud, discovered to them several man in pursuit; and also shewed to the pursuers the course of the fugitives. They endeavoured to gain the rocks where the horses were concealed, and which now appeared in view. These they reached when the pursuers had almost overtaken them — but their horses were gone! Their only remaining chance of escape was to fly into the deep recesses of the rock. They, therefore, entered a winding cave, from whence branched several subterraneous avenues, at the extremity of one of which they stopped. The voices of men now vibrated in tremendous echoes through the various and secret caverns of the place, and the sound of footsteps seemed fast approaching. Julia trembled with terror, and Ferdinand drew his sword, determined to protect her to the last. A confused volley of voices now sounded up that part of the cave were Ferdinand and Julia lay concealed. In a few moments the steps of the pursuers suddenly took a different direction, and the sounds sunk gradually away, and were heard no more. Ferdinand listened attentively for a considerable time, but the stillness of the place remained undisturbed. It was now evident that the men had quitted the rock, and he ventured forth to the mouth of the cave. He surveyed the wilds around, as far as his eye could penetrate, and distinguished no human being; but in the pauses of the wind he still thought he heard a sound of distant voices. As he listened in anxious silence, his eye caught the appearance of a shadow, which moved upon the ground near where he stood. He started back within the cave, but in a few minutes again ventured forth. The shadow remained stationary, but having watched it for some time, Ferdinand saw it glide along till it disappeared behind a point of rock. He had now no doubt that the cave was watched, and that it was one of his late pursuers whose shade he had seen. He returned, therefore, to Julia, and remained near an hour hid in the deepest recess of the rock; when, no sound having interrupted the profound silence of the place, he at length once more ventured to the mouth of the cave. Again he threw a fearful look around, but discerned no human form. The soft moonbeam slept upon the dewy landscape, and the solemn stillness of midnight wrapt the world. Fear heightened to the fugitives the sublimity of

the hour. Ferdinand now led Julia forth, and they passed silently along the shelving foot of the rocks.

They continued their way without farther interruption; and among the cliffs, at some distance from the cave, discovered, to their inexpressible joy, their horses, who having broken their fastenings, had strayed thither, and had now laid themselves down to rest. Ferdinand and Julia immediately mounted; and descending to the plains, took the road that led to a small seaport at some leagues distant, whence they could embark for Italy.

They travelled for some hours through gloomy forests of beech and chesnut; and their way was only faintly illuminated by the moon, which shed a trembling lustre through the dark foliage, and which was seen but at intervals, as the passing clouds yielded to the power of her rays. They reached at length the skirts of the forest. The grey dawn now appeared, and the chill morning air bit shrewdly. It was with inexpressible joy that Julia observed the kindling atmosphere; and soon after the rays of the rising sun touching the tops of the mountains, whose sides were yet involved in dark vapours.

Her fears dissipated with the darkness. — The sun now appeared amid clouds of inconceivable splendour; and unveiled a scene which in other circumstances Julia would have contemplated with rapture. From the side of the hill, down which they were winding, a vale appeared, from whence arose wild and lofty mountains, whose steeps were cloathed with hanging woods, except where here and there a precipice projected its bold and rugged front. Here, a few half-withered trees hung from the crevices of the rock, and gave a picturesque wildness to the object; there, clusters of half-seen cottages, rising from among tufted groves, embellished the green margin of a stream which meandered in the bottom, and bore its waves to the blue and distant main.

The freshness of morning breathed over the scene, and vivified each colour of the landscape. The bright dewdrops hung trembling from the branches of the trees, which at intervals overshadowed the road; and the sprightly music of the birds saluted the rising day. Notwithstanding her anxiety the scene diffused a soft complacency over the mind of Julia.

About noon they reached the port, where Ferdinand was fortunate enough to obtain a small vessel; but the wind was unfavourable, and it was

past midnight before it was possible for them to embark.

When the dawn appeared, Julia returned to the deck; and viewed with a sigh of unaccountable regret, the receding coast of Sicily. But she observed, with high admiration, the light gradually spreading through the atmosphere, darting a feeble ray over the surface of the waters, which rolled in solemn soundings upon the distant shores. Fiery beams now marked the clouds, and the east glowed with increasing radiance, till the sun rose at once above the waves, and illuminating them with a flood of splendour, diffused gaiety and gladness around. The bold concave of the heavens, uniting with the vast expanse of the ocean, formed, a *coup d'oeil* , striking and sublime magnificence of the scenery inspired Julia with delight; and her heart dilating with high enthusiasm, she forgot the sorrows which had oppressed her.

The breeze wafted the ship gently along for some hours, when it gradually sunk into a calm. The glassy surface of the waters was not curled by the lightest air, and the vessel floated heavily on the bosom of the deep. Sicily was yet in view, and the present delay agitated Julia with wild apprehension. Towards the close of day a light breeze sprang up, but it blew from Italy, and a train of dark vapours emerged from the verge of the horizon, which gradually accumulating, the heavens became entirely overcast. The evening shut in suddenly; the rising wind, the heavy clouds that loaded the atmosphere, and the thunder which murmured afar off terrified Julia, and threatened a violent storm.

The tempest came on, and the captain vainly sounded for anchorage: it was deep sea, and the vessel drove furiously before the wind. The darkness was interrupted only at intervals, by the broad expanse of vivid lightnings, which quivered upon the waters, and disclosing the horrible gaspings of the waves, served to render the succeeding darkness more awful. The thunder, which burst in tremendous crashes above, the loud roar of the waves below, the noise of the sailors, and the sudden cracks and groanings of the vessel conspired to heighten the tremendous sublimity of the scene.

Far on the rocky shores the surges sound,
The lashing whirlwinds cleave the vast profound;
While high in air, amid the rising storm,
Driving the blast, sits Danger's black'ning form.

Julia lay fainting with terror and sickness in the cabin, and Ferdinand, though almost hopeless himself, was endeavouring to support her, when aloud and dreadful crash was heard from above. It seemed as if the whole vessel had parted. The voices of the sailors now rose together, and all was confusion and uproar. Ferdinand ran up to the deck, and learned that part of the main mast, borne away by the wind, had fallen upon the deck, whence it had rolled overboard.

It was now past midnight, and the storm continued with unabated fury. For four hours the vessel had been driven before the blast; and the captain now declared it was impossible she could weather the tempest much longer, ordered the long boat to be in readiness. His orders were scarcely executed, when the ship bulged upon a reef of rocks, and the impetuous waves rushed into the vessel: — a general groan ensued. Ferdinand flew to save his sister, whom he carried to the boat, which was nearly filled by the captain and most of the crew. The sea ran so high that it appeared impracticable to reach the shore: but the boat had not moved many yards, when the ship went to pieces. The captain now perceived, by the flashes of lightning, a high rocky coast at about the distance of half a mile. The men struggled hard at the oars; but almost as often as they gained the summit of a wave, it dashed them back again, and made their labour of little avail.

After much difficulty and fatigue they reached the coast, where a new danger presented itself. They beheld a wild rocky shore, whose cliffs appeared inaccessible, and which seemed to afford little possibility of landing. A landing, however, was at last affected; and the sailors, after much search, discovered a kind of pathway cut in the rock, which they all ascended in safety.

The dawn now faintly glimmered, and they surveyed the coast, but could discover no human habitation. They imagined they were on the shores of Sicily, but possessed no means of confirming this conjecture. Terror, sickness, and fatigue had subdued the strength and spirits of Julia, and she was obliged to rest upon the rocks.

The storm now suddenly subsided, and the total calm which succeeded to the wild tumult of the winds and waves, produced a striking and sublime effect. The air was hushed in a deathlike stillness, but the waves were yet violently agitated; and by the increasing light, parts of the wreck

were seen floating wide upon the face of the deep. Some sailors, who had missed the boat, were also discovered clinging to pieces of the vessel, and making towards the shore. On observing this, their shipmates immediately descended to the boat; and, putting off to sea, rescued them from their perilous situation. When Julia was somewhat reanimated, they proceeded up the country in search of a dwelling.

They had travelled near half a league, when the savage features of the country began to soften, and gradually changed to the picturesque beauty of Sicilian scenery. They now discovered at some distance a villa, seated on a gentle eminence, crowned with woods. It was the first human habitation they had seen since they embarked for Italy; and Julia, who was almost sinking with fatigue, beheld it with delight. The captain and his men hastened towards it to make known their distress, while Ferdinand and Julia slowly followed. They observed the men enter the villa, one of whom quickly returned to acquaint them with the hospitable reception his comrades had received.

Julia with difficulty reached the edifice, at the door of which she was met by a young cavalier, whose pleasing and intelligent countenance immediately interested her in his favor. He welcomed the strangers with a benevolent politeness that dissolved at once every uncomfortable feeling which their situation had excited, and produced an instantaneous easy confidence. Through a light and elegant hall, rising into a dome, supported by pillars of white marble, and adorned with busts, he led them to a magnificent vestibule, which opened upon a lawn. Having seated them at a table spread with refreshments he left them, and they surveyed, with surprise, the beauty of the adjacent scene.

The lawn, which was on each side bounded by hanging woods, descended in gentle declivity to a fine lake, whose smooth surface reflected the surrounding shades. Beyond appeared the distant country, arising on the left into bold romantic mountains, and on the right exhibiting a soft and glowing landscape, whose tranquil beauty formed a striking contrast to the wild sublimity of the opposite craggy heights. The blue and distant ocean terminated the view.

In a short time the cavalier returned, conducting two ladies of a very engaging appearance, whom he presented as his wife and sister. They welcomed Julia with graceful kindness; but fatigue soon obliged her to

retire to rest, and a consequent indisposition increased so rapidly, as to render it impracticable for her to quit her present abode on that day. The captain and his men proceeded on their way, leaving Ferdinand and Julia at the villa, where she experienced every kind and tender affection.

The day which was to have devoted Julia to a cloister, was ushered in at the abbey with the usual ceremonies. The church was ornamented, and all the inhabitants of the monastery prepared to attend. The *Padre Abate* now exulted in the success of his scheme, and anticipated, in imagination, the rage and vexation of the marquis, when he should discover that his daughter was lost to him for ever.

The hour of celebration arrived, and he entered the church with a proud firm step, and with a countenance which depictured his inward triumph; he was proceeding to the high altar, when he was told that Julia was no where to be found. Astonishment for awhile suspended other emotions — he yet believed it impossible that she could have effected an escape, and ordered every part of the abbey to be searched — not forgetting the secret caverns belonging to the monastery, which wound beneath the woods. When the search was over, and he became convinced she was fled, the deep workings of his disappointed passions fermented into rage which exceeded all bounds. He denounced the most terrible judgments upon Julia; and calling for Madame de Menon, charged her with having insulted her holy religion, in being accessary to the flight of Julia. Madame endured these reproaches with calm dignity, and preserved a steady silence, but she secretly determined to leave the monastery, and seek in another the repose which she could never hope to find in this.

The report of Julia’s disappearance spread rapidly beyond the walls, and soon reached the ears of the marquis, who rejoiced in the circumstance, believing that she must now inevitably fall into his hands.

After his people, in obedience to his orders, had carefully searched the surrounding woods and rocks, he withdrew them from the abbey; and having dispersed them various ways in search of Julia, he returned to the castle of Mazzini. Here new vexation awaited him, for he now first learned that Ferdinand had escaped from confinement.

The mystery of Julia’s flight was now dissolved; for it was evident by whose means she had effected it, and the marquis issued orders to his people to secure Ferdinand wherever he should be found.

CHAPTER XII I

Hippolitus, who had languished under a long and dangerous illness occasioned by his wounds, but heightened and prolonged by the distress of his mind, was detained in a small town in the coast of Calabria, and was yet ignorant of the death of Cornelia. He scarcely doubted that Julia was now devoted to the duke, and this thought was at times poison to his heart. After his arrival in Calabria, immediately on the recovery of his senses, he dispatched a servant back to the castle of Mazzini, to gain secret intelligence of what had passed after his departure. The eagerness with which we endeavour to escape from misery, taught him to encourage a remote and romantic hope that Julia yet lived for him. Yet even this hope at length languished into despair, as the time elapsed which should have brought his servant from Sicily. Days and weeks passed away in the utmost anxiety to Hippolitus, for still his emissary did not appear; and at last, concluding that he had been either seized by robbers, or discovered and detained by the marquis, the Count sent off a second emissary to the castle of Mazzini. By him he learned the news of Julia’s flight, and his heart dilated with joy; but it was suddenly checked when he heard the marquis had discovered her retreat in the abbey of St Augustin. The wounds which still detained him in confinement, now became intolerable. Julia might yet be lost to him for ever. But even his present state of fear and uncertainty was bliss compared with the anguish of despair, which his mind had long endured.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he quitted Italy for Sicily, in the design of visiting the monastery of St Augustin, where it was possible Julia might yet remain. That he might pass with the secrecy necessary to his plan, and escape the attacks of the marquis, he left his servants in Calabria, and embarked alone.

It was morning when he landed at a small port of Sicily, and proceeded towards the abbey of St Augustin. As he travelled, his imagination revolved the scenes of his early love, the distress of Julia, and the sufferings of Ferdinand, and his heart melted at the retrospect. He considered the probabilities of Julia having found protection from her father in the pity of the *Padre Abate* ; and even ventured to indulge

himself in a flattering, fond anticipation of the moment when Julia should again be restored to his sight.

He arrived at the monastery, and his grief may easily be imagined, when he was informed of the death of his beloved sister, and of the flight of Julia. He quitted St Augustin's immediately, without even knowing that Madame de Menon was there, and set out for a town at some leagues distance, where he designed to pass the night.

Absorbed in the melancholy reflections which the late intelligence excited, he gave the reins to his horse, and journeyed on unmindful of his way. The evening was far advanced when he discovered that he had taken a wrong direction, and that he was bewildered in a wild and solitary scene. He had wandered too far from the road to hope to regain it, and he had beside no recollection of the objects left behind him. A choice of errors, only, lay before him. The view on his right hand exhibited high and savage mountains, covered with heath and black fir; and the wild desolation of their aspect, together with the dangerous appearance of the path that wound up their sides, and which was the only apparent track they afforded, determined Hippolitus not to attempt their ascent. On his left lay a forest, to which the path he was then in led; its appearance was gloomy, but he preferred it to the mountains; and, since he was uncertain of its extent, there was a possibility that he might pass it, and reach a village before the night was set in. At the worst, the forest would afford him a shelter from the winds; and, however he might be bewildered in its labyrinths, he could ascend a tree, and rest in security till the return of light should afford him an opportunity of extricating himself. Among the mountains there was no possibility of meeting with other shelter than what the habitation of man afforded, and such a shelter there was little probability of finding. Innumerable dangers also threatened him here, from which he would be secure on level ground.

Having determined which way to pursue, he pushed his horse into a gallop, and entered the forest as the last rays of the sun trembled on the mountains. The thick foliage of the trees threw a gloom around, which was every moment deepened by the shades of evening. The path was uninterrupted, and the count continued to follow it till all distinction was confounded in the veil of night. Total darkness now made it impossible for

him to pursue his way. He dismounted, and fastening his horse to a tree, climbed among the branches, purposing to remain there till morning.

He had not been long in this situation, when a confused sound of voices from a distance roused his attention. The sound returned at intervals for some time, but without seeming to approach. He descended from the tree, that he might the better judge of the direction whence it came; but before he reached the ground, the noise was ceased, and all was profoundly silent. He continued to listen, but the silence remaining undisturbed, he began to think he had been deceived by the singing of the wind among the leaves; and was preparing to reascend, when he perceived a faint light glimmer through the foliage from afar. The sight revived a hope that he was near some place of human habitation; he therefore unfastened his horse, and led him towards the spot whence the ray issued. The moon was now risen, and threw a checkered gleam over his path sufficient to direct him.

Before he had proceeded far the light disappeared. He continued, however, his way as nearly as he could guess, towards the place whence it had issued; and after much toil, found himself in a spot where the trees formed a circle round a kind of rude lawn. The moonlight discovered to him an edifice which appeared to have been formerly a monastery, but which now exhibited a pile of ruins, whose grandeur, heightened by decay, touched the beholder with reverential awe. Hippolitus paused to gaze upon the scene; the sacred stillness of night increased its effect, and a secret dread, he knew not wherefore, stole upon his heart.

The silence and the character of the place made him doubt whether this was the spot he had been seeking; and as he stood hesitating whether to proceed or to return, he observed a figure standing under an archway of the ruin; it carried a light in its hand, and passing silently along, disappeared in a remote part of the building. The courage of Hippolitus for a moment deserted him. An invincible curiosity, however, subdued his terror, and he determined to pursue, if possible, the way the figure had taken.

He passed over loose stones through a sort of court till he came to the archway; here he stopped, for fear returned upon him. Resuming his courage, however, he went on, still endeavouring to follow the way the figure had passed, and suddenly found himself in an enclosed part of the ruin, whose appearance was more wild and desolate than any he had yet seen. Seized with unconquerable apprehension, he was retiring, when the

low voice of a distressed person struck his ear. His heart sunk at the sound, his limbs trembled, and he was utterly unable to move.

The sound which appeared to be the last groan of a dying person, was repeated. Hippolitus made a strong effort, and sprang forward, when a light burst upon him from a shattered casement of the building, and at the same instant he heard the voices of men!

He advanced softly to the window, and beheld in a small room, which was less decayed than the rest of the edifice, a group of men, who, from the savageness of their looks, and from their dress, appeared to be banditti. They surrounded a man who lay on the ground wounded, and bathed in blood, and who it was very evident had uttered the groans heard by the count.

The obscurity of the place prevented Hippolitus from distinguishing the features of the dying man. From the blood which covered him, and from the surrounding circumstances, he appeared to be murdered; and the count had no doubt that the men he beheld were the murderers. The horror of the scene entirely overcame him; he stood rooted to the spot, and saw the assassins rifle the pockets of the dying person, who, in a voice scarcely articulate, but which despair seemed to aid, supplicated for mercy. The ruffians answered him only with execrations, and continued their plunder. His groans and his sufferings served only to aggravate their cruelty. They were proceeding to take from him a miniature picture, which was fastened round his neck, and had been hitherto concealed in his bosom; when by a sudden effort he half raised himself from the ground, and attempted to save it from their hands. The effort availed him nothing; a blow from one of the villains laid the unfortunate man on the floor without motion. The horrid barbarity of the act seized the mind of Hippolitus so entirely, that, forgetful of his own situation, he groaned aloud, and started with an instantaneous design of avenging the deed. The noise he made alarmed the banditti, who looking whence it came, discovered the count through the casement. They instantly quitted their prize, and rushed towards the door of the room. He was now returned to a sense of his danger, and endeavoured to escape to the exterior part of the ruin; but terror bewildered his senses, and he mistook his way. Instead of regaining the archway, he perplexed himself with fruitless wanderings, and at length found himself only more deeply involved in the secret recesses of the pile.

The steps of his pursuers gained fast upon him, and he continued to perplex himself with vain efforts at escape, till at length, quite exhausted, he sunk on the ground, and endeavoured to resign himself to his fate. He listened with a kind of stern despair, and was surprised to find all silent. On looking round, he perceived by a ray of moonlight, which streamed through a part of the ruin from above, that he was in a sort of vault, which, from the small means he had of judging, he thought was extensive.

In this situation he remained for a considerable time, ruminating on the means of escape, yet scarcely believing escape was possible. If he continued in the vault, he might continue there only to be butchered; but by attempting to rescue himself from the place he was now in, he must rush into the hands of the banditti. Judging it, therefore, the safer way of the two to remain where he was, he endeavoured to await his fate with fortitude, when suddenly the loud voices of the murderers burst upon his ear, and he heard steps advancing quickly towards the spot where he lay.

Despair instantly renewed his vigour; he started from the ground, and throwing round him a look of eager desperation, his eye caught the glimpse of a small door, upon which the moonbeam now fell. He made towards it, and passed it just as the light of a torch gleamed upon the walls of the vault.

He groped his way along a winding passage, and at length came to a flight of steps. Notwithstanding the darkness, he reached the bottom in safety.

He now for the first time stopped to listen — the sounds of pursuit were ceased, and all was silent! Continuing to wander on in effectual endeavours to escape, his hands at length touched cold iron, and he quickly perceived it belonged to a door. The door, however, was fastened, and resisted all his efforts to open it. He was giving up the attempt in despair, when a loud scream from within, followed by a dead and heavy noise, roused all his attention. Silence ensued. He listened for a considerable time at the door, his imagination filled with images of horror, and expecting to hear the sound repeated. He then sought for a decayed part of the door, through which he might discover what was beyond; but he could find none; and after waiting some time without hearing any farther noise, he was quitting the spot, when in passing his arm over the door, it struck against something hard. On examination he perceived, to his extreme

surprize, that the key was in the lock. For a moment he hesitated what to do; but curiosity overcame other considerations, and with a trembling hand he turned the key. The door opened into a large and desolate apartment, dimly lighted by a lamp that stood on a table, which was almost the only furniture of the place. The Count had advanced several steps before he perceived an object, which fixed all his attention. This was the figure of a young woman lying on the floor apparently dead. Her face was concealed in her robe; and the long auburn tresses which fell in beautiful luxuriance over her bosom, served to veil a part of the glowing beauty which the disorder of her dress would have revealed.

Pity, surprize, and admiration struggled in the breast of Hippolitus; and while he stood surveying the object which excited these different emotions, he heard a step advancing towards the room. He flew to the door by which he had entered, and was fortunate enough to reach it before the entrance of the persons whose steps he heard. Having turned the key, he stopped at the door to listen to their proceedings. He distinguished the voices of two men, and knew them to be those of the assassins. Presently he heard a piercing skriek, and at the same instant the voices of the ruffians grew loud and violent. One of them exclaimed that the lady was dying, and accused the other of having frightened her to death, swearing, with horrid imprecations, that she was his, and he would defend her to the last drop of his blood. The dispute grew higher; and neither of the ruffians would give up his claim to the unfortunate object of their altercation.

The clashing of swords was soon after heard, together with a violent noise. The screams were repeated, and the oaths and execrations of the disputants redoubled. They seemed to move towards the door, behind which Hippolitus was concealed; suddenly the door was shook with great force, a deep groan followed, and was instantly succeeded by a noise like that of a person whose whole weight falls at once to the ground. For a moment all was silent. Hippolitus had no doubt that one of the ruffians had destroyed the other, and was soon confirmed in the belief — for the survivor triumphed with brutal exultation over his fallen antagonist. The ruffian hastily quitted the room, and Hippolitus soon after heard the distant voices of several persons in loud dispute. The sounds seemed to come from a chamber over the place where he stood; he also heard a trampling of feet from above, and could even distinguish, at intervals, the

words of the disputants. From these he gathered enough to learn that the affray which had just happened, and the lady who had been the occasion of it, were the subjects of discourse. The voices frequently rose together, and confounded all distinction.

At length the tumult began to subside, and Hippolitus could distinguish what was said. The ruffians agreed to give up the lady in question to him who had fought for her; and leaving him to his prize, they all went out in quest of farther prey. The situation of the unfortunate lady excited a mixture of pity and indignation in Hippolitus, which for some time entirely occupied him; he revolved the means of extricating her from so deplorable a situation, and in these thoughts almost forgot his own danger. He now heard her sighs; and while his heart melted to the sounds, the farther door of the apartment was thrown open, and the wretch to whom she had been allotted, rushed in. Her screams now redoubled, but they were of no avail with the ruffian who had seized her in his arms; when the count, who was unarmed, insensible to every pulse but that of a generous pity, burst into the room, but became fixed like a statue when he beheld his Julia struggling in the grasp of the ruffian. On discovering Hippolitus, she made a sudden spring, and liberated herself; when, running to him, she sunk lifeless in his arms.

Surprise and fury sparkled in the eyes of the ruffian, and he turned with a savage desperation upon the count; who, relinquishing Julia, snatched up the sword of the dead ruffian, which lay upon the floor, and defended himself. The combat was furious, but Hippolitus laid his antagonist senseless at his feet. He flew to Julia, who now revived, but who for some time could speak only by her tears. The transitions of various and rapid sensations, which her heart experienced, and the strangely mingled emotions of joy and terror that agitated Hippolitus, can only be understood by experience. He raised her from the floor, and endeavoured to soothe her to composure, when she called wildly upon Ferdinand. At his name the count started, and he instantly remembered the dying cavalier, whose countenance the glooms had concealed from his view. His heart thrilled with secret agony, yet he resolved to withhold his terrible conjectures from Julia, of whom he learned that Ferdinand, with herself, had been taken by banditti in the way from the villa which had offered them so hospitable a reception after the shipwreck. They were on the road to a port whence they

designed again to embark for Italy, when this misfortune overtook them. Julia added, that Ferdinand had been immediately separated from her; and that, for some hours, she had been confined in the apartment where Hippolitus found her.

The Count with difficulty concealed his terrible apprehensions for Ferdinand, and vainly strove to soften Julia's distress. But there was no time to be lost — they had yet to find a way out of the edifice, and before they could accomplish this, the banditti might return. It was also possible that some of the party were left to watch this their abode during the absence of the rest, and this was another circumstance of reasonable alarm.

After some little consideration, Hippolitus judged it most prudent to seek an outlet through the passage by which he entered; he therefore took the lamp, and led Julia to the door. They entered the avenue, and locking the door after them, sought the flight of steps down which the count had before passed; but having pursued the windings of the avenue a considerable time without finding them, he became certain he had mistaken the way. They, however, found another flight, which they descended and entered upon a passage so very narrow and low, as not to admit of a person walking upright. This passage was closed by a door, which on examination was found to be chiefly of iron. Hippolitus was startled at the sight, but on applying his strength found it gradually yield, when the imprisoned air rushed out, and had nearly extinguished the light. They now entered upon a dark abyss; and the door which moved upon a spring, suddenly closed upon them. On looking round they beheld a large vault; and it is not easy to imagine their horror on discovering they were in a receptacle for the murdered bodies of the unfortunate people who had fallen into the hands of the banditti.

The count could scarcely support the fainting spirits of Julia; he ran to the door, which he endeavoured to open, but the lock was so constructed that it could be moved only on the other side, and all his efforts were useless. He was constrained, therefore, to seek for another door, but could find none. Their situation was the most deplorable that can be imagined; for they were now inclosed in a vault strewn with the dead bodies of the murdered, and must there become the victims of famine, or of the sword. The earth was in several places thrown up, and marked the boundaries of

new-made graves. The bodies which remained unburied were probably left either from hurry or negligence, and exhibited a spectacle too shocking for humanity. The sufferings of Hippolitus were increased by those of Julia, who was sinking with horror, and who he endeavoured to support to apart of the vault which fell into a recess — where stood a bench.

They had not been long in this situation, when they heard a noise which approached gradually, and which did not appear to come from the avenue they had passed.

The noise increased, and they could distinguish voices. Hippolitus believed the murderers were returned; that they had traced his retreat, and were coming towards the vault by some way unknown to him. He prepared for the worst — and drawing his sword, resolved to defend Julia to the last. Their apprehension, however, was soon dissipated by a trampling of horses, which sound had occasioned his alarm, and which now seemed to come from a courtyard above, extremely near the vault. He distinctly heard the voices of the banditti, together with the moans and supplications of some person, whom it was evident they were about to plunder. The sound appeared so very near, that Hippolitus was both shocked and surprised; and looking round the vault, he perceived a small grated window placed very high in the wall, which he concluded overlooked the place where the robbers were assembled. He recollected that his light might betray him; and horrible as was the alternative, he was compelled to extinguish it. He now attempted to climb to the grate, through which he might obtain a view of what was passing without. This at length he effected, for the ruggedness of the wall afforded him a footing. He beheld in a ruinous court, which was partially illuminated by the glare of torches, a group of banditti surrounding two persons who were bound on horseback, and who were supplicating for mercy.

One of the robbers exclaiming with an oath that this was a golden night, bade his comrades dispatch, adding he would go to find Paulo and the lady.

The effect which the latter part of this sentence had upon the prisoners in the vault, may be more easily imagined than described. They were now in total darkness in this mansion of the murdered, without means of escape, and in momentary expectation of sharing a fate similar to that of the wretched objects around them. Julia, overcome with distress and terror,

sunk on the ground; and Hippolitus, descending from the grate, became insensible of his own danger in his apprehension for her.

In a short time all without was confusion and uproar; the ruffian who had left the court returned with the alarm that the lady was fled, and that Paulo was murdered, The robbers quitting their booty to go in search of the fugitive, and to discover the murderer, dreadful vociferations resounded through every recess of the pile.

The tumult had continued a considerable time, which the prisoners had passed in a state of horrible suspence, when they heard the uproar advancing towards the vault, and soon after a number of voices shouted down the avenue. The sound of steps quickened. Hippolitus again drew his sword, and placed himself opposite the entrance, where he had not stood long, when a violent push was made against the door; it flew open, and a party of men rushed into the vault,

Hippolitus kept his position, protesting he would destroy the first who approached. At the sound of his voice they stopped; but presently advancing, commanded him in the king’s name to surrender. He now discovered what his agitation had prevented him from observing sooner, that the men before him were not banditti, but the officers of justice. They had received information of this haunt of villainy from the son of a Sicilian nobleman, who had fallen into the hands of the banditti, and had afterwards escaped from their power.

The officers came attended by a guard, and were every way prepared to prosecute a strenuous search through these horrible recesses.

Hippolitus inquired for Ferdinand, and they all quitted the vault in search of him. In the court, to which they now ascended, the greater part of the banditti were secured by a number of the guard. The count accused the robbers of having secreted his friend, whom he described, and demanded to have liberated.

With one voice they denied the fact, and were resolute in persisting that they knew nothing of the person described. This denial confirmed Hippolitus in his former terrible surmise; that the dying cavalier, whom he had seen, was no other than Ferdinand, and he became furious. He bade the officers prosecute their search, who, leaving a guard over the banditti they had secured, followed him to the room where the late dreadful scene had been acted.

The room was dark and empty; but the traces of blood were visible on the floor; and Julia, though ignorant of the particular apprehension of Hippolitus, almost swooned at the sight. On quitting the room, they wandered for some time among the ruins, without discovering any thing extraordinary, till, in passing under the archway by which Hippolitus had first entered the building, their footsteps returned a deep sound, which convinced them that the ground beneath was hollow. On close examination, they perceived by the light of their torch, a trapdoor, which with some difficulty they lifted, and discovered beneath a narrow flight of steps. They all descended into a low winding passage, where they had not been long, when they heard a trampling of horses above, and a loud and sudden uproar.

The officers apprehending that the banditti had overcome the guard, rushed back to the trapdoor, which they had scarcely lifted, when they heard a clashing of swords, and a confusion of unknown voices. Looking onward, they beheld through the arch, in an inner sort of court, a large party of banditti who were just arrived, rescuing their comrades, and contending furiously with the guard.

On observing this, several of the officers sprang forward to the assistance of their friends; and the rest, subdued by cowardice, hurried down the steps, letting the trapdoor fall after them with a thundering noise. They gave notice to Hippolitus of what was passing above, who hurried Julia along the passage in search of some outlet or place of concealment. They could find neither, and had not long pursued the windings of the way, when they heard the trapdoor lifted, and the steps of persons descending. Despair gave strength to Julia, and winged her flight. But they were now stopped by a door which closed the passage, and the sound of distant voices murmured along the walls.

The door was fastened by strong iron bolts, which Hippolitus vainly endeavoured to draw. The voices drew near. After much labour and difficulty the bolts yielded — the door unclosed — and light dawned upon them through the mouth of a cave, into which they now entered. On quitting the cave they found themselves in the forest, and in a short time reached the borders. They now ventured to stop, and looking back perceived no person in pursuit.

CHAPTER XI V

When Julia had rested, they followed the track before them, and in a short time arrived at a village, where they obtained security and refreshment.

But Julia, whose mind was occupied with dreadful anxiety for Ferdinand, became indifferent to all around her. Even the presence of Hippolitus, which but lately would have raised her from misery to joy, failed to soothe her distress. The steady and noble attachment of her brother had sunk deep in her heart, and reflection only aggravated her affliction. Yet the banditti had steadily persisted in affirming that he was not concealed in their recesses; and this circumstance, which threw a deeper shade over the fears of Hippolitus, imparted a glimmering of hope to the mind of Julia.

A more immediate interest at length forced her mind from this sorrowful subject. It was necessary to determine upon some line of conduct, for she was now in an unknown spot, and ignorant of any place of refuge. The count, who trembled at the dangers which environed her, and at the probabilities he saw of her being torn from him for ever, suffered a consideration of them to overcome the dangerous delicacy which at this mournful period required his silence. He entreated her to destroy the possibility of separation, by consenting to become his immediately. He urged that a priest could be easily procured from a neighboring convent, who would confirm the bonds which had so long united their hearts, and who would thus at once arrest the destiny that so long had threatened his hopes.

This proposal, though similar to the one she had before accepted; and though the certain means of rescuing her from the fate she dreaded, she now turned from in sorrow and dejection. She loved Hippolitus with a steady and tender affection, which was still heightened by the gratitude he claimed as her deliverer; but she considered it a prophanation of the memory of that brother who had suffered so much for her sake, to mingle joy with the grief which her uncertainty concerning him occasioned. She softened her refusal with a tender grace, that quickly dissipated the jealous doubt arising in the mind of Hippolitus, and increased his fond admiration of her character.

She desired to retire for a time to some obscure convent, there to await the issue of the event, which at present involved her in perplexity and sorrow.

Hippolitus struggled with his feelings and forbore to press farther the suit on which his happiness, and almost his existence, now depended. He inquired at the village for a neighbouring convent, and was told, that there was none within twelve leagues, but that near the town of Palini, at about that distance, were two. He procured horses; and leaving the officers to return to Palermo for a stronger guard, he, accompanied by Julia, entered on the road to Palini.

Julia was silent and thoughtful; Hippolitus gradually sunk into the same mood, and he often cast a cautious look around as they travelled for some hours along the feet of the mountains. They stopped to dine under the shade of some beach-trees; for, fearful of discovery, Hippolitus had provided against the necessity of entering many inns. Having finished their repast, they pursued their journey; but Hippolitus now began to doubt whether he was in the right direction. Being destitute, however, of the means of certainty upon this point, he followed the road before him, which now wound up the side of a steep hill, whence they descended into a rich valley, where the shepherd’s pipe sounded sweetly from afar among the hills. The evening sun shed a mild and mellow lustre over the landscape, and softened each feature with a vermil glow that would have inspired a mind less occupied than Julia’s with sensations of congenial tranquillity.

The evening now closed in; and as they were doubtful of the road, and found it would be impossible to reach Palini that night, they took the way to a village, which they perceived at the extremity of the valley.

They had proceeded about half a mile, when they heard a sudden shout of voices echoed from among the hills behind them; and looking back perceived faintly through the dusk a party of men on horseback making towards them. As they drew nearer, the words they spoke were distinguishable, and Julia heard her own name sounded. Shocked at this circumstance, she had now no doubt that she was discovered by a party of her father’s people, and she fled with Hippolitus along the valley. The pursuers, however, were almost come up with them, when they reached the mouth of a cavern, into which she ran for concealment. Hippolitus drew his sword; and awaiting his enemies, stood to defend the entrance.

In a few moments Julia heard the clashing of swords. Her heart trembled for Hippolitus; and she was upon the point of returning to resign herself at once to the power of her enemies, and thus avert the danger that threatened him, when she distinguished the loud voice of the duke.

She shrunk involuntarily at the sound, and pursuing the windings of the cavern, fled into its inmost recesses. Here she had not been long when the voices sounded through the cave, and drew near. It was now evident that Hippolitus was conquered, and that her enemies were in search of her. She threw round a look of unutterable anguish, and perceived very near, by a sudden gleam of torchlight, a low and deep recess in the rock. The light which belonged to her pursuers, grew stronger; and she entered the rock on her knees, for the overhanging craggs would not suffer her to pass otherwise; and having gone a few yards, perceived that it was terminated by a door. The door yielded to her touch, and she suddenly found herself in a highly vaulted cavern, which received a feeble light from the moonbeams that streamed through an opening in the rock above.

She closed the door, and paused to listen. The voices grew louder, and more distinct, and at last approached so near, that she distinguished what was said. Above the rest she heard the voice of the duke. ‘It is impossible she can have quitted the cavern,’ said he, ‘and I will not leave it till I have found her. Seek to the left of that rock, while I examine beyond this point.’

These words were sufficient for Julia; she fled from the door across the cavern before her, and having ran a considerable way, without coming to a termination, stopped to breathe. All was now still, and as she looked around, the gloomy obscurity of the place struck upon her fancy all its horrors. She imperfectly surveyed the vastness of the cavern in wild amazement, and feared that she had precipitated herself again into the power of banditti, for whom along this place appeared a fit receptacle. Having listened a long time without hearing a return of voices, she thought to find the door by which she had entered, but the gloom, and vast extent of the cavern, made the endeavour hopeless, and the attempt unsuccessful. Having wandered a considerable time through the void, she gave up the effort, endeavoured to resign herself to her fate, and to compose her distracted thoughts. The remembrance of her former wonderful escape inspired her with confidence in the mercy of God. But Hippolitus and

Ferdinand were now both lost to her — lost, perhaps, for ever — and the uncertainty of their fate gave force to fancy, and poignancy to sorrow.

Towards morning grief yielded to nature, and Julia sunk to repose. She was awakened by the sun, whose rays darting obliquely through the opening in the rock, threw a partial light across the cavern. Her senses were yet bewildered by sleep, and she started in affright on beholding her situation; as recollection gradually stole upon her mind, her sorrows returned, and she sickened at the fatal retrospect.

She arose, and renewed her search for an outlet. The light, imperfect as it was, now assisted her, and she found a door, which she perceived was not the one by which she had entered. It was firmly fastened; she discovered, however, the bolts and the lock that held it, and at length unclosed the door. It opened upon a dark passage, which she entered.

She groped along the winding walls for some time, when she perceived the way was obstructed. She now discovered that another door interrupted her progress, and sought for the bolts which might fasten it. These she found; and strengthened by desparation forced them back. The door opened, and she beheld in a small room, which received its feeble light from a window above, the pale and emaciated figure of a woman, seated, with half-closed eyes, in a kind of elbow-chair. On perceiving Julia, she started from her seat, and her countenance expressed a wild surprise. Her features, which were worn by sorrow, still retained the traces of beauty, and in her air was a mild dignity that excited in Julia an involuntary veneration.

She seemed as if about to speak, when fixing her eyes earnestly and steadily upon Julia, she stood for a moment in eager gaze, and suddenly exclaiming, ‘My daughter!’ fainted away.

The astonishment of Julia would scarcely suffer her to assist the lady who lay senseless on the floor. A multitude of strange imperfect ideas rushed upon her mind, and she was lost in perplexity; but as she examined the features of the stranger; which were now rekindling into life, she thought she discovered the resemblance of Emilia!

The lady breathing a deep sigh, unclosed her eyes; she raised them to Julia, who hung over her in speechless astonishment, and fixing them upon her with a tender earnest expression — they filled with tears. She pressed Julia to her heart, and a few moments of exquisite, unutterable emotion

followed. When the lady became more composed, ‘Thank heaven!’ said she, ‘my prayer is granted. I am permitted to embrace one of my children before I die. Tell me what brought you hither. Has the marquis at last relented, and allowed me once more to behold you, or has his death dissolved my wretched bondage?’

Truth now glimmered upon the mind of Julia, but so faintly, that instead of enlightening, it served only to increase her perplexity.

‘Is the marquis Mazzini living?’ continued the lady. These words were not to be doubted; Julia threw herself at the feet of her mother, and embracing her knees in an energy of joy, answered only in sobs.

The marchioness eagerly inquired after her children, ‘Emilia is living,’ answered Julia, ‘but my dear brother— ‘ ‘Tell me,’ cried the marchioness, with quickness. An explanation ensued; When she was informed concerning Ferdinand, she sighed deeply, and raising her eyes to heaven, endeavoured to assume a look of pious resignation; but the struggle of maternal feelings was visible in her countenance, and almost overcame her powers of resistance.

Julia gave a short account of the preceding adventures, and of her entrance into the cavern; and found, to her inexpressible surprize, that she was now in a subterranean abode belonging to the southern buildings of the castle of Mazzini! The marchioness was beginning her narrative, when a door was heard to unlock above, and the sound of a footstep followed.

‘Fly!’ cried the marchioness, ‘secret yourself, if possible, for the marquis is coming.’ Julia’s heart sunk at these words; she paused not a moment, but retired through the door by which she had entered. This she had scarcely done, when another door of the cell was unlocked, and she heard the voice of her father. Its sounds thrilled her with a universal tremour; the dread of discovery so strongly operated upon her mind, that she stood in momentary expectation of seeing the door of the passage unclosed by the marquis; and she was deprived of all power of seeking refuge in the cavern.

At length the marquis, who came with food, quitted the cell, and relocked the door, when Julia stole forth from her hiding-place. The marchioness again embraced, and wept over her daughter. The narrative of her sufferings, upon which she now entered, entirely dissipated the mystery which had so long enveloped the southern buildings of the castle.

‘Oh! why,’ said the marchioness, ‘is it my task to discover to my daughter the vices of her father? In relating my sufferings, I reveal his crimes! It is now about fifteen years, as near as I can guess from the small means I have of judging, since I entered this horrible abode. My sorrows, alas! began not here; they commenced at an earlier period. But it is sufficient to observe, that the passion whence originated all my misfortunes, was discovered by me long before I experienced its most baleful effects.

‘Seven years had elapsed since my marriage, when the charms of Maria de Vellorno, a young lady singularly beautiful, inspired the marquis with a passion as violent as it was irregular. I observed, with deep and silent anguish, the cruel indifference of my lord towards me, and the rapid progress of his passion for another. I severely examined my past conduct, which I am thankful to say presented a retrospect of only blameless actions; and I endeavoured, by meek submission, and tender assiduities, to recall that affection which was, alas! gone for ever. My meek submission was considered as a mark of a servile and insensible mind; and my tender assiduities, to which his heart no longer responded, created only disgust, and exalted the proud spirit it was meant to conciliate.

‘The secret grief which this change occasioned, consumed my spirits, and preyed upon my constitution, till at length a severe illness threatened my life. I beheld the approach of death with a steady eye, and even welcomed it as the passport to tranquillity; but it was destined that I should linger through new scenes of misery.

‘One day, which it appears was the paroxysm of my disorder, I sunk in to a state of total torpidity, in which I lay for several hours. It is impossible to describe my feelings, when, on recovering, I found myself in this hideous abode. For some time I doubted my senses, and afterwards believed that I had quitted this world for another; but I was not long suffered to continue in my error, the appearance of the marquis bringing me to a perfect sense of my situation.

‘I now understood that I had been conveyed by his direction to this recess of horror, where it was his will I should remain. My prayers, my supplications, were ineffectual; the hardness of his heart repelled my sorrows back upon myself; and as no entreaties could prevail upon him to inform me where I was, or of his reason for placing me here, I remained

for many years ignorant of my vicinity to the castle, and of the motive of my confinement.

‘From that fatal day, until very lately, I saw the marquis no more — but was attended by a person who had been for some years dependant upon his bounty, and whom necessity, united to an insensible heart, had doubtless induced to accept this office. He generally brought me a week’s provision, at stated intervals, and I remarked that his visits were always in the night.

‘Contrary to my expectation, or my wish, nature did that for me which medicine had refused, and I recovered as if to punish with disappointment and anxiety my cruel tyrant. I afterwards learned, that in obedience to the marquis’s order, I had been carried to this spot by Vincent during the night, and that I had been buried in effigy at a neighbouring church, with all the pomp of funeral honor due to my rank.’

At the name of Vincent Julia started; the doubtful words he had uttered on his deathbed were now explained — the cloud of mystery which had so long involved the southern buildings broke at once away: and each particular circumstance that had excited her former terror, arose to her view entirely unveiled by the words of the marchioness. — The long and total desertion of this part of the fabric — the light that had appeared through the casement — the figure she had seen issue from the tower — the midnight noises she had heard — were circumstances evidently dependant on the imprisonment of the marchioness; the latter of which incidents were produced either by Vincent, or the marquis, in their attendance upon her.

When she considered the long and dreadful sufferings of her mother, and that she had for many years lived so near her, ignorant of her misery, and even of her existence — she was lost in astonishment and pity.

‘My days,’ continued the marchioness, ‘passed in a dead uniformity, more dreadful than the most acute vicissitudes of misfortune, and which would certainly have subdued my reason, had not those firm principles of religious faith, which I imbibed in early youth, enabled me to withstand the still, but forceful pressure of my calamity.

‘The insensible heart of Vincent at length began to soften to my misfortunes. He brought me several articles of comfort, of which I had hitherto been destitute, and answered some questions I put to him concerning my family. To release me from my present situation, however

his inclination might befriend me, was not to be expected, since his life would have paid the forfeiture of what would be termed his duty.

‘I now first discovered my vicinity to the castle. I learned also, that the marquis had married Maria de Vellorno, with whom he had resided at Naples, but that my daughters were left at Mazzini. This last intelligence awakened in my heart the throbs of warm maternal tenderness, and on my knees I supplicated to see them. So earnestly I entreated, and so solemnly I promised to return quietly to my prison, that, at length, prudence yielded to pity, and Vincent consented to my request.

‘On the following day he came to the cell, and informed me my children were going into the woods, and that I might see them from a window near which they would pass. My nerves thrilled at these words, and I could scarcely support myself to the spot I so eagerly sought. He led me through long and intricate passages, as I guessed by the frequent turnings, for my eyes were bound, till I reached a hall of the south buildings. I followed to a room above, where the full light of day once more burst upon my sight, and almost overpowered me. Vincent placed me by a window, which looked towards the woods. Oh! what moments of painful impatience were those in which I awaited your arrival!

‘At length you appeared. I saw you — I saw my children — and was neither permitted to clasp them to my heart, or to speak to them! You was leaning on the arm of your sister, and your countenances spoke the sprightly happy innocence of youth. — Alas! you knew not the wretched fate of your mother, who then gazed upon you! Although you were at too great a distance for my weak voice to reach you, with the utmost difficulty I avoided throwing open the window, and endeavouring to discover myself. The remembrance of my solemn promise, and that the life of Vincent would be sacrificed by the act, alone restrained me. I struggled for some time with emotions too powerful for my nature, and fainted away.

‘On recovering I called wildly for my children, and went to the window — but you were gone! Not all the entreaties of Vincent could for some time remove me from this station, where I waited in the fond expectation of seeing you again — but you appeared no more! At last I returned to my cell in an ecstasy of grief which I tremble even to remember.

‘This interview, so eagerly sought, and so reluctantly granted, proved a source of new misery — instead of calming, it agitated my mind with a

restless, wild despair, which bore away my strongest powers of resistance. I raved incessantly of my children, and incessantly solicited to see them again — Vincent, however, had found but too much cause to repent of his first indulgence, to grant me a second.

‘About this time a circumstance occurred which promised me a speedy release from calamity. About a week elapsed, and Vincent did not appear. My little stock of provision was exhausted, and I had been two days without food, when I again heard the doors that led to my prison creek on their hinges. An unknown step approached, and in a few minutes the marquis entered my cell! My blood was chilled at the sight, and I closed my eyes as I hoped for the last time. The sound of his voice recalled me. His countenance was dark and sullen, and I perceived that he trembled. He informed me that Vincent was no more, and that henceforward his office he should take upon himself. I forbore to reproach — where reproach would only have produced new sufferings, and withheld supplication where it would have exasperated conscience and inflamed revenge. My knowledge of the marquis’s second marriage I concealed.

‘He usually attended me when night might best conceal his visits; though these were irregular in their return. Lately, from what motive I cannot guess, he has ceased his nocturnal visits, and comes only in the day.

‘Once when midnight increased the darkness of my prison, and seemed to render silence even more awful, touched by the sacred horrors of the hour, I poured forth my distress in loud lamentation. Oh! never can I forget what I felt, when I heard a distant voice answered to my moan! A wild surprize, which was strangely mingled with hope, seized me, and in my first emotion I should have answered the call, had not a recollection crossed me, which destroyed at once every half-raised sensation of joy. I remembered the dreadful vengeance which the marquis had sworn to execute upon me, if I ever, by any means, endeavoured to make known the place of my concealment; and though life had long been a burden to me, I dared not to incur the certainty of being murdered. I also well knew that no person who might discover my situation could effect my enlargement, for I had no relations to deliver me by force; and the marquis, you know, has not only power to imprison, but also the right of life and death in his own domains; I, therefore, forbore to answer the call, though I could not entirely repress my lamentation. I long perplexed myself with

endeavouring to account for this strange circumstance, and am to this moment ignorant of its cause.’

Julia remembering that Ferdinand had been confined in a dungeon of the castle, it instantly occurred to her that his prison, and that of the marchioness, were not far distant; and she scrupled not to believe that it was his voice which her mother had heard. She was right in this belief, and it was indeed the marchioness whose groans had formerly caused Ferdinand so much alarm, both in the marble hall of the south buildings, and in his dungeon.

When Julia communicated her opinion, and the marchioness believed that she had heard the voice of her son — her emotion was extreme, and it was some time before she could resume her narration.

‘A short time since,’ continued the marchioness, ‘the marquis brought me a fortnight’s provision, and told me that I should probably see him no more till the expiration of that term. His absence at this period you have explained in your account of the transactions at the abbey of St Augustin. How can I ever sufficiently acknowledge the obligations I owe to my dear and invaluable friend Madame de Menon! Oh! that it might be permitted me to testify my gratitude.’

Julia attended to the narrative of her mother in silent astonishment, and gave all the sympathy which sorrow could demand. ‘Surely,’ cried she, ‘the providence on whom you have so firmly relied, and whose inflictions you have supported with a fortitude so noble, has conducted me through a labyrinth of misfortunes to this spot, for the purpose of delivering you! Oh! let us hasten to fly this horrid abode — let us seek to escape through the cavern by which I entered.’

She paused in earnest expectation awaiting a reply. ‘Whither can I fly?’ said the marchioness, deeply sighing. This question, spoken with the emphasis of despair, affected Julia to tears, and she was for a while silent.

‘The marquis,’ resumed Julia, ‘would not know where to seek you, or if he found you beyond his own domains, would fear to claim you. A convent may afford for the present a safe asylum; and whatever shall happen, surely no fate you may hereafter encounter can be more dreadful than the one you now experience.’

The marchioness assented to the truth of this, yet her broken spirits, the effect of long sorrow and confinement, made her hesitate how to act; and

there was a kind of placid despair in her look, which too faithfully depicted her feelings. It was obvious to Julia that the cavern she had passed wound beneath the range of mountains on whose opposite side stood the castle of Mazzini. The hills thus rising formed a screen which must entirely conceal their emergence from the mouth of the cave, and their flight, from those in the castle. She represented these circumstances to her mother, and urged them so forcibly that the lethargy of despair yielded to hope, and the marchioness committed herself to the conduct of her daughter.

‘Oh! let me lead you to light and life!’ cried Julia with warm enthusiasm. ‘Surely heaven can bless me with no greater good than by making me the deliverer of my mother.’ They both knelt down; and the marchioness, with that affecting eloquence which true piety inspires, and with that confidence which had supported her through so many miseries, committed herself to the protection of God, and implored his favor on their attempt.

They arose, but as they conversed farther on their plan, Julia recollected that she was destitute of money — the banditti having robbed her of all! The sudden shock produced by this remembrance almost subdued her spirits; never till this moment had she understood the value of money. But she commanded her feelings, and resolved to conceal this circumstance from the marchioness, preferring the chance of any evil they might encounter from without, to the certain misery of this terrible imprisonment.

Having taken what provision the marquis had brought, they quitted the cell, and entered upon the dark passage, along which they passed with cautious steps. Julia came first to the door of the cavern, but who can paint her distress when she found it was fastened! All her efforts to open it were ineffectual. — The door which had closed after her, was held by a spring lock, and could be opened on this side only with a key. When she understood this circumstance, the marchioness, with a placid resignation which seemed to exalt her above humanity, addressed herself again to heaven, and turned back to her cell. Here Julia indulged without reserve, and without scruple, the excess of her grief. The marchioness wept over her. ‘Not for myself,’ said she, ‘do I grieve. I have too long been inured to misfortune to sink under its pressure. This disappointment is intrinsically,

perhaps, little — for I had no certain refuge from calamity — and had it even been otherwise, a few years only of suffering would have been spared me. It is for you, Julia, who so much lament my fate; and who in being thus delivered to the power of your father, are sacrificed to the Duke de Luovo — that my heart swells.'

Julia could make no reply, but by pressing to her lips the hand which was held forth to her, she saw all the wretchedness of her situation; and her fearful uncertainty concerning Hippolitus and Ferdinand, formed no inferior part of her affliction.

'If,' resumed the marchioness, 'you prefer imprisonment with your mother, to a marriage with the duke, you may still secret yourself in the passage we have just quitted, and partake of the provision which is brought me.'

'O! talk not, madam, of a marriage with the duke,' said Julia; 'surely any fate is preferable to that. But when I consider that in remaining here, I am condemned only to the sufferings which my mother has so long endured, and that this confinement will enable me to soften, by tender sympathy, the asperity of her misfortunes, I ought to submit to my present situation with complacency, even did a marriage with the duke appear less hateful to me.'

'Excellent girl!' exclaimed the marchioness, clasping Julia to her bosom; 'the sufferings you lament are almost repaid by this proof of your goodness and affection! Alas! that I should have been so long deprived of such a daughter!'

Julia now endeavoured to imitate the fortitude of her mother, and tenderly concealed her anxiety for Ferdinand and Hippolitus, the idea of whom incessantly haunted her imagination. When the marquis brought food to the cell, she retired to the avenue leading to the cavern, and escaped discovery.

CHAPTER X V

The marquis, meanwhile, whose indefatigable search after Julia failed of success, was successively the slave of alternate passions, and he poured forth the spleen of disappointment on his unhappy domestics.

The marchioness, who may now more properly be called Maria de Vellorno, inflamed, by artful insinuations, the passions already irritated, and heightened with cruel triumph his resentment towards Julia and Madame de Menon. She represented, what his feelings too acutely acknowledged, — that by the obstinate disobedience of the first, and the machinations of the last, a priest had been enabled to arrest his authority as a father — to insult the sacred honor of his nobility — and to overturn at once his proudest schemes of power and ambition. She declared it her opinion, that the *Abate* was acquainted with the place of Julia's present retreat, and upbraided the marquis with want of spirit in thus submitting to be outwitted by a priest, and forbearing an appeal to the pope, whose authority would compel the *Abate* to restore Julia.

This reproach stung the very soul of the marquis; he felt all its force, and was at the same time conscious of his inability to obviate it. The effect of his crimes now fell in severe punishment upon his own head. The threatened secret, which was no other than the imprisonment of the marchioness, arrested his arm of vengeance, and compelled him to submit to insult and disappointment. But the reproach of Maria sunk deep in his mind; it fomented his pride into redoubled fury, and he now repelled with disdain the idea of submission.

He revolved the means which might effect his purpose — he saw but one — this was the death of the marchioness.

The commission of one crime often requires the perpetration of another. When once we enter on the ladyrinth of vice, we can seldom return, but are led on, through correspondent mazes, to destruction. To obviate the effect of his first crime, it was now necessary the marquis should commit a second, and conceal the *imprisonment* of the marchioness by her *murder* . Himself the only living witness of her existence, when she was removed, the allegations of the *Padre Abate* would by this means be unsupported by

any proof, and he might then boldly appeal to the pope for the restoration of his child.

He mused upon this scheme, and the more he accustomed his mind to contemplate it, the less scrupulous he became. The crime from which he would formerly have shrunk, he now surveyed with a steady eye. The fury of his passions, unaccustomed to resistance, uniting with the force of what ambition termed necessity — urged him to the deed, and he determined upon the murder of his wife. The means of effecting his purpose were easy and various; but as he was not yet so entirely hardened as to be able to view her dying pangs, and embrue his own hands in her blood, he chose to dispatch her by means of poison, which he resolved to mingle in her food.

But a new affliction was preparing for the marquis, which attacked him where he was most vulnerable; and the veil, which had so long overshadowed his reason, was now to be removed. He was informed by Baptista of the infidelity of Maria de Vellorno. In the first emotion of passion, he spurned the informer from his presence, and disdained to believe the circumstance. A little reflection changed the object of his resentment; he recalled the servant, whose faithfulness he had no reason to distrust, and condescended to interrogate him on the subject of his misfortune.

He learned that an intimacy had for some time subsisted between Maria and the Cavalier de Vincini; and that the assignation was usually held at the pavilion on the seashore, in an evening. Baptista farther declared, that if the marquis desired a confirmation of his words, he might obtain it by visiting this spot at the hour mentioned.

This information lighted up the wildest passions of his nature; his former sufferings faded away before the stronger influence of the present misfortune, and it seemed as if he had never tasted misery till now. To suspect the wife upon whom he doated with romantic fondness, on whom he had centered all his firmest hopes of happiness, and for whose sake he had committed the crime which embittered even his present moment, and which would involve him in still deeper guilt — to find *her* ungrateful to his love, and a traitoress to his honor — produced a misery more poignant than any his imagination had conceived. He was torn by contending passions, and opposite resolutions: — now he resolved to expiate her guilt with her blood — and now he melted in all the softness of love. Vengeance

and honor bade him strike to the heart which had betrayed him, and urged him instantly to the deed — when the idea of her beauty — her winning smiles — her fond endearments stole upon his fancy, and subdued his heart; he almost wept to the idea of injuring her, and in spight of appearances, pronounced her faithful. The succeeding moment plunged him again into uncertainty; his tortures acquired new vigour from cessation, and again he experienced all the phrenzy of despair. He was now resolved to end his doubts by repairing to the pavilion; but again his heart wavered in irresolution how to proceed should his fears be confirmed. In the mean time he determined to watch the behaviour of Maria with severe vigilance.

They met at dinner, and he observed her closely, but discovered not the smallest impropriety in her conduct. Her smiles and her beauty again wound their fascinations round his heart, and in the excess of their influence he was almost tempted to repair the injury which his late suspicions had done her, by confessing them at her feet. The appearance of the Cavalier de Vincini, however, renewed his suspicions; his heart throbbed wildly, and with restless impatience he watched the return of evening, which would remove his suspence.

Night at length came. He repaired to the pavilion, and secreted himself among the trees that embowered it. Many minutes had not passed, when he heard a sound of low whispering voices steal from among the trees, and footsteps approaching down the alley. He stood almost petrified with terrible sensations, and presently heard some persons enter the pavilion. The marquis now emerged from his hiding-place; a faint light issued from the building. He stole to the window, and beheld within, Maria and the Cavalier de Vincini. Fired at the sight, he drew his sword, and sprang forward. The sound of his step alarmed the cavalier, who, on perceiving the marquis, rushed by him from the pavilion, and disappeared among the woods. The marquis pursued, but could not overtake him; and he returned to the pavilion with an intention of plunging his sword in the heart of Maria, when he discovered her senseless on the ground. Pity now suspended his vengeance; he paused in agonizing gaze upon her, and returned his sword into the scabbard.

She revived, but on observing the marquis, screamed and relapsed. He hastened to the castle for assistance, inventing, to conceal his disgrace,

some pretence for her sudden illness, and she was conveyed to her chamber.

The marquis was now not suffered to doubt her infidelity, but the passion which her conduct abused, her faithlessness could not subdue; he still doated with absurd fondness, and even regretted that uncertainty could no longer flatter him with hope. It seemed as if his desire of her affection increased with his knowledge of the loss of it; and the very circumstance which should have roused his aversion, by a strange perversity of disposition, appeared to heighten his passion, and to make him think it impossible he could exist without her.

When the first energy of his indignation was subsided, he determined, therefore, to reprove and to punish, but hereafter to restore her to favor.

In this resolution he went to her apartment, and reprehended her falsehood in terms of just indignation.

Maria de Vellorno, in whom the late discovery had roused resentment, instead of awakening penitence; and exasperated pride without exciting shame — heard the upbraidings of the marquis with impatience, and replied to them with acrimonious violence.

She boldly asserted her innocence, and instantly invented a story, the plausibility of which might have deceived a man who had evidence less certain than his senses to contradict it. She behaved with a haughtiness the most insolent; and when she perceived that the marquis was no longer to be misled, and that her violence failed to accomplish its purpose, she had recourse to tears and supplications. But the artifice was too glaring to succeed; and the marquis quitted her apartment in an agony of resentment.

His former fascinations, however, quickly returned, and again held him in suspension between love and vengeance. That the vehemence of his passion, however, might not want an object, he ordered Baptista to discover the retreat of the Cavalier de Vincini on whom he meant to revenge his lost honor. Shame forbade him to employ others in the search.

This discovery suspended for a while the operations of the fatal scheme, which had before employed the thoughts of the marquis; but it had only suspended — not destroyed them. The late occurrence had annihilated his domestic happiness; but his pride now rose to rescue him from despair, and he centered all his future hopes upon ambition. In a moment of cool reflection, he considered that he had derived neither happiness or content

from the pursuit of dissipated pleasures, to which he had hitherto sacrificed every opposing consideration. He resolved, therefore, to abandon the gay schemes of dissipation which had formerly allured him, and dedicate himself entirely to ambition, in the pursuits and delights of which he hoped to bury all his cares. He therefore became more earnest than ever for the marriage of Julia with the Duke de Luovo, through whose means he designed to involve himself in the interests of the state, and determined to recover her at whatever consequence. He resolved, without further delay, to appeal to the pope; but to do this with safety it was necessary that the marchioness should die; and he returned therefore to the consideration and execution of his diabolical purpose.

He mingled a poisonous drug with the food he designed for her; and when night arrived, carried it to the cell. As he unlocked the door, his hand trembled; and when he presented the food, and looked consciously for the last time upon the marchioness, who received it with humble thankfulness, his heart almost relented. His countenance, over which was diffused the paleness of death, expressed the secret movements of his soul, and he gazed upon her with eyes of stiffened horror. Alarmed by his looks, she fell upon her knees to supplicate his pity.

Her attitude recalled his bewildered senses; and endeavouring to assume a tranquil aspect, he bade her rise, and instantly quitted the cell, fearful of the instability of his purpose. His mind was not yet sufficiently hardened by guilt to repel the arrows of conscience, and his imagination responded to her power. As he passed through the long dreary passages from the prison, solemn and mysterious sounds seemed to speak in every murmur of the blast which crept along their windings, and he often started and looked back.

He reached his chamber, and having shut the door, surveyed the room in fearful examination. Ideal forms flitted before his fancy, and for the first time in his life he feared to be alone. Shame only withheld him from calling Baptista. The gloom of the hour, and the deathlike silence that prevailed, assisted the horrors of his imagination. He half repented of the deed, yet deemed it now too late to obviate it; and he threw himself on his bed in terrible emotion. His head grew dizzy, and a sudden faintness overcame him; he hesitated, and at length arose to ring for assistance, but found himself unable to stand.

In a few moments he was somewhat revived, and rang his bell; but before any person appeared, he was seized with terrible pains, and staggering to his bed, sunk senseless upon it. Here Baptista, who was the first person that entered his room, found him struggling seemingly in the agonies of death. The whole castle was immediately roused, and the confusion may be more easily imagined than described. Emilia, amid the general alarm, came to her father's room, but the sight of him overcame her, and she was carried from his presence. By the help of proper applications the marquis recovered his senses and his pains had a short cessation.

'I am dying,' said he, in a faultering accent; 'send instantly for the marchioness and my son.'

Ferdinand, in escaping from the hands of the banditti, it was now seen, had fallen into the power of his father. He had been since confined in an apartment of the castle, and was now liberated to obey the summons. The countenance of the marquis exhibited a ghastly image; Ferdinand, when he drew near the bed, suddenly shrunk back, overcome with horror. The marquis now beckoned his attendants to quit the room, and they were preparing to obey, when a violent noise was heard from without; almost in the same instant the door of the apartment was thrown open, and the servant, who had been sent for the marchioness, rushed in. His look alone declared the horror of his mind, for words he had none to utter. He stared wildly, and pointed to the gallery he had quitted. Ferdinand, seized with new terror, rushed the way he pointed to the apartment of the marchioness. A spectacle of horror presented itself. Maria lay on a couch lifeless, and bathed in blood. A poignard, the instrument of her destruction, was on the floor; and it appeared from a letter which was found on the couch beside her, that she had died by her own hand. The paper contained these words:

TO THE MARQUIS DE MAZZINI Your words have stabbed my heart. No power on earth could restore the peace you have destroyed. I will escape from my torture. When you read this, I shall be no more. But the triumph shall no longer be yours — the draught you have drank was given by the hand of the injured MARIA DE MAZZINI.

It now appeared that the marquis was poisoned by the vengeance of the woman to whom he had resigned his conscience. The consternation and distress of Ferdinand cannot easily be conceived: he hastened back to his

father’s chamber, but determined to conceal the dreadful catastrophe of Maria de Vellorno. This precaution, however, was useless; for the servants, in the consternation of terror, had revealed it, and the marquis had fainted.

Returning pains recalled his senses, and the agonies he suffered were too shocking for the beholders. Medical endeavours were applied, but the poison was too powerful for antidote. The marquis’s pains at length subsided; the poison had exhausted most of its rage, and he became tolerably easy. He waved his hand for the attendants to leave the room; and beckoning to Ferdinand, whose senses were almost stunned by this accumulation of horror, bade him sit down beside him. ‘The hand of death is now upon me,’ said he; ‘I would employ these last moments in revealing a deed, which is more dreadful to me than all the bodily agonies I suffer. It will be some relief to me to discover it.’ Ferdinand grasped the hand of the marquis in speechless terror. ‘The retribution of heaven is upon me,’ resumed the marquis. ‘My punishment is the immediate consequence of my guilt. Heaven has made that woman the instrument of its justice, whom I made the instrument of my crimes; —— that woman, for whose sake I forgot conscience, and braved vice — for whom I imprisoned an innocent wife, and afterwards murdered her.’

At these words every nerve of Ferdinand thrilled; he let go the marquis’s hand and started back. ‘Look not so fiercely on me,’ said the marquis, in a hollow voice; ‘your eyes strike death to my soul; my conscience needs not this additional pang.’— ‘My mother!’ exclaimed Ferdinand— ‘my mother! Speak, tell me.’— ‘I have no breath,’ said the marquis. ‘Oh! — Take these keys — the south tower — the trapdoor.— ‘Tis possible — Oh! — ‘

The marquis made a sudden spring upwards, and fell lifeless on the bed; the attendants were called in, but he was gone for ever. His last words struck with the force of lightning upon the mind of Ferdinand; they seemed to say that his mother might yet exist. He took the keys, and ordering some of the servants to follow, hastened to the southern building; he proceeded to the tower, and the trapdoor beneath the staircase was lifted. They all descended into a dark passage, which conducted them through several intricacies to the door of the cell. Ferdinand, in trembling horrible expectation, applied the key; the door opened, and he entered; but what was his surprize when he found no person in the cell! He concluded

that he had mistaken the place, and quitted it for further search; but having followed the windings of the passage, by which he entered, without discovering any other door, he returned to a more exact examination of the cell. He now observed the door, which led to the cavern, and he entered upon the avenue, but no person was found there and no voice answered to his call. Having reached the door of the cavern, which was fastened, he returned lost in grief, and meditating upon the last words of the marquis. He now thought that he had mistaken their import, and that the words ‘‘tis possible,’ were not meant to apply to the life of the marchioness, he concluded, that the murder had been committed at a distant period; and he resolved, therefore, to have the ground of the cell dug up, and the remains of his mother sought for.

When the first violence of the emotions excited by the late scenes was subsided, he enquired concerning Maria de Vellorno.

It appeared that on the day preceding this horrid transaction, the marquis had passed some hours in her apartment; that they were heard in loud dispute; — that the passion of the marquis grew high; — that he upbraided her with her past conduct, and threatened her with a formal separation. When the marquis quitted her, she was heard walking quick through the room, in a passion of tears; she often suddenly stopped in vehement but incoherent exclamation; and at last threw herself on the floor, and was for some time entirely still. Here her woman found her, upon whose entrance she arose hastily, and reproved her for appearing uncalled. After this she remained silent and sullen.

She descended to supper, where the marquis met her alone at table. Little was said during the repast, at the conclusion of which the servants were dismissed; and it was believed that during the interval between supper, and the hour of repose, Maria de Vellorno contrived to mingle poison with the wine of the marquis. How she had procured this poison was never discovered.

She retired early to her chamber; and her woman observing that she appeared much agitated, inquired if she was ill? To this she returned a short answer in the negative, and her woman was soon afterwards dismissed. But she had hardly shut the door of the room when she heard her lady’s voice recalling her. She returned, and received some trifling order, and observed that Maria looked uncommonly pale; there was

besides a wildness in her eyes which frightened her, but she did not dare to ask any questions. She again quitted the room, and had only reached the extremity of the gallery when her mistress's bell rang. She hastened back, Maria enquired if the marquis was gone to bed, and if all was quiet? Being answered in the affirmative, she replied, 'This is a still hour and a dark one! — Good night!'

Her woman having once more left the room, stopped at the door to listen, but all within remaining silent, she retired to rest.

It is probable that Maria perpetrated the fatal act soon after the dismission of her woman; for when she was found, two hours afterwards, she appeared to have been dead for some time. On examination a wound was discovered on her left side, which had doubtless penetrated to the heart, from the suddenness of her death, and from the effusion of blood which had followed.

These terrible events so deeply affected Emilia that she was confined to her bed by a dangerous illness. Ferdinand struggled against the shock with manly fortitude. But amid all the tumult of the present scenes, his uncertainty concerning Julia, whom he had left in the hands of banditti, and whom he had been withheld from seeking or rescuing, formed, perhaps, the most affecting part of his distress.

The late Marquis de Mazzini, and Maria de Vellorno, were interred with the honor due to their rank in the church of the convent of St Nicolo. Their lives exhibited a boundless indulgence of violent and luxurious passions, and their deaths marked the consequences of such indulgence, and held forth to mankind a singular instance of divine vengeance.

CHAPTER XV I

In turning up the ground of the cell, it was discovered that it communicated with the dungeon in which Ferdinand had been confined, and where he had heard those groans which had occasioned him so much terror.

The story which the marquis formerly related to his son, concerning the southern buildings, it was now evident was fabricated for the purpose of concealing the imprisonment of the marchioness. In the choice of his subject, he certainly discovered some art; for the circumstance related was calculated, by impressing terror, to prevent farther enquiry into the recesses of these buildings. It served, also, to explain, by supernatural evidence, the cause of those sounds, and of that appearance which had been there observed, but which were, in reality, occasioned only by the marquis.

The event of the examination in the cell threw Ferdinand into new perplexity. The marquis had confessed that he poisoned his wife — yet her remains were not to be found; and the place which he signified to be that of her confinement, bore no vestige of her having been there. There appeared no way by which she could have escaped from her prison; for both the door which opened upon the cell, and that which terminated the avenue beyond, were fastened when tried by Ferdinand.

But the young marquis had no time for useless speculation — serious duties called upon him. He believed that Julia was still in the power of banditti; and, on the conclusion of his father’s funeral, he set forward himself to Palermo, to give information of the abode of the robbers, and to repair with the officers of justice, accompanied by a party of his own people, to the rescue of his sister. On his arrival at Palermo he was informed, that a banditti, whose retreat had been among the ruins of a monastery, situated in the forest of Marentino, was already discovered; that their abode had been searched, and themselves secured for examples of public justice — but that no captive lady had been found amongst them. This latter intelligence excited in Ferdinand a very serious distress, and he was wholly unable to conjecture her fate. He obtained leave, however, to

interrogate those of the robbers, who were imprisoned at Palermo, but could draw from them no satisfactory or certain information.

At length he quitted Palermo for the forest of Marentino, thinking it possible that Julia might be heard of in its neighbourhood. He travelled on in melancholy and dejection, and evening overtook him long before he reached the place of his destination. The night came on heavily in clouds, and a violent storm of wind and rain arose. The road lay through a wild and rocky country, and Ferdinand could obtain no shelter. His attendants offered him their cloaks, but he refused to expose a servant to the hardship he would not himself endure. He travelled for some miles in a heavy rain; and the wind, which howled mournfully among the rocks, and whose solemn pauses were filled by the distant roarings of the sea, heightened the desolation of the scene. At length he discerned, amid the darkness from afar, a red light waving in the wind: it varied with the blast, but never totally disappeared. He pushed his horse into a gallop, and made towards it.

The flame continued to direct his course; and on a nearer approach, he perceived, by the red reflection of its fires, streaming a long radiance upon the waters beneath — a lighthouse situated upon a point of rock which overhung the sea. He knocked for admittance, and the door was opened by an old man, who bade him welcome.

Within appeared a cheerful blazing fire, round which were seated several persons, who seemed like himself to have sought shelter from the tempest of the night. The sight of the fire cheered him, and he advanced towards it, when a sudden scream seized his attention; the company rose up in confusion, and in the same instant he discovered Julia and Hippolitus. The joy of that moment is not to be described, but his attention was quickly called off from his own situation to that of a lady, who during the general transport had fainted. His sensations on learning she was his mother cannot be described.

She revived. ‘My son!’ said she, in a languid voice, as she pressed him to her heart. ‘Great God, I am recompensed! Surely this moment may repay a life of misery!’ He could only receive her caresses in silence; but the sudden tears which started in his eyes spoke a language too expressive to be misunderstood.

When the first emotion of the scene was passed, Julia enquired by what means Ferdinand had come to this spot. He answered her generally, and avoided for the present entering upon the affecting subject of the late events at the castle of Mazzini. Julia related the history of her adventures since she parted with her brother. In her narration, it appeared that Hippolitus, who was taken by the Duke de Luovo at the mouth of the cave, had afterwards escaped, and returned to the cavern in search of Julia. The low recess in the rock, through which Julia had passed, he perceived by the light of his flambeau. He penetrated to the cavern beyond, and from thence to the prison of the marchioness. No colour of language can paint the scene which followed; it is sufficient to say that the whole party agreed to quit the cell at the return of night. But this being a night on which it was known the marquis would visit the prison, they agreed to defer their departure till after his appearance, and thus elude the danger to be expected from an early discovery of the escape of the marchioness.

At the sound of footsteps above, Hippolitus and Julia had secreted themselves in the avenue; and immediately on the marquis's departure they all repaired to the cavern, leaving, in the hurry of their flight, untouched the poisonous food he had brought. Having escaped from thence they proceeded to a neighbouring village, where horses were procured to carry them towards Palermo. Here, after a tedious journey, they arrived, in the design of embarking for Italy. Contrary winds had detained them till the day on which Ferdinand left that city, when, apprehensive and weary of delay, they hired a small vessel, and determined to brave the winds. They had soon reason to repent their temerity; for the vessel had not been long at sea when the storm arose, which threw them back upon the shores of Sicily, and brought them to the lighthouse, where they were discovered by Ferdinand.

On the following morning Ferdinand returned with his friends to Palermo, where he first disclosed the late fatal events of the castle. They now settled their future plans; and Ferdinand hastened to the castle of Mazzini to fetch Emilia, and to give orders for the removal of his household to his palace at Naples, where he designed to fix his future residence. The distress of Emilia, whom he found recovered from her indisposition, yielded to joy and wonder, when she heard of the existence of her mother, and the safety of her sister. She departed with Ferdinand for

Palermo, where her friends awaited her, and where the joy of the meeting was considerably heightened by the appearance of Madame de Menon, for whom the marchioness had dispatched a messenger to St Augustin's. Madame had quitted the abbey for another convent, to which, however, the messenger was directed. This happy party now embarked for Naples.

From this period the castle of Mazzini, which had been the theatre of a dreadful catastrophe; and whose scenes would have revived in the minds of the chief personages connected with it, painful and shocking reflections — was abandoned.

On their arrival at Naples, Ferdinand presented to the king a clear and satisfactory account of the late events at the castle, in consequence of which the marchioness was confirmed in her rank, and Ferdinand was received as the sixth Marquis de Mazzini.

The marchioness, thus restored to the world, and to happiness, resided with her children in the palace at Naples, where, after time had somewhat mellowed the remembrance of the late calamity, the nuptials of Hippolitus and Julia were celebrated. The recollection of the difficulties they had encountered, and of the distress they had endured for each other, now served only to heighten by contrast the happiness of the present period.

Ferdinand soon after accepted a command in the Neapolitan army; and amidst the many heroes of that warlike and turbulent age, distinguished himself for his valour and ability. The occupations of war engaged his mind, while his heart was solicitous in promoting the happiness of his family.

Madame de Menon, whose generous attachment to the marchioness had been fully proved, found in the restoration of her friend a living witness of her marriage, and thus recovered those estates which had been unjustly withheld from her. But the marchioness and her family, grateful to her friendship, and attached to her virtues, prevailed upon her to spend the remainder of her life at the palace of Mazzini.

Emilia, wholly attached to her family, continued to reside with the marchioness, who saw her race renewed in the children of Hippolitus and Julia. Thus surrounded by her children and friends, and engaged in forming the minds of the infant generation, she seemed to forget that she had ever been otherwise than happy.

*

Here the manuscript annals conclude. In reviewing this story, we perceive a singular and striking instance of moral retribution. We learn, also, that those who do only THAT WHICH IS RIGHT, endure nothing in misfortune but a trial of their virtue, and from trials well endured derive the surest claim to the protection of heaven.

FINIS

THE ROMANCE OF THE FOREST: INTERSPERSED WITH SOME PIECES OF POET RY

The Romance of the Forest: interspersed with some pieces of poetry was first published in 1791 and proved incredibly popular, going through four editions during the first three years of its publication. Radcliffe's novel does not deviate greatly from her previous works and contains many of the Gothic tropes of the period: elements of the supernatural, ruined buildings, devilish aristocracy, an overly sensitive fainting heroine, hidden doors, family secrets, yellowed manuscripts, imprisoned women and murder. The heroine of the tale is Adeline who is sent into the forest by a mysterious captor to be with Monsieur de la Motte and his wife Madame Constance, who along with their servants are attempting to escape their creditors in Paris. The group settle into an old abbey which is appropriately occupied by owls and bats, before the owner of the abbey Marquis de Montalt appears at the residence.

The Marquis' arrival signals the more sinister developments of the novel as imprisonment, forced marriage and the threat of sexual and physical violence emerge. Of course there is also the requisite 'torn apart from her one-true-love' plot line that is a staple feature of many early Gothic novels. There is little doubt about the type of conclusion to the work and the Catholic setting is once again a feature of the text, which serves in part as a distancing device for British readers. The figure of the malignant and depraved aristocrat is another repeated component of the genre. Adeline is very much the gothic heroine with a sweet disposition and love for poetry and nature, who is constantly placed in danger and must try to escape. The text highlights Radcliffe's ability to weave the detailed descriptions of landscape with the supernatural and psychologically unnerving elements of the novel.

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Gothic convention - secluded castle

CHAPTER 1

“I am a man,
So weary with disasters, tugg’d with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on’t.”

“When once sordid interest seizes on the heart, it freezes up the source of every warm and liberal feeling; it is an enemy alike to virtue and to taste — this it perverts, and that it annihilates. The time may come, my friend, when death shall dissolve the sinews of avarice, and justice be permitted to resume her rights.”

Such were the words of the Advocate Nemours to Pierre de la Motte, as the latter stept at midnight into the carriage which was to bear him far from Paris, from his creditors and the persecution of the laws. De la Motte thanked him for this last instance of his kindness; the assistance he had given him in escape; and, when the carriage drove away, uttered a sad adieu! The gloom of the hour, and the peculiar emergency of his circumstances, sunk him in silent reverie.

Whoever has read Guyot de Pitaval, the most faithful of those writers who record the proceedings in the Parliamentary Courts of Paris, during the seventeenth century, must surely remember the striking story of Pierre de la Motte, and the Marquis Phillipe de Montalt: let all such, therefore, be informed, that the person here introduced to their notice was that individual Pierre de la Motte.

As Madame de la Motte leaned from the coach window, and gave a last look to the walls of Paris — Paris, the scene of her former happiness, and the residence of many dear friends — the fortitude, which had till now supported her, yielded to the force of grief. “Farewell all!” sighed she, “this last look and we are separated for ever!” Tears followed her words, and, sinking back, she resigned herself to the stillness of sorrow. The recollection of former times pressed heavily upon her heart: a few months before and she was surrounded by friends, fortune, and consequence; now she was deprived of all, a miserable exile from her native place, without home, without comfort — almost without hope. It was not the least of her afflictions that she had been obliged to quit Paris without bidding adieu to

her only son, who was now on duty with his regiment in Germany: and such had been the precipitancy of this removal, that had she even known where he was stationed, she had no time to inform him of it, or of the alteration in his father’s circumstances.

Pierre de la Motte was a gentleman, descended from an ancient house of France. He was a man whose passions often overcame his reason, and, for a time, silenced his conscience; but, through the image of virtue, which Nature had impressed upon his heart, was sometimes obscured by the passing influence of vice, it was never wholly obliterated. With strength of mind sufficient to have withstood temptation, he would have been a good man; as it was, he was always a weak, and sometimes a vicious member of society: yet his mind was active, and his imagination vivid, which, co-operating with the force of passion, often dazzled his judgement and subdued principle. Thus he was a man, infirm in purpose and visionary in virtue: in a word, his conduct was suggested by feeling, rather than principle; and his virtue, such as it was, could not stand the pressure of occasion.

Early in life he had married Constance Valentia, a beautiful and elegant woman, attached to her family and beloved by them. Her birth was equal, her fortune superior to his; and their nuptials had been celebrated under the auspices of an approving and flattering world. Her heart was devoted to La Motte, and, for some time, she found in him an affectionate husband; but, allured by the gaieties of Paris, he was soon devoted to its luxuries, and in a few years his fortune and affection were equally lost in dissipation. A false pride had still operated against his interest, and withheld him from honourable retreat while it was yet in his power: the habits, which he had acquired, enchained him to the scene of his former pleasure; and thus he had continued an expensive stile of life till the means of prolonging it were exhausted. He at length awoke from this lethargy of security; but it was only to plunge into new error, and to attempt schemes for the reparation of his fortune, which served to sink him deeper in destruction. The consequence of a transaction, in which he thus engaged, now drove him, with the small wreck of his property, into dangerous and ignominious exile.

It was his design to pass into one of the Southern Provinces, and there seek, near the borders of the kingdom, an asylum in some obscure village.

His family consisted of his wife, and two faithful domestics, a man and woman, who followed the fortunes of their master.

The night was dark and tempestuous, and, at about the distance of three leagues from Paris, Peter, who now acted as postillion, having drove for some time over a wild heath where many ways crossed, stopped, and acquainted De la Motte with his perplexity. The sudden stopping of the carriage roused the latter from his reverie, and filled the whole party with the terror of pursuit; he was unable to supply the necessary direction, and the extreme darkness made it dangerous to proceed without one. During this period of distress, a light was perceived at some distance, and after much doubt and hesitation, La Motte, in the hope of obtaining assistance, alighted and advanced towards it; he proceeded slowly, from the fear of unknown pits. The light issued from the window of a small and ancient house, which stood alone on the heath, at the distance of half a mile.

Having reached the door, he stopped for some moments, listening in apprehensive anxiety — no sound was heard but that of the wind, which swept in hollow gusts over the waste. At length he ventured to knock, and, having waited sometime, during which he indistinctly heard several voices in conversation, some one within inquired what he wanted? La Motte answered, that he was a traveller who had lost his way, and desired to be directed to the nearest town.

“That,” said the person, “is seven miles off, and the road bad enough, even if you could see it: if you only want a bed, you may have it here, and had better stay.”

“The “pitiless pelting” of the storm, which, at this time, beat with increasing fury upon La Motte, inclined him to give up the attempt of proceeding farther till daylight; but, desirous of seeing the person with whom he conversed, before he ventured to expose his family by calling up the carriage, he asked to be admitted. The door was now opened by a tall figure with a light, who invited La Motte to enter. He followed the man through a passage into a room almost unfurnished, in one corner of which a bed was spread upon the floor. The forlorn and desolate aspect of this apartment made La Motte shrink involuntarily, and he was turning to go out when the man suddenly pushed him back, and he heard the door locked upon him: his heart failed, yet he made a desperate, though vain, effort to force the door, and called loudly for release. No answer was returned; but

he distinguished the voices of men in the room above, and, not doubting but their intention was to rob and murder him, his agitation, at first, overcame his reason. By the light of some almost-expiring embers, he perceived a window, but the hope, which this discovery revived, was quickly lost, when he found the aperture guarded by strong iron bars. Such preparation for security surprized him, and confirmed his worst apprehensions. — Alone, unarmed — beyond the chance of assistance, he saw himself in the power of people, whose trade was apparently rapine! — murder their means! — After revolving every possibility of escape, he endeavoured to await the event with fortitude; but La Motte could boast of no such virtue.

The voices had ceased, and all remained still for a quarter of an hour, when, between the pauses of the wind, he thought he distinguished the sobs and moaning of a female; he listened attentively and became confirmed in his conjecture; it was too evidently the accent of distress. At this conviction, the remains of his courage forsook him, and a terrible surmise darted, with the rapidity of lightning, cross his brain. It was probable that his carriage had been discovered by the people of the house, who, with a design of plunder, had secured his servant, and brought hither Madame de la Motte. he was the more inclined to believe this, by the stillness which had, for sometime, reigned in the house, previous to the sounds he now heard. Or it was possible that the inhabitants were not robbers, but persons to whom he had been betrayed by his friend or servant, and who were appointed to deliver him into the hands of justice. Yet he hardly dared to doubt the integrity of his friend, who had been entrusted with the secret of his flight and the plan of his route, and had procured him the carriage in which he had escaped. “Such depravity,” exclaimed La Motte, “cannot surely exist in human nature; much less in the heart of Nemours!”

This ejaculation was interrupted by a noise in the passage leading to the room: it approached — the door was unlocked — and the man who had admitted La Motte into the house entered, leading, or rather forcibly dragging along, a beautiful girl, who appeared to be about eighteen. Her features were bathed in tears, and she seemed to suffer the utmost distress. The man fastened the lock and put the key in his pocket. He then advanced to La Motte, who had before observed other persons in the passage, and

pointing a pistol to his breast, “You are wholly in our power,” said he, “no assistance can reach you: if you wish to save your life, swear that you will convey this girl where I may never see her more; or rather consent to take her with you, for your oath I would not believe, and I can take care you shall not find me again. — Answer quickly, you have no time to lose.”

He now seized the trembling hand of the girl, who shrunk aghast with terror, and hurried her towards La Motte, whom surprize still kept silent. She sunk at his feet, and with supplicating eyes, that streamed with tears, implored him to have pity on her. Notwithstanding his present agitation, he found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference. Her youth, her apparent innocence — the artless energy of her manner forcibly assailed his heart, and he was going to speak, when the ruffian, who mistook the silence of astonishment for that of hesitation, prevented him. “I have a horse ready to take you from hence,” said he, “and I will direct you over the heath. If you return within an hour, you die: after then, you are at liberty to come here when you please.”

La Motte, without answering, raised the lovely girl from the floor, and was so much relieved from his own apprehensions, that he had leisure to attempt dissipating hers. “Let us be gone,” said the ruffian, “and have no more of this nonsense; you may think yourself well off it’s no worse. I’ll go and get the horse ready.”

The last words roused La Motte, and perplexed him with new fears; he dreaded to discover his carriage, left its appearance might tempt the banditti to plunder; and to depart on horseback with this man might produce a consequence yet more to be dreaded. Madame La Motte, wearied with apprehension, would, probably, send for her husband to the house, when all the former danger would be incurred, with the additional evil of being separated from his family, and the chance of being detected by the emissaries of justice in endeavouring to recover them. As these reflections passed over his mind in tumultuous rapidity, a noise was again heard in the passage, an uproar and scuffle ensued, and in the same moment he could distinguish the voice of his servant, who had been sent by Madame La Motte in search of him. Being now determined to disclose what could not long be concealed, he exclaimed aloud, that a horse was

unnecessary, that he had a carriage at some distance which would convey them from the heath, the man, who was seized, being his servant.

The ruffian, speaking through the door, bid him be patient awhile and he should hear more from him. La Motte now turned his eyes upon his unfortunate companion, who, pale and exhausted, leaned for support against the wall. Her features, which were delicately beautiful, had gained from distress an expression of captivating sweetness: she had

“An eye
As when the blue sky trembles thro’ a cloud
Of purest white.”

A habit of grey camlet, with short flashed sleeves, shewed, but did not adorn, her figure: it was thrown open at the bosom, upon which part of her hair had fallen in disorder, while the light veil hastily thrown on, had, in her confusion, been suffered to fall back. Every moment of farther observation heightened the surprize of La Motte, and interested him more warmly in her favour. Such elegance and apparent resinement, contrasted with the desolation of the house, and the savage manners of its inhabitants, seemed to him like a romance of imagination, rather than an occurrence of real life. He endeavoured to comfort her, and his sense of compassion was too sincere to be misunderstood. Her terror gradually subsided into gratitude and grief. “Ah, Sir,” said she, “Heaven has sent you to my relief, and will surely reward you for your protection: I have no friend in the world, if I do not find one in you.”

La Motte assured her of his kindness, when he was interrupted by the entrance of the ruffian. He desired to be conducted to his family. “All in good time,” replied the latter; “I have taken care of one of them, and will of you, please St. Peter; so be comforted.” These comfortable words renewed the terror of La Motte, who now earnestly begged to know if his family were safe. “O! as for that matter they are safe enough, and you will be with them presently; but don’t stand parlying here all night. Do you chuse to go or stay? you know the conditions.” They now bound the eyes of La Motte and of the young lady, whom terror had hitherto kept silent, and then placing them on two horses, a man mounted behind each, and they immediately gallopped off. They had proceeded in this way near half

an hour, when La Motte entreated to know wither he was going? “You will know that bye and bye,” said the ruffian, “so be at peace.” Finding interrogatories useless, La Motte resumed silence till the horses stopped. His conductor then hallooed, and being answered by voices at some distance, in a few moments the sound of carriage wheels was heard, and, presently after, the words of a man directing Peter which way to drive. As the carriage approached, La Motte called, and, to his inexpressible joy, was answered by his wife.

“You are now beyond the borders of the heath, and may go which way you will,” said the ruffian; “if you return within an hour, you will be welcomed by a brace of bullets.” This was a very unnecessary caution to La Motte, whom they now released. The young stranger sighed deeply, as she entered the carriage; and the ruffian, having bestowed upon Peter some directions and more threats, waited to see him drive off. They did not wait long.

La Motte immediately gave a short relation of what had passed at the house, including an account of the manner in which the young stranger had been introduced to him. During this narrative, her deep convulsive sighs frequently drew the attention of Madame La Motte, whose compassion became gradually interested in her behalf, and who now endeavoured to tranquillize her spirits. The unhappy girl answered her kindness in artless and simple expressions, and then relapsed into tears and silence. Madame forbore for the present to ask any questions that might lead to a discovery of her connections, or seem to require an explanation of the late adventure, which now furnishing her with a new subject of reflection, the sense of her own misfortunes pressed less heavily upon her mind. The distress of La Motte was even for a while suspended; he ruminated on the late scene, and it appeared like a vision, or one of those improbable fictions that sometimes are exhibited in a romance: he could reduce it to no principles of probability, or render it comprehensible by any endeavour to analize it. The present charge, and the chance of future trouble brought upon him by this adventure, occasioned some dissatisfaction; but the beauty and seeming innocence of Adeline, united with the pleadings of humanity in her favour, and he determined to protect her.

The tumult of emotions which had passed in the bosom of Adeline, began now to subside; terror was softened into anxiety, and despair into

grief. The sympathy so evident in the manners of her companions, particularly in those of Madame La Motte, soothed her heart and encouraged her to hope for better days.

Dismally and silently the night passed on, for the minds of the travellers were too much occupied by their several sufferings to admit of conversation. The dawn, so anxiously watched for at length appeared, and introduced the strangers more fully to each other. Adeline derived comfort from the looks of Madame La Motte, who gazed frequently and attentively at her, and thought she had seldom seen a countenance so interesting, or a form so striking. The languor of sorrow threw a melancholy grace upon her features, that appealed immediately to the heart; and there was a penetrating sweetness in her blue eyes, which indicated an intelligent and amiable mind.

La Motte now looked anxiously from the coach window, that he might judge of their situation, and observe whether he was followed. The obscurity of the dawn confined his views, but no person appeared. The sun at length tinted the eastern clouds and the tops of the highest hills, and soon after burst in full splendour on the scene. The terrors of La Motte began to subside, and the griefs of Adeline to soften. They entered upon a lane confined by high banks and overarched by trees, on whose branches appeared the first green buds of spring glittering with dews. The fresh breeze of the morning animated the spirits of Adeline, whose mind was delicately sensible to the beauties of nature. As she viewed the flowery luxuriance of the turf, and the tender green of the trees, or caught, between the opening banks, a glimpse of the varied landscape, rich with wood, and fading into blue and distant mountains, her heart expanded in momentary joy. With Adeline the charms of external nature were heightened by those of novelty: she had seldom seen the grandeur of an extensive prospect, or the magnificence of a wide horizon — and not often the picturesque beauties of more confined scenery. Her mind had not lost by long oppression that elastic energy, which resists calamity; else, however susceptible might have been her original taste, the beauties of nature would no longer have charmed her thus easily even to temporary repose.

The road, at length, wound down the side of a hill, and La Motte, again looking anxiously from the window, saw before him an open champaign country, through which the road, wholly unsheltered from observation,

extended almost in a direct line. The danger of these circumstances alarmed him, for his flight might, without difficulty, be traced for many leagues from the hills he was now descending. Of the first peasant that passed, he inquired for a road among the hills, but heard of none. La Motte now sunk into his former terrors. Madame, notwithstanding her own apprehensions, endeavoured to reassure him, but, finding her efforts ineffectual, she also retired to the contemplation of her misfortunes. Often, as they went on, did La Motte look back upon the country they had passed, and often did imagination suggest to him the sounds of distant pursuits.

The travellers stopped to breakfast in a village, where the road was at length obscured by woods, and La Motte's spirits again revived. Adeline appeared more tranquil than she had yet been, and La Motte now asked for an explanation of the scene he had witnessed on the preceding night. The inquiry renewed all her distress, and with tears she entreated for the present to be spared on the subject. La Motte pressed it no farther, but he observed that for the greater part of the day she seemed to remember it in melancholy and dejection. They now travelled among the hills and were, therefore, in less danger of observation; but La Motte avoided the great towns, and stopped in obscure ones no longer than to refresh the horses. About two hours after noon, the road wound into a deep valley, watered by a rivulet, and overhung with wood. La Motte called to Peter, and ordered him to drive to a thickly embowered spot, that appeared on the left. Here he alighted with his family, and Peter having spread the provisions on the turf, they seated themselves and partook of a repast, which, in other circumstances, would have been thought delicious. Adeline endeavoured to smile, but the languor of grief was now heightened by indisposition. The violent agitation of mind, and fatigue of body, which she had suffered for the last twenty-four hours, had overpowered her strength, and, when La Motte led her back to the carriage, her whole frame trembled with illness. But she uttered no complaint, and, having long observed the dejection of her companions, she made a feeble effort to enliven them.

They continued to travel throughout the day without any accident or interruption, and, about three hours after sunset, arrived at Monville, a small town where La Motte determined to pass the night. Repose was, indeed, necessary to the whole party, whose pale and haggard looks, as they alighted from the carriage, were but too obvious to pass unobserved

by the people of the inn. As soon as beds could be prepared, Adeline withdrew to her chamber, accompanied by Madame La Motte, whose concern for the fair stranger made her exert every effort to soothe and console her. Adeline wept in silence, and taking the hand of Madame, pressed it to her bosom. These were not merely tears of grief — they were mingled with those which flow from the grateful heart, when, unexpectedly, it meets with sympathy. Madame La Motte understood them. After some momentary silence, she renewed her assurances of kindness, and entreated Adeline to confide in her friendship; but she carefully avoided any mention of the subject, which had before so much affected her. Adeline at length found words to express her sense of this goodness, which she did in a manner so natural and sincere, that Madame, finding herself much affected, took leave of her for the night.

In the morning, La Motte rose at an early hour, impatient to be gone. Every thing was prepared for his departure, and the breakfast had been waiting some time, but Adeline did not appear. Madame La Motte went to her chamber, and found her sunk in a disturbed slumber. Her breathing was short and irregular — she frequently started, or sighed, and sometimes she muttered an incoherent sentence. While Madame gazed with concern upon her languid countenance, she awoke, and, looking up, gave her hand to Madame La Motte, who found it burning with fever. She had passed a restless night, and, as she now attempted to rise, her head, which beat with intense pain, grew giddy, her strength failed, and she sunk back.

Madame was much alarmed, being at once convinced that it was impossible she could travel, and that a delay might prove fatal to her husband. She went to inform him of the truth, and his distress may be more easily imagined than described. He saw all the inconvenience and danger of delay, yet he could not so far divest himself of humanity, as to abandon Adeline to the care, or rather, to the neglect of strangers. He sent immediately for a physician, who pronounced her to be in a high fever, and said, a removal in her present state must be fatal. La Motte now determined to wait the event, and endeavoured to calm the transports of terror, which, at times, assailed him. In the mean while, he took such precautions as his situation admitted of, passing the greater part of the day out of the village, in a spot from whence he had a view of the road for some distance; yet to be exposed to destruction by the illness of a girl,

whom he did not know, and who had actually been forced upon him, was a misfortune, to which La Motte had not philosophy enough to submit with composure.

Adeline's fever continued to increase during the whole day, and at night, when the physician took his leave, he told La Motte, the event would very soon be decided. La Motte received this intelligence with real concern. The beauty and innocence of Adeline had overcome the disadvantageous circumstances under which she had been introduced to him, and he now gave less consideration to the inconvenience she might hereafter occasion him, than to the hope of her recovery.

Madame La Motte watched over her with tender anxiety, and observed with admiration, her patient sweetness and mild resignation. Adeline amply repaid her, though she thought she could not. "Young as I am," she would say, "and deserted by those upon whom I have a claim for protection, I can remember no connection to make me regret life so much, as that I hoped to form with you. If I live, my conduct will best express my sense of your goodness; — words are but seeble testimonies."

The sweetness of her manners so much attracted Madame La Motte, that she watched the crisis of her disorder, with a solicitude which precluded every other interest. Adeline passed a very disturbed night, and, when the physician appeared in the morning, he gave orders that she should be indulged with whatever she liked, and answered the inquiries of La Motte with a frankness that left him nothing to hope.

In the mean time, his patient, after drinking profusely of some mild liquids, fell asleep, in which she continued for several hours, and so profound was her repose, that her breath alone gave sign of existence. She awoke free from fever, and with no other disorder than weakness, which, in a few days, she overcame so well, as to be able to set out with La Motte for B — , a village out of the great road, which he thought it prudent to quit. There they passed the following night, and early the next morning commenced their journey upon a wild and woody tract of country. They stopped about noon at a solitary village, where they took refreshments, and obtained directions for passing the vast forest of Fontanville, upon the borders of which they now were. La Motte wished at first to take a guide, but he apprehended more evil from the discovery he might make of his

route, than he hoped for benefit from assistance in the wilds of this uncultivated tract.

La Motte now designed to pass on to Lyons, where he could either seek concealment in its neighbourhood, or embark on the Rhone for Geneva, should the emergency of his circumstances hereafter require him to leave France. It was about twelve o'clock at noon, and he was desirous to hasten forward, that he might pass the forest of Fontanville, and reach the town on its opposite borders, before night fall. Having deposited a fresh stock of provisions in the carriage, and received such directions as were necessary concerning the roads, they again set forward, and in a short time entered upon the forest. It was now the latter end of April, and the weather was remarkably temperate and fine. The balmy freshness of the air, which breathed the first pure essence of vegetation; and the gentle warmth of the sun, whose beams vivified every hue of nature, and opened every floweret of spring, revived Adeline, and inspired her with life and health. As she inhaled the breeze, her strength seemed to return, and, as her eyes wandered through the romantic glades that opened into the forest, her heart was gladdened with complacent delight: but when from these objects she turned her regard upon Monsieur and Madame La Motte, to whose tender attentions she owed her life, and in whose looks she now read esteem and kindness, her bosom glowed with sweet affections, and she experienced a force of gratitude which might be called sublime.

For the remainder of the day they continued to travel, without seeing a hut, or meeting a human being. It was now near sun-set, and, the prospect being closed on all sides by the forest, La Motte began to have apprehensions that his servant had mistaken the way. The road, if a road it could be called, which afforded only a slight track upon the grass, was sometimes overrun by luxuriant vegetation, and sometimes obscured by the deep shades, and Peter at length stopped uncertain of the way. La Motte, who dreaded being benighted in a scene so wild and solitary as this forest, and whose apprehensions of banditti were very sanguine, ordered him to proceed at any rate, and, if he found no track, to endeavour to gain a more open part of the forest. With these orders, Peter again set forwards, but having proceeded some way, and his views being still confined by woody glades and forest walks, he began to despair of extricating himself, and stopped for further orders. The sun was now set, but, as La Motte

looked anxiously from the window, he observed upon the vivid glow of the western horison, some dark towers rising from among the trees at a little distance, and ordered Peter to drive towards them. “If they belong to a monastery,” said he, “we may probably gain admittance for the night.”

The carriage drove along under the shade of “melancholy boughs,” through which the evening twilight, which yet coloured the air, diffused a solemnity that vibrated in thrilling sensations upon the hearts of the travellers. Expectation kept them silent. The present scene recalled to Adeline a remembrance of the late terrific circumstances, and her mind responded but too easily to the apprehension of new misfortunes. La Motte alighted at the foot of a green knoll, where the trees again opening to light, permitted a nearer, though imperfect, view of the edifice.

CHAPTER 2

“How these antique towers and vacant courts
Chill the suspended soul! Till expectation
Wears the face of fear: and fear, half ready
To become devotion, mutters a kind
Of mental orison, it knows not wherefore.
What a kind of being is circumstance!”
Horace Walpole.

He approached, and perceived the Gothic remains of an abbey: it stood on a kind of rude lawn, overshadowed by high and spreading trees, which seemed coeval with the building, and diffused a romantic gloom around. The greater part of the pile appeared to be sinking into ruins, and that, which had withstood the ravages of time, shewed the remaining features of the fabric more awful in decay. The lofty battlements, thickly enwreathed with ivy, were half demolished, and become the residence of birds of prey. Huge fragments of the eastern tower, which was almost demolished, lay scattered amid the high grass, that waved slowly to the breeze. “The thistle shook its lonely head; the moss whistled to the wind.” A Gothic gate, richly ornamented with fretwork, which opened into the main body of the edifice, but which was now obstructed with brush-wood, remained entire. Above the vast and magnificent portal of this gate arose a window of the same order, whose pointed arches still exhibited fragments of stained glass, once the pride of monkish devotion. La Motte, thinking it possible it might yet shelter some human being, advanced to the gate and lifted a massy knocker. The hollow sounds rung through the emptiness of the place. After waiting a few minutes, he forced back the gate, which was heavy with iron work, and creaked harshly on its hinges.

He entered what appeared to have been the chapel of the abbey, where the hymn of devotion had once been raised, and the tear of penitence had once been shed; sounds, which could now only be recalled by imagination — tears of penitence, which had been long since fixed in fate. La Motte paused a moment, for he felt a sensation of sublimity rising into terror — a suspension of mingled astonishment and awe! He surveyed the vastness of the place, and as he contemplated its ruins, fancy bore him back to past ages. “And these walls,” said he, “where once superstition lurked, and

austerity anticipated an earthly purgatory, now tremble over the mortal remains of the beings who reared them!”

The deepening gloom now reminded La Motte that he had no time to lose, but curiosity prompted him to explore farther, and he obeyed the impulse. — As he walked over the broken pavement, the sound of his steps ran in echoes through the place, and seemed like the mysterious accents of the dead, reproving the sacrilegious mortal who thus dared to disturb their precincts.

From this chapel he passed into the nave of the great church, of which one window, more perfect than the rest, opened upon a long vista of the forest, through which was seen the rich colouring of evening, melting by imperceptible gradations into the solemn grey of upper air. Dark hills, whose outline appeared distinct upon the vivid glow of the horizon, closed the perspective. Several of the pillars, which had once supported the roof, remained the proud effigies of sinking greatness, and seemed to nod at every murmur of the blast over the fragments of those that had fallen a little before them. La Motte sighed. The comparison between himself and the gradation of decay, which these columns exhibited, was but too obvious and affecting. “A few years,” said he, “and I shall become like the mortals on whose reliques I now gaze, and, like them too, I may be the subject of meditation to a succeeding generation, which shall totter but a little while over the object they contemplate, e’er they also sink into the dust.”

Retiring from this scene, he walked through the cloisters, till a door, which communicated with the lofty part of the building, attracted his curiosity. He opened this and perceived, across the foot of the staircase, another door; — but now, partly checked by fear, and partly by the recollection of the surprize his family might feel in his absence, he returned with hasty steps to his carriage, having wasted some of the precious moments of twilight, and gained no information.

Some slight answer to Madame La Motte’s inquiries, and a general direction to Peter to drive carefully on, and look for a road, was all that his anxiety would permit him to utter. The night shade fell thick around, which, deepened by the gloom of the forest, soon rendered it dangerous to proceed. Peter stopped, but La Motte, persisting in his first determination, ordered him to go on. Peter ventured to remonstrate, Madame La Motte

entreated, but La Motte reproved — commanded, and at length repented; for the hind wheel rising upon the stump of an old tree, which the darkness had prevented Peter from observing, the carriage was in an instant overturned.

The party, as may be supposed, were much terrified, but no one was materially hurt, and having disengaged themselves from their perilous situation, La Motte and Peter endeavoured to raise the carriage. The extent of this misfortune was now discovered, for they perceived that the wheel was broke. Their distress was reasonably great, for not only was the coach disabled from proceeding, but it could not even afford a shelter from the cold dews of the night, it being impossible to preserve it in an upright situation. After a few moment's silence, La Motte proposed that they should return to the ruins which they had just quitted, which lay at a very short distance, and pass the night in the most habitable part of them: that, when morning dawned, Peter should take one of the coach horses, and endeavour to find a road and a town, from whence assistance could be procured for repairing the carriage. This proposal was opposed by Madame La Motte, who shuddered at the idea of passing so many hours of darkness in a place so forlorn as the monastery. Terrors, which she neither endeavoured to examine, or combat, overcame her, and she told La Motte she had rather remain exposed to the unwholesome dews of night, than encounter the desolation of the ruins. La Motte had at first felt an equal reluctance to return to this spot, but having subdued his own feelings, he resolved not to yield to those of his wife.

The horses being now disengaged from the carriage, the party moved towards the edifice. As they proceeded, Peter, who followed them, struck a light, and they entered the ruins by the flame of sticks, which he had collected. The partial gleams thrown across the fabric seemed to make its desolation more solemn, while the obscurity of the greater part of the pile heightened its sublimity, and led fancy on to scenes of horror. Adeline, who had hitherto remained in silence, now uttered an exclamation of mingled admiration and fear. A kind of pleasing dread thrilled her bosom, and filled all her soul. Tears started into her eyes: — she wished, yet feared, to go on; — she hung upon the arm of La Motte, and looked at him with a sort of hesitating interrogation.

He opened the door of the great hall, and they entered: its extent was lost in gloom. “Let us stay here,” said Madame de la Motte, “I will go no farther.” La Motte pointed to the broken roof, and was proceeding, when he was interrupted by an uncommon noise, which passed along the hall. They were all silent — it was the silence of terror. Madame La Motte spoke first. “Let us quit this spot,” said she, “any evil is preferable to the feeling, which now oppresses me. Let us retire instantly.” The stillness had for some time remained undisturbed, and La Motte, ashamed of the fear he had involuntarily betrayed, now thought it necessary to affect a boldness, which he did not feel. He, therefore, opposed ridicule to the terror of Madame, and insisted upon proceeding. Thus compelled to acquiesce, she traversed the hall with trembling steps. They came to a narrow passage, and Peter’s sticks being nearly exhausted, they awaited here, while he went in search of more.

The almost expiring light flashed faintly upon the walls of the passage, shewing the recess more horrible. Across the hall, the greater part of which was concealed in shadow, the feeble ray spread a tremulous gleam, exhibiting the chasm in the roof, while many nameless objects were seen imperfectly through the dusk. Adeline with a smile, inquired of La Motte, if he believed in spirits. The question was ill-timed, for the present scene impressed its terrors upon La Motte, and, in spite of endeavour, he felt a superstitious dread stealing upon him. He was now, perhaps, standing over the ashes of the dead. If spirits were ever permitted to revisit the earth, this seemed the hour and the place most suitable for their appearance. La Motte remaining silent, Adeline said, “Were I inclined to superstition” — she was interrupted by a return of the noise, which had been lately heard. It sounded down the passage, at whose entrance they stood, and sunk gradually away. Every heart palpitated, and they remained listening in silence. A new subject of apprehension seized La Motte: — the noise might proceed from banditti, and he hesitated whether it would be safe to proceed. Peter now came with the light: Madame refused to enter the passage — La Motte was not much inclined to it; but Peter, in whom curiosity was more prevalent than fear, readily offered his services. La Motte, after some hesitation, suffered him to go, while he awaited at the entrance the result of the inquiry. The extent of the passage soon concealed Peter from view, and the echoes of his footsteps were lost in a sound,

which rushed along the avenue, and became fainter and fainter, till it sunk into silence. La Motte now called aloud to Peter, but no answer was returned; at length, they heard the sound of a distant footstep, and Peter soon after appeared, breathless, and pale with fear.

When he came within hearing of La Motte, he called out, “An please your honour, I’ve done for them, I believe, but I’ve had a hard bout. I thought I was fighting with the devil.”— “What are you speaking of?” said La Motte.

“They were nothing but owls and rooks after all,” continued Peter; “but the light brought them all about my ears, and they made such a confounded clapping with their wings, that I thought at first I had been beset with a legion of devils. But I have drove them all out, master, and you have nothing to fear now.”

The latter part of the sentence, intimating a suspicion of his courage, La Motte could have dispensed with, and, to retrieve in some degree his reputation, he made a point of proceeding through the passage. They now moved on with alacrity, for, as Peter said, they had “nothing to fear.”

The passage led into a large area, on one side of which, over a range of cloisters, appeared the west tower, and a lofty part of the edifice; the other side was open to the woods. La Motte led the way to a door of the tower, which he now perceived was the same he had formerly entered; but he found some difficulty in advancing, for the area was overgrown with brambles and nettles, and the light, which Peter carried, afforded only an uncertain gleam. When he unclosed the door, the dismal aspect of the place revived the apprehensions of Madame La Motte, and extorted from Adeline an inquiry whither they were going. Peter held up the light to shew the narrow staircase that wound round the tower; but La Motte, observing the second door, drew back the rusty bolts, and entered a spacious apartment, which, from its stile and condition, was evidently of a much later date than the other part of the structure: though desolate and forlorn it was very little impaired by time; the walls were damp, but not decayed; and the glass was yet firm in the windows.

They passed on to a suit of apartments resembling the first they had seen, and expressed their surprise at the incongruous appearance of this part of the edifice with the mouldering walls they had left behind. These apartments conducted them to a winding passage, that received light and

air through narrow cavities, placed high in the wall; and was at length closed by a door barred with iron, which being with some difficulty opened, they entered a vaulted room. La Motte surveyed it with a scrutinizing eye, and endeavoured to conjecture for what purpose it had been guarded by a door of such strength; but he saw little within to assist his curiosity. The room appeared to have been built in modern times upon a Gothic plan. Adeline approached a large window that formed a kind of recess raised by one step over the level of the floor; she observed to La Motte that the whole floor was inlaid with Mosaic work; which drew from him a remark, that the style of this apartment was not strictly Gothic. He passed on to a door, which appeared on the opposite side of the apartment, and, unlocking it, found himself in the great hall, by which he had entered the fabric.

He now perceived, what the gloom had before concealed, a spiral staircase, which led to a gallery above; and which, from its present condition, seemed to have been built with the more modern part of the fabric, though this also affected the Gothic mode of architecture: La Motte had little doubt that these stairs led to apartments, corresponding with those he had passed below, and hesitated whether to explore them; but the entreaties of Madame, who was much fatigued, prevailed with him to defer all farther examination. After some deliberation, in which of the rooms they should pass the night, they determined to return to that which opened from the tower.

A fire was kindled on a hearth, which it is probable had not for many years before afforded the warmth of hospitality; and Peter having spread the provision he had brought from the coach, La Motte and his family, encircled round the fire, partook of a repast, which hunger and fatigue made delicious. Apprehension gradually gave way to confidence, for they now found themselves in something like a human habitation, and they had leisure to laugh at their late terrors; but, as the blast shook the doors, Adeline often started, and threw a fearful glance around. They continued to laugh and talk cheerfully for a time; yet their merriment was transient, if not affected; for a sense of their peculiar and distressed circumstances pressed upon their recollection, and sunk each individual into langour and pensive silence. Adeline felt the forlornness of her condition with energy; she reflected upon the past with astonishment, and anticipated the future

with fear. She found herself wholly dependent upon strangers, with no other claim than what distress demands from the common sympathy of kindred beings; sighs swelled her heart, and the frequent tear started to her eye; but she checked it, ere it betrayed on her cheek the sorrow, which she thought it would be ungrateful to reveal.

La Motte, at length, broke this meditative silence, by directing the fire to be renewed for the night, and the door to be secured: this seemed a necessary precaution, even in this solitude, and was effected by means of large stones piled against it, for other fastening there was none. It had frequently occurred to La Motte, that this apparently forsaken edifice might be a place of refuge to banditti. Here was solitude to conceal them; and a wild and extensive forest to assist their schemes of rapine, and to perplex, with its labyrinths, those who might be bold enough to attempt pursuit. These apprehensions, however, he hid within his own bosom, saving his companions from a share of the uneasiness they occasioned. Peter was ordered to watch at the door, and, having given the fire a rousing stir, our desolate party drew round it, and sought in sleep a short oblivion of care.

The night passed on without disturbance. Adeline slept, but uneasy dreams fleeted before her fancy, and she awoke at an early hour: the recollection of her sorrows arose upon her mind, and yielding to their pressure, her tears flowed silently and fast. That she might indulge them without restraint, she went to a window that looked upon an open part of the forest; all was gloom and silence; she stood for some time viewing the shadowy scene.

The first tender tints of morning now appeared on the verge of the horizon, stealing upon the darkness; — so pure, so fine, so ætherial! it seemed as if Heaven was opening to the view. The dark mists were seen to roll off to the west, as the tints of light grew stronger, deepening the obscurity of that part of the hemisphere, and involving the features of the country below; meanwhile, in the east, the hues became more vivid, darting a trembling lustre far around, till a ruddy glow, which fired all that part of the Heavens, announced the rising sun. At first, a small line of inconceivable splendour emerged on the horizon, which, quickly expanding, the sun appeared in all his glory, unveiling the whole face of nature, vivifying every colour of the landscape, and sprinkling the dewy

earth with glittering light. The low and gentle responses of birds, awakened by the morning ray, now broke the silence of the hour; their soft warbling rising by degrees till they swelled the chorus of universal gladness. Adeline's heart swelled too with gratitude and adoration.

The scene before her soothed her mind, and exalted her thoughts to the great Author of Nature; she uttered an involuntary prayer: "Father of good, who made this glorious scene! I resign myself to thy hands: thou wilt support me under my present sorrows, and protect me from future evil."

Thus confiding in the benevolence of God, she wiped the tears from her eyes, while the sweet union of conscience and reflection rewarded her trust; and her mind, losing the feelings which had lately oppressed it, became tranquil and composed.

La Motte awoke soon after, and Peter prepared to set out on his expedition. As he mounted his horse, "An' please you, Master," said he, "I think we had as good look no farther for an habitation till better times turn up; for nobody will think of looking for us here; and when one sees the place by day light, its none so bad, but what a little patching up would make it comfortable enough." La Motte made no reply, but he thought of Peter's words. During the intervals of the night, when anxiety had kept him waking, the same idea had occurred to him; concealment was his only security, and this place afforded it. The desolation of the spot was repulsive to his wishes; but he had only a choice of evils — a forest with liberty was not a bad home for one, who had too much reason to expect a prison. As he walked through the apartments, and examined their condition more attentively, he perceived they might easily be made habitable; and now surveying them under the cheerfulness of morning, his design strengthened; and he mused upon the means of accomplishing it, which nothing seemed so much to obstruct as the apparent difficulty of procuring food.

He communicated his thoughts to Madame la Motte, who felt repugnance to the scheme. La Motte, however, seldom consulted his wife till he had determined how to act; and he had already resolved to be guided in this affair by the report of Peter. If he could discover a town in the neighbourhood of the forest, where provisions and other necessaries could be procured, he would seek no farther for a place of rest.

In the mean time, he spent the anxious interval of Peter’s absence in examining the ruin, and walking over the environs; they were sweetly romantic, and the luxuriant woods, with which they abounded, seemed to sequester this spot from the rest of the world. Frequently a natural vista would yield a view of the country, terminated by hills, which retiring in distance, faded into the blue horizon. A stream, various and musical in its course, wound at the foot of the lawn, on which stood the abbey; here it silently glided beneath the shades, feeding the flowers that bloomed on its banks, and diffusing dewy freshness around; there it spread in broad expanse to-day, reflecting the sylvan scene, and the wild deer that tasted its waves. La Motte observed every where a profusion of game; the pheasants scarcely flew from his approach, and the deer gazed mildly at him as he passed. They were strangers to man!

On his return to the abbey, La Motte ascended the stairs that led to the tower. About half way up, a door appeared in the wall; it yielded, without resistance, to his hand; but, a sudden noise within, accompanied by a cloud of dust, made him step back and close the door. After waiting a few minutes, he again opened it, and perceived a large room of the more modern building. The remains of tapestry hung in tatters upon the walls, which were become the residence of birds of prey, whose sudden flight on the opening of the door had brought down a quantity of dust, and occasioned the noise. The windows were shattered, and almost without glass; but he was surprised to observe some remains of furniture; chairs, whose fashion and condition bore the date of their antiquity; a broken table, and an iron grate almost consumed by rust.

On the opposite side of the room was a door, which led to another apartment, proportioned like the first, but hung with arras somewhat less tattered. In one corner stood a small bedstead, and a few shattered chairs were placed round the walls. La Motte gazed with a mixture of wonder and curiosity. “ ‘Tis strange,” said he, “that these rooms, and these alone, should bear the marks of inhabitation: perhaps, some wretched wanderer, like myself, may have here sought refuge from a persecuting world; and here, perhaps, laid down the load of existence: perhaps, too, I have followed his footsteps, but to mingle my dust with his!” He turned suddenly, and was about to quit the room, when he perceived a small door near the bed; it opened into a closet, which was lighted by one small

window, and was in the same condition as the apartments he had passed, except that it was destitute even of the remains of furniture. As he walked over the floor, he thought he felt one part of it shake beneath his steps, and, examining, found a trap door. Curiosity prompted him to explore farther, and with some difficulty he opened it. It disclosed a staircase which terminated in darkness. La Motte descended a few steps, but was unwilling to trust the abyss; and, after wondering for what purpose it was so secretly constructed, he closed the trap, and quitted this suit of apartments.

The stairs in the tower above were so much decayed, that he did not attempt to ascend them: he returned to the hall, and by the spiral staircase, which he had observed the evening before, reached the gallery, and found another suit of apartments entirely unfurnished, very much like those below.

He renewed with Madame La Motte his former conversation respecting the abbey, and she exerted all her endeavours to dissuade him from his purpose, acknowledging the solitary security of the spot, but pleading that other places might be found equally well adapted for concealment and more for comfort. This La Motte doubted: besides, the forest abounded with game, which would, at once, afford him amusement and food, a circumstance, considering his small stock of money, by no means to be overlooked: and he had suffered his mind to dwell so much upon the scheme, that it was become a favourite one. Adeline listened in silent anxiety to the discourse, and waited the issue of Peter’s report.

The morning passed, but Peter did not return. Our solitary party took their dinner of the provision they had fortunately brought with them, and afterwards walked forth into the woods. Adeline, who never suffered any good to pass unnoticed, because it came attended with evil, forgot for a while the desolation of the abbey in the beauty of the adjacent scenery. The pleasantness of the shades soothed her heart, and the varied features of the landscape amused her fancy; she almost thought she could be contented to live here. Already she began to feel an interest in the concerns of her companions, and for Madame La Motte she felt more; it was the warm emotion of gratitude and affection.

The afternoon wore away, and they returned to the abbey. Peter was still absent, and his absence now began to excite surprize and apprehension.

The approach of darkness also threw a gloom upon the hopes of the wanderers: another night must be passed under the same forlorn circumstances as the preceding one; and, what was still worse, with a very scanty stock of provisions. The fortitude of Madame La Motte now entirely forsook her, and she wept bitterly. Adeline's heart was as mournful as Madame's, but she rallied her drooping spirits, and gave the first instance of her kindness by endeavouring to revive those of her friend.

La Motte was restless and uneasy, and, leaving the abbey, he walked alone the way which Peter had taken. He had not gone far, when he perceived him between the trees, leading his horse. "What news, Peter?" hallooed La Motte. Peter came on, panting for breath, and said not a word, till La Motte repeated the question in a tone of somewhat more authority. "Ah, bless you, Master!" said he, when he had taken breath to answer, "I am glad to see you; I thought I should never have got back again: I've met with a world of misfortunes."

"Well, you may relate them hereafter; let me hear whether you have discovered— "

"Discovered!" interrupted Peter, Yes, I am discovered with a vengeance! If your Honour will look at my arms, you'll see how I am discovered."

"Discoloured! I suppose you mean," said La Motte. "But how came you in this condition?"

"Why, I'll tell you how it was, Sir; your Honour knows I learned a smack of boxing of that Englishman that used to come with his master to our house."

"Well, well — tell me where you have been."

"I scarcely know myself, Master; I've been where I got a sound drubbing, but then it was in your business, and so I don't mind. But if ever I meet with that rascal again!"— "You seem to like your first drubbing so well, that you want another, and unless you speak more to the purpose, you shall soon have one."

Peter was now frightened into method, and endeavoured to proceed: "When I left the old Abbey," said he, I followed the way you directed, and, turning to the right of that grove of trees yonder, I looked this way and that to see if I could see a house, or a cottage, or even a man, but not a soul of them was to be seen, and so I jogged on, near the value of a league, I

warrant, and then I came to a track; oh! oh! says I, we have you now; this will do — paths can't be made without feet. However, I was out in my reckoning, for the devil a bit of a soul could I see, and, after following the track this way and that way, for the third of a league, I lost it, and had to find out another."

"Is it impossible for you to speak to the point?" said La Motte: "omit these foolish particulars, and tell whether you have succeeded."

"Well, then, Master, to be short, for that's the nearest way after all, I wandered a long while at random, I did not know where, all through a forest like this, and I took special care to note how the trees stood, that I might find my way back. At last I came to another path, and was sure I should find something now, though I had found nothing before, for I could not be mistaken twice; so, peeping between the trees, I spied a cottage, and I gave my horse a lash, that sounded through the forest, and I was at the door in a minute. They told me there was a town about half a league off, and bade me follow the track and it would bring me there, so it did; and my horse, I believe, smelt the corn in the manger by the rate he went at. I inquired for a wheel-wright, and was told there was but one in the place, and he could not be found. I waited and waited, for I knew it was in vain to think of returning without doing my business. The man at last came home from the country, and I told him how long I had waited; for, says I, I knew it was in vain to return without my business."

"Do be less tedious," said La Motte, if it is in thy nature."

"It is in my nature," answered Peter, and if it was more in my nature, your Honour should have it all. Would you think it, Sir, the fellow had the impudence to ask a louis-d'or for mending the coach wheel! I believe in my conscience he saw I was in a hurry and could not do without him. A louis-d'or! says I, my Master shall give no such price, he sha'n't be imposed upon by no such rascal as you. Whereupon, the fellow looked glum, and gave me a douse o'the chops: with this, I up with my fist and gave him another, and should have beat him presently, if another man had not come in, and then I was obliged to give up."

"And so you are returned as wife as you went?"

"Why, Master, I hope I have too much spirit to submit to a rascal, or let you submit to one either: besides, I have bought some nails to try if I I can't mend the wheel myself — I had always a hand at carpentry."

“Well, I commend your zeal in my cause, but on this occasion it was rather ill-timed. And what have you got in that basket?”

“Why, Master, I bethought me that we could not get away from this place till the carriage was ready to draw us, and in the mean time, says I, nobody can live without victuals, so I’ll e’en lay out the little money I have and take a basket with me.”

“That’s the only wife thing you have done yet, and this, indeed, redeems your blunders.”

“Why now, Master, it does my heart good to hear you speak; I knew I was doing for the best all the while: but I’ve had a hard job to find my way back; and here’s another piece of ill luck, for the horse has got a thorn in his foot.”

La Motte made inquiries concerning the town, and sound it was capable of supplying him with provision, and what little furniture was necessary to render the abbey habitable. This intelligence almost settled his plans, and he ordered Peter to return on the following morning and make inquiries concerning the abbey. If the answers were favourable to his wishes, he commissioned him to buy a cart and load it with some furniture, and some materials necessary for repairing the modern apartments. Peter stared: “What, does your Honour mean to live here?”

“Why, suppose I do?”

“Why then your Honour has made a wise determination, according to my hint; for your Honour knows I said”— “Well, Peter, it is not necessary to repeat what you said; perhaps, I had determined on the subject before.”

“Egad, Master, you’re in the right, and I’m glad of it, for, I believe, we shall not quickly be disturbed here, except by the rooks and owls. Yes, yes — I warrant I’ll make it a place fit for a king; and as for the town, one may get any thing, I’m sure of that; though they think no more about this place than they do about India or England, or any of those places.”

They now reached the abbey, where Peter was received with great joy; but the hopes of his mistress and Adeline were repressed, when they learned that he returned, without having executed his commission, and heard his account of the town. La Motte’s orders to Peter were heard with almost equal concern by Madame and Adeline; but the latter concealed her uneasiness, and used all her efforts to overcome that of her friend. The sweetness of her behaviour, and the air of satisfaction she assumed,

sensibly affected Madame, and discovered to her a source of comfort, which she had hitherto overlooked. The affectionate attentions of her young friend promised to console her for the want of other society, and her conversation to enliven the hours which might otherwise be passed in painful regret.

The observations and general behaviour of Adeline already bespoke a good understanding and an amiable heart, but she had yet more — she had genius. She was now in her nineteenth year; her figure of the middling size, and turned to the most exquisite proportion; her hair was dark auburn, her eyes blue, and whether they sparkled with intelligence, or melted with tenderness, they were equally attractive: her form had the airy lightness of a nymph, and, when she smiled, her countenance might have been drawn for the younger sister of Hebe: the captivations of her beauty were heightened by the grace and simplicity of her manners, and confirmed by the intrinsic value of a heart

“That might be shrin’d in crystal, And have all its movements scann’d.”

Annette now kindled the fire for the night: Peter’s basket was opened, and supper prepared. Madame La Motte was still pensive and silent. “There is scarcely any condition so bad,” said Adeline, “but we may one time or other wish we had not quitted it. Honest Peter, when he was bewildered in the forest, or had two enemies to encounter instead of one, confesses he wished himself at the abbey. And I am certain, there is no situation so destitute, but comfort may be extracted from it. The blaze of this fire shines yet more cheerfully from the contrasted dreariness of the place; and this plentiful repast is made yet more delicious, from the temporary want we have suffered. Let us enjoy the good and forget the evil.”

“You speak, my dear,” replied Madame La Motte, “like one, whose spirits have not been often depressed by misfortune, (Adeline sighed) and whose hopes are, therefore, vigorous.” Long suffering,” said La Motte, has subdued in our minds that elastic energy, which repels the pressure of evil, and dances to the bound of joy. “But I speak in rhapsody, though only from the remembrance of such a time. I once, like you, Adeline, could extract comfort from most situations.”

“And may now, my dear Sir,” said Adeline. “Still believe it possible, and you will find it is so.”

“The illusion is gone — I can no longer deceive myself.”

“Pardon me, Sir, if I say, it is now only you deceive yourself, by suffering the cloud of sorrow to tinge every object you look upon.”

“It may be so,” said La Motte, “but let us leave the subject.”

After supper, the doors were secured, as before, for the night, and the wanderers resigned themselves to repose.

On the following morning, Peter again set out for the little town of Auboine, and the hours of his absence were again spent by Madame La Motte and Adeline in much anxiety and some hope, for the intelligence he might bring concerning the abbey might yet release them from the plans of La Motte. Towards the close of day he was descried coming slowly on; and the cart, which accompanied him, too certainly confirmed their fears. He brought materials for repairing the place, and some furniture.

Of the abbey he gave an account, of which the following is the substance: — It belonged, together with a large part of the adjacent forest, to a nobleman, who now resided with his family on a remote estate. He inherited it, in right of his wife, from his father-in-law, who had caused the more modern apartments to be erected, and had resided in them some part of every year, for the purpose of shooting and hunting. It was reported, that some person was, soon after it came to the present possessor, brought secretly to the abbey and confined in these apartments; who, or what he was, had never been conjectured, and what became of him nobody knew. The report died gradually away, and many persons entirely disbelieved the whole of it. But however this affair might be, certain it was, the present owner had visited the abbey only two summers, since his succeeding to it; and the furniture, after some time, was removed.

This circumstance had at first excited surprize, and various reports arose in consequence, but it was difficult to know what ought to be believed. Among the rest, it was said, that strange appearances had been observed at the abbey, and uncommon noises heard; and though this report had been ridiculed by sensible persons as the idle superstition of ignorance, it had fastened so strongly upon the minds of the common people, that for the last seventeen years none of the peasantry had ventured to approach the spot. The abbey was now, therefore, abandoned to decay.

La Motte ruminated upon this account. At first, it called up unpleasant ideas, but they were soon dismissed, and considerations more interesting

to his welfare took place: he congratulated himself that he had now found a spot, where he was not likely to be either discovered or disturbed; yet it could not escape him that there was a strange coincidence between one part of Peter's narrative, and the condition of the chambers that opened from the tower above stairs. The remains of furniture, of which the other apartments were void — the solitary bed — the number and connection of the rooms, were circumstances that united to confirm his opinion. This, however, he concealed in his own breast, for he already perceived that Peter's account had not assisted in reconciling his family to the necessity of dwelling at the abbey.

But they had only to submit in silence, and whatever disagreeable apprehension might intrude upon them, they now appeared willing to suppress the expression of it. Peter, indeed, was exempt from any evil of this kind; he knew no fear, and his mind was now wholly occupied with his approaching business. Madame La Motte, with a placid kind of despair, endeavoured to reconcile herself to that, which no effort of understanding could teach her to avoid, and which, an indulgence in lamentation, could only make more intolerable. Indeed, though a sense of the immediate inconveniences to be endured at the abbey, had made her oppose the scheme of living there, she did not really know how their situation could be improved by removal: yet her thoughts often wandered towards Paris, and reflected the retrospect of past times, with the images of weeping friends left, perhaps, for ever. The affectionate endearments of her only son, whom, from the danger of his situation, and the obscurity of hers, she might reasonably fear never to see again, arose upon her memory and overcame her fortitude. "Why — why was I reserved for this hour?" would she say, "and what will be my years to come?"

Adeline had no retrospect of past delight to give emphasis to present calamity — no weeping friends — no dear regretted objects to point the edge of sorrow, and throw a sickly hue upon her future prospects: she knew not yet the pangs of disappointed hope, or the acuter sting of self-accusation; she had no misery, but what patience could assuage, or fortitude overcome.

At the dawn of the following day Peter arose to his labour: he proceeded with alacrity, and, in a few days, two of the lower apartments were so much altered for the better, that La Motte began to exult, and his family to

perceive that their situation would not be so miserable as they had imagined. The furniture Peter had already brought was disposed in these rooms, one of which was the vaulted apartment. Madame La Motte furnished this as a sitting room, preferring it for its large Gothic window, that descended almost to the floor, admitting a prospect of the lawn, and the picturesque scenery of the surrounding woods.

Peter having returned to Auboine for a farther supply, all the lower apartments were in a few weeks not only habitable, but comfortable. These, however, being insufficient for the accommodation of the family, a room above stairs was prepared for Adeline: it was the chamber that opened immediately from the tower, and she preferred it to those beyond, because it was less distant from the family, and the windows fronting an avenue of the forest, afforded a more extensive prospect. The tapestry, that was decayed, and hung loosely from the walls, was now nailed up, and made to look less desolate; and, though the room had still a solemn aspect, from its spaciousness and the narrowness of the windows, it was not uncomfortable.

The first night that Adeline retired hither, she slept little: the solitary air of the place affected her spirits; the more so, perhaps, because she had, with friendly consideration, endeavoured to support them in the presence of Madame La Motte. She remembered the narrative of Peter, several circumstances of which had impressed her imagination in spite of her reason, and she found it difficult wholly to subdue apprehension. At one time, terror so strongly seized her mind, that she had even opened the door with an intention of calling Madame La Motte; but, listening for a moment on the stairs of the tower, every thing seemed still; at length, she heard the voice of La Motte speaking cheerfully, and the absurdity of her fears struck her forcibly; she blushed that she had for a moment submitted to them, and returned to her chamber wondering at herself.

CHAPTER 3

“Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The season’s difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter’s wind.”
Shakespeare.

La Motte arranged his little plan of living. His mornings were usually spent in shooting, or fishing, and the dinner, thus provided by his industry; he relished with a keener appetite than had ever attended him at the luxurious tables of Paris. The afternoons he passed with his family: sometimes he would select a book from the few he had brought with him, and endeavour to fix his attention to the words his lips repeated: — but his mind suffered little abstraction from its own cares, and the sentiment he pronounced left no trace behind it. Sometimes he conversed, but oftener sat in gloomy silence, musing upon the past, or anticipating the future.

At these moments, Adeline, with a sweetness almost irresistible, endeavoured to enliven his spirits, and to withdraw him from himself. Seldom she succeeded, but when she did the grateful looks of Madame La Motte, and the benevolent feelings of her own bosom, realized the chearfulness she had at at first only assumed. Adeline’s mind had the happy art, or, perhaps, it were more just to say, the happy nature, of accommodating itself to her situation. Her present condition, though forlorn, was not devoid of comfort, and this comfort was confirmed by her virtues. So much she won upon the affections of her protectors, that Madame La Motte loved her as her child, and La Motte himself, though a man little susceptible of tenderness, could not be insensible to her solicitudes. Whenever he relaxed from the sullenness of misery, it was at the influence of Adeline.

Peter regularly brought a weekly supply of provisions from Auboine, and, on those occasions, always quitted the town by a route contrary to that leading to the abbey. Several weeks having passed without molestation, La Motte dismissed all apprehension of pursuit, and at length became tolerably reconciled to the complection of his circumstances. As habit and effort strengthened the fortitude of Madame La Motte, the features of

misfortune appeared to soften. The forest, which at first seemed to her a frightful solitude, had lost its terrific aspect; and that edifice, whose half demolished walls and gloomy desolation had struck her mind with the force of melancholy and dismay, was now beheld as a domestic asylum, and a safe refuge from the storms of power.

She was a sensible and highly accomplished woman, and it became her chief delight to form the rising graces of Adeline, who had, as has been already shown, a sweetness of disposition, which made her quick to repay instruction with improvement, and indulgence with love. Never was Adeline so pleased as when she anticipated her wishes, and never so diligent as when she was employed in her business. The little affairs of the houshold she overlooked and managed with such admirable exactness, that Madame La Motte had neither anxiety, nor care, concerning them. And Adeline formed for herself in this barren situation, many amusements, that occasionally banished the remembrance of her misfortunes. La Motte's books were her chief consolation. With one of these she would frequently ramble into the forest, where the river, winding through a glade, diffused coolness, and with its murmuring accents, invited repose: there she would seat herself, and, resigned to the illusions of the page, pass many hours in oblivion of sorrow.

Here too, when her mind was tranquilized by the surrounding scenery, she wooed the gentle muse, and indulged in ideal happiness. The delight of these moments she commemorated in the following address

To the Visions of Fancy.

Dear, wild illusions of creative mind! Whose varying hues arise to Fancy's art, And by her magic force are swift combin'd In forms that please, and scenes that touch the heart:

Oh! whether at her voice ye soft assume The pensive grace of sorrow drooping low; Or rise sublime on terror's lofty plume, And shake the soul with wildly thrilling woe; Or, sweetly bright, your gayer tints ye spread, Bid scenes of pleasure steal upon my view, Love wave his purple pinions o'er my head, And wake the tender thought to passion true;

O! still — ye shadowy forms! attend my lonely hours, Still chase my real cares with your illusive powers.

Madame La Motte had frequently expressed curiosity concerning the events of Adeline's life, and by what circumstances she had been thrown

into a situation so perilous and mysterious as that in which La Motte had found her. Adeline had given a brief account of the manner in which she had been brought thither, but had always with tears intreated to be spared for that time from a particular relation of her history. Her spirits were not then equal to retrospection, but now that they were soothed by quiet, and strengthened by confidence, she one day gave Madame La Motte the following narration.

I am the only child, said Adeline, of Louis de St. Pierre, a chevalier of reputable family, but of small fortune, who for many years resided at Paris. Of my mother I have a faint remembrance: I lost her when I was only seven years old, and this was my first misfortune. At her death, my father gave up housekeeping, boarded me in a convent, and quitted Paris. Thus was I, at this early period of my life, abandoned to strangers. My father came sometimes to Paris; he then visited me, and I well remember the grief I used to feel when he bade me farewell. On these occasions, which rung my heart with grief, he appeared unmoved; so that I often thought he had little tenderness for me. But he was my father, and the only person to whom I could look up for protection and love.

In this convent I continued till I was twelve years old. A thousand times I had entreated my father to take me home, but at first motives of prudence, and afterwards of avarice, prevented him. I was now removed from this convent, and placed in another, where I learned my father intended I should take the veil. I will not attempt to express my surprize and grief on this occasion. Too long I had been immured in the walls of a cloister, and too much had I seen of the sullen misery of its votaries, not to feel horror and disgust at the prospect of being added to their number.

The Lady Abbess was a woman of rigid decorum and severe devotion; exact in the observance of every detail of form, and never forgave an offence against ceremony. It was her method, when she wanted to make converts to her order, to denounce and terrify rather than to persuade and allure. Her’s were the arts of cunning practised upon fear, not those of sophistication upon reason. She employed numberless stratagems to gain me to her purpose, and they all wore the complection of her character. But in the life to which she would have devoted me, I saw too many forms of real terror, to be overcome by the influence of her ideal host, and was resolute in rejecting the veil. Here I passed several years of miserable

resistance against cruelty and superstition. My father I seldom saw; when I did, I entreated him to alter my destination, but he objected that his fortune was insufficient to support me in the world, and at length denounced vengeance on my head if I persisted in disobedience.

You, my dear Madam, can form little idea of the wretchedness of my situation, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and imprisonment of the most dreadful kind, or to the vengeance of a father, from whom I had no appeal. My resolution relaxed — for some time I paused upon the choice of evils — but at length the horrors of the monastic life rose so fully to my view, that fortitude gave way before them. Excluded from the cheerful intercourse of society — from the pleasant view of nature — almost from the light of day — condemned to silence — rigid formality — abstinence and penance — condemned to forego the delights of a world, which imagination painted in the gayest and most alluring colours, and whose hues were, perhaps, not the less captivating because they were only ideal: — such was the state, to which I was destined. Again my resolution was invigorated: my father's cruelty subdued tenderness, and roused indignation. "Since he can forget," said I, "the affection of a parent, and condemn his child without remorse to wretchedness and despair — the bond of filial and parental duty no longer subsists between us — he has himself dissolved it, and I will yet struggle for liberty and life."

Finding me unmoved by menace, the Lady Abbess had now recourse to more subtle measures: she condescended to smile, and even to flatter; but her's was the distorted smile of cunning, not the gracious emblem of kindness; it provoked disgust, instead of inspiring affection. She painted the character of a vestal in the most beautiful tints of art — its holy innocence — its mild dignity — its sublime devotion. I sighed as she spoke. This she regarded as a favourable symptom, and proceeded on her picture with more animation. She described the serenity of a monastic life — its security from the seductive charms, restless passions, and sorrowful vicissitudes of the world — the rapturous delights of religion, and the sweet reciprocal affection of the sisterhood.

So highly she finished the piece, that the lurking lines of cunning would, to an inexperienced eye, have escaped detection. Mine was too sorrowfully informed. Too often had I witnessed the secret tear and bursting sigh of vain regret, the sullen pinings of discontent, and the mute anguish of

despair. My silence and my manner assured her of my incredulity, and it was with difficulty that she preserved a decent composure.

My father, as may be imagined, was highly incensed at my perseverance, which he called obstinacy, but, what will not be so easily believed, he soon after relented, and appointed a day to take me from the convent. O! judge of my feelings when I received this intelligence. The joy it occasioned awakened all my gratitude; I forgot the former cruelty of my father, and that the present indulgence was less the effect of his kindness than of my resolution. I wept that I could not indulge his every wish.

What days of blissful expectation were those that preceded my departure! The world, from which I had been hitherto secluded — the world, in which my fancy had been so often delighted to roam — whose paths were strewn with fadeless roses — whose every scene smiled in beauty and invited to delight — where all the people were good, and all the good happy — Ah! then that world was bursting upon my view. Let me catch the rapturous remembrance before it vanish! It is like the passing lights of autumn, that gleam for a moment on a hill, and then leave it to darkness. I counted the days and hours that withheld me from this fairy land. It was in the convent only that people were deceitful and cruel: it was there only that misery dwelt. I was quitting it all! How I pitied the poor nuns that were to be left behind. I would have given half that world I prized so much, had it been mine, to have taken them out with me.

The long wished for day at last arrived. My father came, and for a moment my joy was lost in the sorrow of bidding farewell to my poor companions, for whom I had never felt such warmth of kindness as at this instant. I was soon beyond the gates of the convent. I looked around me, and viewed the vast vault of heaven no longer bounded by monastic walls, and the green earth extended in hill and dale to the round verge of the horizon! My heart danced with delight, tears swelled in my eyes, and for some moments I was unable to speak. My thoughts rose to Heaven in sentiments of gratitude to the Giver of all good!

At length, I returned to my father; dear Sir, said I, how I thank you for my deliverance, and how I wish I could do every thing to oblige you.

Return, then, to your convent, said he, in a harsh accent. I shuddered; his look and manner jarred the tone of my feelings; they struck discord upon my heart, which had before responded only to harmony. The ardour of joy

was in a moment repressed, and every object around me was saddened with the gloom of disappointment. It was not that I suspected my father would take me back to the convent; but that his feelings seemed so very dissonant to the joy and gratitude, which I had but a moment before felt and expressed to him. — Pardon, Madam, a relation of these trivial circumstances; the strong vicissitudes of feeling which they impressed upon my heart, make me think them important, when they are, perhaps, only disgusting.

"No, my dear," said Madame La Motte, "they are interesting to me; they illustrate little traits of character, which I love to observe. You are worthy of all my regards, and from this moment I give my tenderest pity to your misfortunes, and my affection to your goodness."

These words melted the heart of Adeline; she kissed the hand which Madame held out, and remained a few minutes silent. At length she said, "May I deserve this goodness! and may I ever be thankful to God, who, in giving me such a friend, has raised me to comfort and hope!

"My father's house was situated a few leagues on the other side of Paris, and in our way to it, we passed through that city. What a novel scene! Where were now the solemn faces, the demure manners I had been accustomed to see in the convent? Every countenance was here animated, either by business or pleasure; every step was airy, and every smile was gay. All the people appeared like friends; they looked and smiled at me; I smiled again, and wished to have told them how pleased I was. How delightful, said I, to live surrounded by friends!

"What crowded streets! What magnificent hotels! What splendid equipages! I scarcely observed that the streets were narrow, or the way dangerous. What bustle, what tumult, what delight! I could never be sufficiently thankful that I was removed from the convent. Again, I was going to express my gratitude to my father, but his looks forbad me, and I was silent. I am too diffuse; even the faint forms which memory reflects of passed delight are grateful to the heart. The shadow of pleasure is still gazed upon with a melancholy enjoyment, though the substance is fled beyond our reach."

"Having quitted Paris, which I left with many sighs, and gazed upon till the towers of every church dissolved in distance from my view; we entered upon a gloomy and unfrequented road. It was evening when we reached a

wild heath; I looked round in search of a human dwelling, but could find none; and not a human being was to be seen. I experienced something of what I used to feel in the convent; my heart had not been so sad since I left it. Of my father, who still sat in silence, I inquired if we were near home; he answered in the affirmative. Night came on, however, before we reached the place of our destination; it was a lone house on the waste; but I need not describe it to you, Madam. When the carriage stopped, two men appeared at the door, and assisted us to alight; so gloomy were their countenances, and so few their words, I almost fancied myself again in the convent. Certain it is, I had not seen such melancholy faces since I quitted it. Is this a part of the world I have so fondly contemplated? said I.

"The interior appearance of the house was desolate and mean; I was surprised that my father had chosen such a place for his habitation, and also that no woman was to be seen; but I knew that inquiry would only produce a reproof, and was, therefore, silent. At supper, the two men I had before seen sat down with us; they said little, but seemed to observe me much. I was confused and displeased, which, my father noticing, frowned at them with a look, which convinced me he meant more than I comprehended. When the cloth was drawn, my father took my hand and conducted me to the door of my chamber; having sat down the candle, and wished me good night, he left me to my own solitary thoughts.

"How different were they from those I had indulged a few hours before! then expectation, hope, delight, danced before me; now melancholy and disappointment chilled the ardour of my mind, and discoloured my future prospect. The appearance of every thing around conduced to depress me. On the floor lay a small bed without curtains, or hangings; two old chairs and a table were all the remaining furniture in the room. I went to the window, with an intention of looking out upon the surrounding scene, and found it was grated. I was shocked at this circumstance, and, comparing it with the lonely situation, and the strange appearance of the house, together with the countenances and behaviour of the men who had supped with us, I was lost in a labyrinth of conjecture.

"At length I laid down to sleep; but the anxiety of my mind prevented repose; gloomy unpleasing images flitted before my fancy, and I fell into a sort of waking dream: I thought that I was in a lonely forest with my father; his looks were severe, and his gestures menacing: he upbraided me

for leaving the convent, and while he spoke, drew from his pocket a mirror, which he held before my face; I looked in it and saw, (my blood now thrills as I repeat it) I saw myself wounded, and bleeding profusely. Then I thought myself in the house again; and suddenly heard these words, in accents so distinct, that for some time after I awoke, I could scarcely believe them ideal, ‘Depart this house, destruction hovers here.’

“I was awakened by a footstep on the stairs; it was my father retiring to his chamber; the lateness of the hour surprised me, for it was past midnight.

“On the following morning, the party of the preceding evening assembled at breakfast, and were as gloomy and silent as before. The table was spread by a boy of my father’s; but the cook and the house-maid, whatever they might be, were invisible.”

“The next morning, I was surprized, on attempting to leave my chamber, to find the door locked; I waited a considerable time before I ventured to call; when I did, no answer was returned; I then went to the window, and called more loudly, but my own voice was still the only sound I heard. Near an hour I passed in a state of surprise and terror not to be described: at length, I heard a person coming up stairs, and I renewed the call; I was answered, that my father had that morning set off for Paris, whence he would return in a few days; in the meanwhile he had ordered me to be confined in my chamber. On my expressing surprise and apprehension at this circumstance, I was assured I had nothing to fear, and that I should live as well as if I was at liberty.”

“The latter part of this speech seemed to contain an odd kind of comfort; I made little reply, but submitted to necessity. Once more I was abandoned to sorrowful reflection; what a day was the one I now passed! alone, and agitated with grief and apprehension. I endeavoured to conjecture the cause of this harsh treatment; and, at length concluded it was designed by my father, as a punishment for my former disobedience. But why abandon me to the power of strangers, to men, whose countenances bore the stamp of villany so strongly as to impress even my inexperienced mind with terror! Surmise involved me only deeper in perplexity, yet I found it impossible to forbear pursuing the subject; and the day was divided between lamentation and conjecture. Night at length came, and such a night! Darkness brought new terrors: I looked round the

chamber for some means of fastening my door on the inside, but could perceive none; at last I contrived to place the back of a chair in an oblique direction, so as to render it secure.

“I had scarcely done this, and laid down upon my bed in my cloaths, not to sleep, but to watch, when I heard a rap at the door of the house, which was opened and shut so quickly, that the person who had knocked, seemed only to deliver a letter or message. Soon after, I heard voices at intervals in a room below stairs, sometimes speaking very low, and sometimes rising, all together, as if in dispute. Something more excusable than curiosity made me endeavour to distinguish what was said, but in vain; now and then a word or two reached me, and once I heard my name repeated, but no more.”

“Thus passed the hours till midnight, when all became still. I had laid for some time in a state between fear and hope, when I heard the lock of my door gently moved backward and forward; I started up, and listened; for a moment it was still, then the noise returned, and I heard a whispering without; my spirits died away, but I was yet sensible. Presently an effort was made at the door, as if to force it; I shrieked aloud, and immediately heard the voices of the men I had seen at my father’s table: they called loudly for the door to be opened, and on my returning no answer, uttered dreadful execrations. I had just strength sufficient to move to the window, in the desperate hope of escaping thence; but my feeble efforts could not even shake the bars. O! how can I recollect these moments of horror, and be sufficiently thankful that I am now in safety and comfort!

“They remained some time at the door, then they quitted it, and went down stairs. How my heart revived at every step of their departure; I fell upon my knees, thanked God that he had preserved me this time, and implored his farther protection. I was rising from this short prayer, when suddenly I heard a noise in a different part of the room, and, on looking round, I perceived the door of a small closet open, and two men enter the chamber.

“They seized me, and I sunk senseless in their arms; how long I remained in this condition I know not, but on reviving, I perceived myself again alone, and heard several voices from below stairs. I had presence of mind to run to the door of the closet, my only chance of escape; but it was locked! I then recollected it was possible, that the ruffians might have

forgot to turn the key of the chamber door, which was held by the chair; but here, also, I was disappointed. I clasped my hands in an agony of despair, and stood for some time immoveable.

“A violent noise from below rouzed me, and soon after I heard people ascending the stairs: I now gave myself up for lost. The steps approached, the door of the closet was again unlocked. I stood calmly, and again saw the men enter the chamber; I neither spoke, nor resisted: the faculties of my soul were wrought up beyond the power of feeling; as a violent blow on the body stuns for awhile the sense of pain. They led me down stairs; the door of a room below was thrown open, and I beheld a stranger; it was then that my senses returned; I shrieked, and resisted, but was forced along. It is unnecessary to say that this stranger was Monsieur La Motte, or to add, that I shall for ever bless him as my deliverer.”

Adeline ceased to speak; Madame La Motte remained silent. There were some circumstances in Adeline’s narrative, which raised all her curiosity. She asked if Adeline believed her father to be a party in this mysterious affair. Adeline, though it was impossible to doubt that he had been principally and materially concerned in some part of it, thought, or said she thought, he was innocent of any intention against her life. “Yet, what motive,” said Madame La Motte, could there be for a degree of cruelty so apparently unprofitable?” Here the inquiry ended; and Adeline confessed she had pursued it, till her mind shrunk from all farther research.

The sympathy which such uncommon misfortune excited, Madame La Motte now expressed without reserve, and this expression of it, strengthened the tye of mutual friendship. Adeline felt her spirits relieved by the disclosure she had made to Madame La Motte; and the latter acknowledged the value of the confidence, by an increase of affectionate attentions.

CHAPTER 4

“ — My May of life
Is fall’n into the fear, the yellow leaf.”
Macbeth.

“Full oft, unknowing and unknown,
He wore his endless noons alone,
Amid th’ autumnal wood:
Oft was he wont in hasty fit,
Abrupt the social board to quit.”
Wharton.

La Motte had now passed above a month in this seclusion; and his wife had the pleasure to see him recover tranquillity and even cheerfulness. In this pleasure Adeline warmly participated; and she might justly have congratulated herself, as one cause of his restoration; her cheerfulness and delicate attention had effected what Madame La Motte’s greater anxiety had failed to accomplish. La Motte did not seem regardless of her amiable disposition, and sometimes thanked her in a manner more earnest than was usual with him. She, in her turn, considered him as her only protector, and now felt towards him the affection of a daughter.

The time she had spent in this peaceful retirement had softened the remembrance of past events, and restored her mind to its natural tone: and when memory brought back to her view her former short and romantic expectations of happiness, though she gave a sigh to the rapturous illusion, she less lamented the disappointment, than rejoiced in her present security and comfort.

But the satisfaction which La Motte’s cheerfulness diffused around him was of short continuance; he became suddenly gloomy and reserved; the society of his family was no longer grateful to him; and he would spend whole hours in the most secluded parts of the forest, devoted to melancholy and secret grief. He did not, as formerly, indulge the humour of his sadness, without restraint, in the presence of others; he now evidently endeavoured to conceal it, and affected a cheerfulness that was too artificial to escape detection.

His servant Peter, either impelled by curiosity or kindness, sometimes followed him, unseen, into the forest. He observed him frequently retire to one particular spot, in a remote part, which having gained, he always disappeared, before Peter, who was obliged to follow at a distance, could exactly notice where. All his endeavours, now prompted by wonder and invigorated by disappointment, were unsuccessful, and he was at length compelled to endure the tortures of unsatisfied curiosity.

This change in the manners and habits of her husband was too conspicuous to pass unobserved by Madame La Motte, who endeavoured, by all the stratagems which affection could suggest, or female invention supply, to win him to her confidence. He seemed insensible to the influence of the first, and withstood the wiles of the latter. Finding all her efforts insufficient to dissipate the glooms which overhung his mind, or to penetrate their secret cause, she desisted from farther attempt, and endeavoured to submit to this mysterious distress.

Week after week elapsed, and the same unknown cause sealed the lips and corroded the heart of La Motte. The place of his visitation in the forest had not been traced. Peter had frequently examined round the spot where his master disappeared, but had never discovered any recess, which could be supposed to conceal him. The astonishment of the servant was at length raised to an insupportable degree, and he communicated to his mistress the subject of it.

The emotion, which this information excited, she disguised from Peter, and reproved him for the means he had taken to gratify his curiosity. But she revolved this circumstance in her thoughts, and comparing it with the late alteration in his temper, her uneasiness was renewed, and her perplexity considerably increased. After much consideration, being unable to assign any other motive for his conduct, she began to attribute it to the influence of illicit passion; and her heart, which now out-ran her judgement, confirmed the supposition, and roused all the torturing pangs of jealousy.

Comparatively speaking, she had never known affliction till now: she had abandoned her dearest friends and connections — had relinquished the gaieties, the luxuries, and almost the necessaries of life; — fled with her family into exile, an exile the most dreary and comfortless; experiencing the evils of reality, and those of apprehension, united: all these she had

patiently endured, supported by the affection of him, for whose sake she suffered. Though that affection, indeed, had for some time appeared to be abated, she had borne its decrease with fortitude: but the last stroke of calamity, hitherto withheld, now came with irresistible force — the love, of which she lamented the loss, she now believed was transferred to another.

The operation of strong passion confuses the powers of reason, and warps them to its own particular direction. Her usual degree of judgement, unopposed by the influence of her heart, would probably have pointed out to Madame La Motte some circumstances upon the subject of her distress, equivocal, if not contradictory to her suspicions. No such circumstances appeared to her, and she did not long hesitate to decide, that Adeline was the object of her husband's attachment. Her beauty out of the question, who else, indeed, could it be in a spot thus secluded from the world?

The same cause destroyed, almost at the same moment, her only remaining comfort; and, when she wept that she could no longer look for happiness in the affection of La Motte, she wept also, that she could no longer seek solace in the friendship of Adeline. She had too great an esteem for her to doubt at first, the integrity of her conduct, but, in spite of reason, her heart no longer expanded to her with its usual warmth of kindness. She shrunk from her confidence; and, as the secret broodings of jealousy cherished her suspicions, she became less kind to her, even in manner.

Adeline, observing the change, at first attributed it to accident, and afterwards to a temporary displeasure, arising from some little inadvertency in her conduct. She, therefore, increased her assiduities; but, perceiving, contrary to all expectation, that her efforts to please failed of their usual consequence, and that the reserve of Madame's manner rather increased than abated, she became seriously uneasy, and resolved to seek an explanation. This Madame La Motte as sedulously avoided, and was for some time able to prevent. Adeline, however, too much interested in the event to yield to delicate scruples, pressed the subject so closely, that Madame, at first agitated and confused, at length invented some idle excuse, and laughed off the affair.

She now saw the necessity of subduing all appearance of reserve towards Adeline; and though her art could not conquer the prejudices of

passion, it taught her to assume, with tolerable success, the aspect of kindness. Adeline was deceived, and was again at peace. Indeed, confidence in the sincerity and goodness of others was her weakness. But the pangs of stifled jealousy struck deeper to the heart of Madame La Motte, and she resolved, at all events, to obtain some certainty upon the subject of her suspicions.

She now condescended to a meanness, which she had before despised, and ordered Peter to watch the steps of his master, in order to discover, if possible, the place of his visitation! So much did passion win upon her judgement, by time and indulgence, that she sometimes ventured even to doubt the integrity of Adeline, and afterwards proceeded to believe it possible that the object of La Motte's rambles might be an assignation with her. What suggested this conjecture was, that Adeline frequently took long walks alone in the forest, and sometimes was absent from the abbey for many hours. This circumstance, which Madame La Motte had at first attributed to Adeline's fondness for the picturesque beauties of nature, now operated forcibly upon her imagination, and she could view it in no other light, than as affording an opportunity for secret conversation with her husband.

Peter obeyed the orders of his mistress with alacrity, for they were warmly seconded by his own curiosity. All his endeavours were, however, fruitless; he never dared to follow La Motte near enough to observe the place of his last retreat. Her impatience thus heightened by delay, and her passion stimulated by difficulty, Madame La Motte now resolved to apply to her husband for an explanation of his conduct.

After some consideration, concerning the manner most likely to succeed with him, she went to La Motte, but when she entered the room where he sat, forgetting all her concerted address, she fell at his feet, and was, for some moments, lost in tears. Surprized at her attitude and distress, he inquired the occasion of it, and was answered, that it was caused by his own conduct. "My conduct! What part of it, pray?" inquired he.

"Your reserve, your secret sorrow, and frequent absence from the abbey."

"Is it then so wonderful, that a man, who has lost almost every thing, should sometimes lament his misfortunes? or so criminal to attempt

concealing his grief, that he must be blamed for it by those, whom he would save from the pain of sharing it?”

Having uttered these words, he quitted the room, leaving Madame La Motte lost in surprize, but somewhat relieved from the pressure of her former suspicions. Still, however, she pursued Adeline with an eye of scrutiny; and the mask of kindness would sometimes fall off, and discover the features of distrust. Adeline, without exactly knowing why, felt less at ease and less happy in her presence than formerly; her spirits drooped, and she would often, when alone, weep at the forlornness of her condition. Formerly, her remembrance of past sufferings was lost in the friendship of Madame La Motte; now, though her behaviour was too guarded to betray any striking instance of unkindness, there was something in her manner which chilled the hopes of Adeline, unable as she was to analyse it. But a circumstance, which soon occurred, suspended, for a while, the jealousy of Madame La Motte, and roused her husband from his state of gloomy stupefaction.

Peter, having been one day to Auboine, for the weekly supply of provisions, returned with intelligence that awakened in La Motte new apprehension and anxiety.

“Oh, Sir! I’ve heard something that has astonished me, as well it may,” cried Peter, “and so it will you, when you come to know it. As I was standing in the blacksmith’s shop, while the smith was driving a nail into the horse’s shoe (by the bye, the horse lost it in an odd way, I’ll tell you, Sir, how it was)” —

“Nay, prithee leave it till another time, and go on with your story.”

“Why then, Sir, as I was standing in the blacksmith’s shop, comes in a man with a pipe in his mouth, and a large pouch of tobacco in his hand”— “Well — what has the pipe to do with the story?”

“Nay, Sir, you put me out; I can’t go on, unless you let me tell it my own way. As I was saying — with a pipe in his mouth — I think I was there, your Honour!”

“Yes, yes.”

“He sets himself down on the bench, and, taking the pipe from his mouth, says to the blacksmith — Neighbour, do you know any body of the name of La Motte hereabouts? — Bless your Honour, I turned all of a cold

sweat in a minute! — Is not your Honour well, shall I fetch you any thing?”

“No — but be short in your narrative.”

“La Motte! La Motte! said the blacksmith, I think I’ve heard the name.”— “Have you?” said I, you’re cunning then, for there’s no such person hereabouts, to my knowledge.”

“Fool! — why did you say that?”

“Because I did not want them to know your Honour was here; and if I had not managed very cleverly, they would have found me out. There is no such person, hereabouts, to my knowledge, says I,”— “Indeed! says the blacksmith, you know more of the neighbourhood than I do then.” — Aye, says the man with the pipe, that’s very true. How came you to know so much of the neighbourhood? I came here twenty-six years ago, come next St. Michael, and you know more than I do. How came you to know so much?”

“With that he put his pipe in his mouth, and gave a whiff full in my face. Lord! your Honour, I trembled from head to foot. Nay, as for that matter, says I, I don’t know more than other people, but I’m sure I never heard of such a man as that.” — Pray, says the blacksmith, staring me full in the face, an’t you the man that was inquiring some time since about Saint Clair’s Abbey?”— “Well, what of that? says I, what does that prove?”— “Why, they say, somebody lives in the abbey now, said the man, turning to the other; and, for aught I know, it may be this same La Motte.”— “Aye, or for aught I know either, says the man with the pipe, getting up from the bench, and you know more of this than you’ll own. I’ll lay my life on’t, this Monsieur La Motte lives at the abbey.”— “Aye, says I, you are out there, for he does not live at the abbey now.”

“Confound your folly!” cried La Motte, “but be quick — how did the matter end?”

“My master does not live there now, said I. — Oh! oh! said the man with the pipe; he is your master, then? And pray how long has he left the abbey — and where does he live now?” Hold, said I, not so fast — I know when to speak and when to hold my tongue — but who has been inquiring for him?”

“What! he expected somebody to inquire for him? says the man.” — No, says I, he did not, but if he did, what does that prove? — that argues

nothing.” With that, he looked at the blacksmith, and they went out of the shop together, leaving my horse’s shoe undone. But I never minded that, for the moment they were gone, I mounted and rode away as fast as I could. But in my fright, your Honour, I forgot to take the round about way, and so came straight home.”

La Motte, extremely shocked at Peter’s intelligence, made no other reply than by cursing his folly, and immediately went in search of Madame, who was walking with Adeline on the banks of the river. La Motte was too much agitated to soften his information by preface. “We are discovered!” said he, “the King’s officers have been inquiring for me at Auboine, and Peter has blundered upon my ruin.” He then informed her of what Peter had related, and bade her prepare to quit the abbey.

“But whither can we fly?” said Madame La Motte, scarcely able to support herself. “Any where!” said he, “to stay here is certain destruction. We must take refuge in Switzerland, I think. If any part of France would have concealed me, surely it had been this!”

“Alas, how are we perfecuted!” rejoined Madame. “This spot is scarcely made comfortable, before we are obliged to leave it, and go we know not whither.”

“I wish we may not yet know whither,” replied La Motte, “that is the least evil that threatens us. Let us escape a prison, and I care not whither we go. But return to the abbey immediately, and pack up what moveables you can.” A flood of tears came to the relief of Madame La Motte, and she hung upon Adeline’s arm, silent and trembling. Adeline, though she had no comfort to bestow, endeavoured to command her feelings and appear composed. Come,” said La Motte, “we waste time; let us lament hereafter, but at present prepare for flight. Exert a little of that fortitude, which is so necessary for our preservation. Adeline does not weep, yet her state is as wretched as your own, for I know not how long I shall be able to protect her.”

Notwithstanding her terror, this reproof touched the pride of Madame La Motte, who dried her tears, but disdained to reply, and looked at Adeline with a strong expression of displeasure. As they moved silently toward the abbey, Adeline asked La Motte if he was sure they were the king’s officers, who inquired for him. “I cannot, doubt it,” he replied, “who else could

possibly inquire for me? Besides, the behaviour of the man, who mentioned my name, puts the matter beyond a question."

"Perhaps not," said Madame La Motte: "let us wait till morning ere we set off. We may then find it will be unnecessary to go."

"We may, indeed; the king's officers would probably by that time have told us as much." La Motte went to give orders to Peter. "Set off in an hour," said Peter, "Lord bless you, master! only consider the coach wheel; it would take me a day at least to mend it, for your Honour knows I never mended one in my life."

This was a circumstance which La Motte had entirely overlooked. When they settled at the abbey, Peter had at first been too busy in repairing the apartments, to remember the carriage, and afterwards, believing it would not quickly be wanted, he had neglected to do it. La Motte's temper now entirely forsook him, and with many execrations he ordered Peter to go to work immediately: but on searching for the materials formerly bought, they were no where to be found, and Peter at length remembered, though he was prudent enough to conceal this circumstance that he had used the nails in repairing the abbey.

It was now, therefore, impossible to quit the forest that night, and La Motte had only to consider the most probable plan of concealment, should the officers of justice visit the ruin before the morning; a circumstance, which the thoughtlessness of Peter in returning from Auboine, by the straight way, made not unlikely.

At first, indeed, it occurred to him, that, though his family could not be removed, he might himself take one of the horses, and escape from the forest before night. But he thought there would still be some danger of detection in the towns through which he must pass, and he could not well bear the idea of leaving his family unprotected, without knowing when he could return to them, or whither he could direct them to follow him. La Motte was not a man of very vigorous resolution, and he was, perhaps, rather more willing to suffer in company than alone.

After much consideration, he recollected the trapdoor of the closet belonging to the chambers above. It was invisible to the eye, and, whatever might be its direction, it would securely shelter him, at least, from discovery. Having deliberated farther upon the subject, he determined to explore the recess to which the stairs led, and thought it possible, that for a

short time his whole family might be concealed within it. There was little time between the suggestion of the plan and the execution of his purpose, for darkness was spreading around, and, in every murmur of the wind, he thought he heard the voices of his enemies.

He called for a light and ascended alone to the chamber. When he came to the closet, it was some time before he could find the trapdoor, so exactly did it correspond with the boards of the floor. At length, he found and raised it. The chill damps of long confined air rushed from the aperture, and he stood for a moment to let them pass, ere he descended. As he stood looking down the abyss, he recollected the report, which Peter had brought concerning the abbey, and it gave him an uneasy sensation. But this soon yielded to more pressing interests.

The stairs were steep, and in many places trembled beneath his weight. Having continued to descend for some time, his feet touched the ground, and he found himself in a narrow passage; but as he turned to pursue it, the damp vapours curled round him and extinguished the light. He called aloud for Peter, but could make nobody hear, and, after some time, he endeavoured to find his way up the stairs. In this, with difficulty, he succeeded, and, passing the chambers with cautious steps, descended the tower.

The security, which the place he had just quitted seemed to promise, was of too much importance to be slightly rejected, and he determined immediately to make another experiment with the light: — having now fixed it in a lanthorn, he descended a second time to the passage. The current of vapours occasioned by the opening of the trapdoor, was abated, and the fresh air thence admitted had began to circulate: La Motte passed on unmolested.

The passage was of considerable length, and led him to a door, which was fastened. He placed the lanthorn at some distance to avoid the current of air, and applied his strength to the door. It shook under his hands, but did not yield. Upon examining it more closely, he perceived the wood round the lock was dedecayed, probably by the damps, and this encouraged him to proceed. After some time it gave way to his effort, and he found himself in a square stone room.

He stood for some time to survey it. The walls, which were dripping with unwholesome dews, were entirely bare and afforded not even a

window. A small iron grate alone admitted the air. At the further end, near a low recess, was another door. La Motte went towards it, and, as he passed, looked into the recess. Upon the ground within it, stood a large chest, which he went forward to examine, and, lifting the lid, he saw the remains of a human skeleton. Horror struck upon his heart, and he involuntarily stepped back. During a pause of some moments, his first emotions subsided. That thrilling curiosity, which objects of terror often excite in the human mind, impelled him to take a second view of this dismal spectacle.

La Motte stood motionless as he gazed; the object before him seemed to confirm the report that some person had formerly been murdered in the abbey. At length he closed the chest, and advanced to the second door, which also was fastened, but the key was in the lock. He turned it with difficulty, and then found the door was held by two strong bolts. Having undrawn these, it disclosed a flight of steps, which he descended. They terminated in a chain of low vaults, or rather cells, that, from the manner of their construction and present condition, seemed to have been coeval with the most ancient parts of the abbey. La Motte, in his then depressed state of mind, thought them the burial places of the monks, who formerly inhabited the pile above; but they were more calculated for places of penance for the living, than of rest for the dead.

Having reached the extremity of these cells, the way was again closed by a door. La Motte now hesitated whether he should attempt to proceed any farther. The present spot seemed to afford the security he sought. Here he might pass the night unmolested by apprehension of discovery, and it was most probable, that if the officers arrived in the night, and found the abbey vacated, they would quit it before morning, or, at least, before he could have any occasion to emerge from concealment. These considerations restored his mind to a state of greater composure. His only immediate care was to bring his family, as soon as possible, to this place of security, lest the officers should come unawares upon them; and, while he stood thus musing, he blamed himself for delay.

But an irresistible desire of knowing to what this door led, arrested his steps, and he turned to open it. The door, however, was fastened, and, as he attempted to force it, he suddenly thought he heard a noise above. It now

occurred to him, that the officers might already have arrived, and he quitted the cells with precipitation, intending to listen at the trapdoor.

“There, said he, I may wait in security, and perhaps hear something of what passes. My family will not be known, or, at least, not hurt, and their uneasiness on my account, they must learn to endure.”

These were the arguments of La Motte, in which; it must be owned, selfish prudence was more conspicuous than tender anxiety for his wife. He had by this time reached the bottom of the stairs, when, on looking up, he perceived the trapdoor was left open, and ascending in haste to close it, he heard footsteps advancing through the chambers above. Before he could descend entirely out of sight, he again looked up and perceived through the aperture the face of a man looking down upon him. “Master,” cried Peter; — La Motte was somewhat relieved at the sound of his voice, though angry that he had occasioned him so much terror.

“What brings you here, and what is the matter below?”

“Nothing, Sir, nothing’s the matter, only my mistress sent me to see after your Honour.”

“There’s nobody there then,” said La Motte, “setting his foot upon the step.”

“Yes, Sir, there is my mistress and Mademoiselle Adeline and”— “Well — well” said La Motte briskly— “go your ways, I am coming.”

He informed Madame La Motte where he had been, and of his intention of secreting himself, and deliberated upon the means of convincing the officers, should they arrive, that he had quitted the abbey. For this purpose, he ordered all the moveable furniture to be conveyed to the cells below. La Motte himself assisted in this business, and every hand was employed for dispatch. In a very short time, the habitable part of the fabric was left almost as desolate as he had found it. He then bade Peter take the horses to a distance from the abbey, and turn them loose. After farther consideration, he thought it might contribute to mislead them, if he placed in some conspicuous part of the fabric an inscription, signifying his condition, and mentioning the date of his departure from the abbey. Over the door of the tower, which led to the habitable part of the structure, he, therefore, cut the following lines.

“O ye! whom misfortune may lead to this spot, Learn that there are others as miserable as yourselves.”

P — I-M — a wretched exile, sought within these walls a refuge from persecution, on the 27th of April 1658, and quitted them on the 12th of July in the same year, in search of a more convenient asylum.

After engraving these words with a knife, the small stock of provisions remaining from the week's supply (for Peter, in his fright, had returned unloaded from his last journey) was put into a basket, and, La Motte having assembled his family, they all ascended the stairs of the tower and passed through the chambers to the closet. Peter went first with a light, and with some difficulty found the trapdoor. Madame La Motte shuddered as she surveyed the gloomy abyss; but they were all silent.

La Motte now took the light and led the way; Madame followed, and then Adeline. "These old monks loved good wine, as well as other people," said Peter, who brought up the rear, "I warrant your Honour, now, this was their cellar; I smell the casks already."

"Peace," said La Motte, "reserve your jokes for a proper occasion."

"There is no harm in loving good wine, as your Honour knows."

"Have done with this buffoonery," said La Motte, in a tone more authoritative, "and go first." Peter obeyed.

They came to the vaulted room. The dismal spectacle he had seen here, deterred La Motte from passing the night in this chamber; and the furniture had, by his own order, been conveyed to the cells below. He was anxious that his family should not perceive the skeleton; an object, which would, probably, excite a degree of horror not to be overcome during their stay. La Motte now passed the chest in haste; and Madame La Motte and Adeline were too much engrossed by their own thoughts, to give minute attention to external circumstances.

When they reached the cells, Madame La Motte wept at the necessity which condemned her to a spot so dismal. "Alas," said she, "are we, indeed, thus reduced! The apartments above, formerly appeared to me a deplorable habitation; but they are a place compared to these."

"True, my dear," said La Motte, and let the remembrance of what you once thought them, soothe your discontent now; these cells are also a place, compared to the Bicétre, or the Bastille, and to the terrors of farther punishment, which would accompany them: let the apprehension of the greater evil teach you to endure the less: I am contented if we find here the refuge I seek."

Madame La Motte was silent, and Adeline, forgetting her late unkindness, endeavoured as much as she could to console her; while her heart was sinking with the misfortunes, which she could not but anticipate, she appeared composed, and even cheerful. She attended Madame La Motte with the most watchful solicitude, and felt so thankful that La Motte was no secreted within this recess, that she almost lost her perception of its glooms and inconveniences.

This she artlessly expressed to him, who could not be insensible to the tenderness it discovered. Madame La Motte was also sensible of it, and it renewed a painful sensation. The effusions of gratitude she mistook for those of tenderness.

La Motte returned frequently to the trap door, to listen if any body was in the abbey; but no sound disturbed the stillness of night; at length they sat down to supper; the repast was a melancholy one. “If the officers do not come hither to night,” said Madame La Motte, sighing, “suppose, my dear, Peter returns to Auboine tomorrow. He may there learn something more of this affair; or, at least, he might procure a carriage to convey us hence.”

“To be sure he might,” said La Motte, peevishly, “and people to attend it also. Peter would be an excellent person to shew the officers the way to the abbey, and to inform them of what they might else be in doubt about, my concealment here.”

“How cruel is this irony!” replied Madame La Motte, “I proposed only what I thought would be for our mutual good; my judgement was, perhaps, wrong, but my intention was certainly right.” Tears swelled into her eyes as she spoke these words. Adeline wished to relieve her; but delicacy kept her silent. La Motte observed the effect of his speech, and something like remorse touched his heart. He approached, and taking her hand, “You must allow for the perturbation of my mind,” said he, “I did not mean to afflict you thus. The idea of sending Peter to Auboine, where he has already done so much harm by his blunders, teased me, and I could not let it pass unnoticed. No, my dear, our only chance of safety is to remain where we are while our provisions last. If the officers do not come here to-night, they probably will tomorrow, or, perhaps, the next day. When they have searched the abbey, without finding me, they will depart; we may then

emerge from this recess, and take measures for removing to a distant country.”

Madame La Motte acknowledged the justice of his words, and her mind being relieved by the little apology he had made, she became tolerably cheerful. Supper being ended, La Motte stationed the faithful, though simple Peter, at the foot of the steps that ascended to the closet; there to keep watch during the night. Having done this, he returned to the lower cells, where he had left his little family. The beds were spread, and having mournfully bad each other good night, they laid down, and implored rest.

Adeline’s thoughts were too busy to suffer her to repose, and when she believed her companions were sunk in slumbers, she indulged the sorrow which reflection brought. She also looked forward to the future with the most mournful apprehension. “Should La Motte be seized, what was to become of her? She would then be a wanderer in the wide world; without friends to protect, or money to support her; the prospect was gloomy — was terrible!” She surveyed it and shuddered! The distresses too of Monsieur and Madame La Motte, whom she loved with the most lively affection, formed no inconsiderable part of her’s.

Sometimes she looked back to her father; but in him she only saw an enemy, from whom she must fly: this remembrance heightened her sorrow; yet it was not the recollection of the suffering he had occasioned her, by which she was so much afflicted, as by the sense of his unkindness: she wept bitterly. At length, with that artless piety, which innocence only knows, she addressed the Supreme Being, and resigned herself to his care. Her mind then gradually became peaceful and reassured, and soon after she sunk to repose.

CHAPTER 5

A Surprize — An Adventure — A Mystery.

The night passed without any alarm; Peter had remained upon his post, and heard nothing that prevented his sleeping. La Motte heard him, long before he saw him, most musically snoring; though it must be owned there was more of the bass, than of any other part of the gamut in his performance. He was soon roused by the bravura of La Motte, whose notes sounded discord to his ears, and destroyed the torpor of his tranquillity.

“God bless you, Master, what’s the matter?” cried Peter, waking, “are they come?”

“Yes, for aught you care, they might be come. Did I place you here to sleep, sirrah?”

“Bless you, Master,” returned Peter, “sleep is the only comfort to be had here; I’m sure I would not deny it to a dog in such a place as this.”

La Motte sternly questioned him concerning any noise he might have heard in the night; and Peter full as solemnly protested he had heard none; an assertion which was strictly true, for he had enjoyed the comfort of being asleep the whole time.

La Motte ascended to the trapdoor and listened attentively. No sounds were heard, and, as he ventured to lift it, the full light of the sun burst upon his sight, the morning being now far advanced; he walked softly along the chambers, and looked through a window; no person was to be seen. Encouraged by this apparent security, he ventured down the stairs of the tower, and entered the first apartment. He was proceeding towards the second, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he first peeped through the crevice of the door, which stood half open. He looked, and distinctly saw a person sitting near the window, upon which his arm rested.

The discovery so much shocked him, that for a moment he lost all presence of mind, and was utterly unable to move from the spot. The person, whose back was towards him, arose, and turned his head. La Motte now recovered himself, and quitting the apartment as quickly, and, at the same time, as silently as possible, ascended to the closet. He raised the trapdoor, but before he closed it, heard the footsteps of a person entering

the outer chamber. Bolts, or other fastening to the trap there was none; and his security depended solely upon the exact correspondence of the boards. The outer door of the stone room had no means of defence; and the fastenings of the inner one were on the wrong side to afford security, even till some means of escape could be found.

When he reached this room, he paused, and heard distinctly, persons waling in the closet above. While he was listening, he heard a voice call him by name, and instantly fled to the cells below, expecting every moment to hear the trap lifted, and the footsteps of pursuit; but he was fled beyond the reach of hearing either. Having thrown himself on the ground, at the farthest extremity of the vaults, he lay for some time breathless with agitation. Madame La Motte and Adeline, in the utmost terror, inquired what had happened. It was some time before he could speak; when he did, it was almost unnecessary, for the distant noises, which sounded from above, informed his family of a part of the truth.

The sounds did not seem to approach, but Madame La Motte, unable to command her terror, shrieked aloud: this redoubled the distress of La Motte. “You have already destroyed me,” cried he; “that shriek has informed them where I am.” He traversed the cells with clasped hands and quick steps. Adeline stood pale and still as death, supporting Madame La Motte, whom, with difficulty, she prevented from fainting. “O! Dupras! Dupras! you are already avenged!” said he, in a voice that seemed to burst from his heart: there was a pause of silence. “But why should I deceive myself with a hope of escaping?” he resumed, “why do I wait here for their coming? Let me rather end these torturing pangs by throwing myself into their hands at once.”

As he spoke, he moved towards the door, but the distress of Madame La Motte arrested his steps. “Stay,” said she, “for my sake, stay; do not leave me thus, nor throw yourself voluntarily into destruction!”

“Surely, Sir,” said Adeline, “you are too precipitate; this despair is useless, as it is ill-founded. We hear no person approaching; if the officers had discovered the trapdoor, they would certainly have been here before now.” The words of Adeline stilled the tumult of his mind: the agitation of terror subsided; and reason beamed a feeble ray upon his hopes. He listened attentively, and perceiving that all was silent, advanced with

caution to the stone room; and thence to the foot of the stairs that led to the trapdoor. It was closed: no sound was heard above.

He watched a long time, and the silence continuing, his hopes strengthened, and, at length, he began to believe that the officers had quitted the abbey; the day, however, was spent in anxious watchfulness. He did not dare to unclose the trapdoor; and he frequently thought he heard distant noises. It was evident, however, that the secret of the closet had escaped discovery; and on this circumstance he justly founded his security. The following night was passed, like the day, in trembling hope, and incessant watching.

But the necessities of hunger now threatened them. The provisions, which had been distributed with the nicest economy, were nearly exhausted, and the most deplorable consequences might be expected from their remaining longer in concealment. Thus circumstanced, La Motte deliberated upon the most prudent method of proceeding. There appeared no other alternative, than to send Peter to Auboine, the only town from which he could return within the time prescribed by their necessities. There was game, indeed, in the forest; but Peter could neither handle a gun, or use a fishing rod to any advantage.

It was, therefore, agreed he should go to Auboine for a supply of provisions, and at the same time bring materials for mending the coach wheel, that they might have some ready conveyance from the forest. La Motte forbade Peter to ask any questions concerning the people who had inquired for him, or take any methods for discovering whether they had quitted the country, left his blunders should again betray him. He ordered him to be entirely silent as to these subjects, and to finish his business, and leave the place with all possible dispatch.

A difficulty yet remained to be overcome — Who should first venture abroad into the abbey, to learn, whether it was vacated by the officers of justice? La Motte considered, that if he was again seen, he should be effectually betrayed; which would not be so certain, if one of his family was observed, for they were all unknown to the officers. It was necessary, however, that the person he sent should have courage enough to go through with the inquiry, and wit enough to conduct it with caution. Peter, perhaps, had the first; but was certainly destitute of the last. Annette had neither. La Motte looked at his wife, and asked her, if, for his sake, she dared to

venture. Her heart shrunk from the proposal, yet she was unwilling to refuse, or appear indifferent upon a point so essential to the safety of her husband. Adeline observed in her countenance the agitation of her mind, and, surmounting the fears, which had hitherto kept her silent, she offered herself to go.

“They will be less likely to offend me,” said she, “than a man.” Shame would not suffer La Motte to accept her offer; and Madame, touched by the magnanimity of her conduct, felt a momentary renewal of all her former kindness. Adeline pressed her proposal so warmly, and seemed so much in earnest, that La Motte began to hesitate. “You, Sir,” said she, “once preserved me from the most imminent danger, and your kindness has since protected me. Do not refuse me the satisfaction of deserving your goodness by a grateful return of it. Let me go into the abbey, and if, by so doing, I should preserve you from evil, I shall be sufficiently rewarded for what little danger I may incur, for my pleasure will be at least equal to yours.”

Madame La Motte could scarcely refrain from tears as Adeline spoke; and La Motte, sighing deeply, said, “Well, be it so; go, Adeline, and from this moment consider me as your debtor.” Adeline stayed not to reply, but taking a light, quitted the cells, La Motte following to raise the trapdoor, and cautioning her to look, if possible, into every apartment, before she entered it. “If you should be seen,” said he, “you must account for your appearance so as not to discover me. Your own presence of mind may assist you, I cannot. — God bless you!”

When she was gone, Madame La Motte’s admiration of her conduct began to yield to other emotions. Distrust gradually undermined kindness, and jealousy raised suspicions. “It must be a sentiment more powerful than gratitude,” thought she, “that could teach Adeline to subdue her fears. What, but Love, could influence her to a conduct so generous!” Madame La Motte, when she found it impossible to account for Adeline’s conduct, without alledging some interested motives for it, however her suspicions might agree with the practice of the world, had surely forgotten how much she once admired the purity and disinterestedness of her young friend.

Adeline, mean while, ascended to the chambers: the cheerful beams of the sun played once more upon her sight, and reanimated her spirits; she walked lightly through the apartments, nor stopped till she came to the

stairs of the tower. Here she stood for some time, but no sounds met her ear, save the sighing of the wind among the trees, and, at length, she descended. She passed the apartments below, without seeing any person; and the little furniture that remained, seemed to stand exactly as she had left it. She now ventured to look out from the tower: the only animate objects, that appeared, were the deer, quietly grazing under the shade of the woods. Her favourite little fawn distinguished Adeline, and came bounding towards her with strong marks of joy. She was somewhat alarmed left the animal, being observed, should betray her, and walked swiftly away through the cloisters.

She opened the door that led to the great hall of the abbey, but the passage was so gloomy and dark, that she feared to enter it, and started back. It was necessary, however, that she should examine farther, particularly on the opposite side of the ruin, of which she had hitherto had no view: but her fears returned when she recollected how far it would lead her from her only place of refuge, and how difficult it would be to retreat. She hesitated what to do; but when she recollected her obligations to La Motte, and considered this as, perhaps, her only opportunity of doing him a service, she determined to proceed.

As these thoughts passed rapidly over her mind, she raised her innocent looks to heaven, and breathed a silent prayer. With trembling steps she proceeded over fragments of the ruin, looking anxiously around, and often starting as the breeze rustled among the trees, mistaking it for the whisperings of men. She came to the lawn which fronted the fabric, but no person was to be seen, and her spirits revived. The great door of the hall she now endeavoured to open, but suddenly remembering that it was fastened by La Motte’s orders, she proceeded to the north end of the abbey, and, having surveyed the prospect around, as far as the thick foliage of the trees would permit, without perceiving any person, she turned her steps to the tower from which she had issued.

Adeline was now light of heart, and returned with impatience to inform La Motte of his security. In the cloisters she was again met by her little favourite, and stopped for a moment to caress it. The fawn seemed sensible to the sound of her voice, and discovered new joy; but while she spoke, it suddenly started from her hand, and looking up, she perceived the

door of the passage, leading to the great hall, open, and a man in the habit of a soldier issue forth.

With the swiftness of an arrow she fled along the cloisters, nor once ventured to look back; but a voice called to her to stop, and she heard steps advancing quick in pursuit. Before she could reach the tower, her breath failed her, and she leaned against a pillar of the ruin, pale and exhausted. The man came up, and gazing at her with a strong expression of surprize and curiosity, he assumed a gentle manner, assured her she had nothing to fear, and inquired if she belonged to La Motte: observing that she still looked terrified and remained silent, he repeated his assurances and his question.

“I know that he is concealed within the ruin,” said the stranger; “the occasion of his concealment I also know; but it is of the utmost importance I should see him, and he will then be convinced he has nothing to fear from me.” Adeline trembled so excessively, that it was with difficulty she could support herself — she hesitated, and knew not what to reply. Her manner seemed to confirm the suspicions of the stranger, and her consciousness of this increased her embarrassment: he took advantage of it to press her farther. Adeline, at length, replied, that “La Motte had some time since resided at the abbey.” “And does still, Madam,” said the stranger; “lead me to where he may be found — I must see him, and”— “Never, Sir,” replied Adeline, “and I solemnly assure you, it will be in vain to search for him.”

“That I must try,” resumed he, “since you, Madam, will not assist me. I have already followed him to some chambers above, where I suddenly lost him: thereabouts he must be concealed, and it’s plain, therefore, they afford some secret passage.”

Without waiting Adeline’s reply, he sprung to the door of the tower. She now thought it would betray a consciousness of the truth of his conjecture to follow him, and resolved to remain below. But, upon farther consideration, it occurred to her, that he might steal silently into the closet, and possibly surprize La Motte at the door of the trap. She, therefore, hastened after him, that her voice might prevent the danger she apprehended. He was already in the second chamber, when she overtook him; she immediately began to speak aloud.

This room he searched with the most scrupulous care, but finding no private door, or other outlet, he proceeded to the closet: then it was, that it required all her fortitude to conceal her agitation. He continued the search. “Within these chambers, I know he is concealed,” said he, “though hitherto I have not been able to discover how. It was hither I followed a man, whom I believe to be him, and he could not escape without a passage; I shall not quit the place till I have found it.”

He examined the walls and the boards, but without discovering the division of the floor, which, indeed, so exactly corresponded, that La Motte himself had not perceived it by the eye, but by the trembling of the floor beneath his feet. “Here is some mystery,” said the stranger, “which I cannot comprehend, and perhaps never shall.” He was turning to quit the closet, when, who can paint the distress of Adeline, upon seeing the trapdoor gently raised, and La Motte himself appeared. “Hah!” cried the stranger, advancing eagerly to him. La Motte sprang forward, and they were locked in each other’s arms.

The astonishment of Adeline, for a moment, surpassed even her former distress; but a remembrance darted across her mind, which explained the present scene, and before La Motte could exclaim, “My son!” she knew the stranger as such. Peter, who stood at the foot of the stairs and heard what passed above, flew to acquaint his mistress with the joyful discovery, and, in a few moments, she was folded in the embrace of her son. This spot, so lately the mansion of despair, seemed metamorphosed into the palace of pleasure, and the walls echoed only to the accents of joy and congratulation.

The joy of Peter on this occasion was beyond expression: he acted a perfect pantomime — he capered about, clasped his hands — ran to his young master — shook him by the hand, in spite of the frowns of La Motte; ran every where, without knowing for what, and gave no rational answer to any thing that was said to him.

After their first emotions were subsided, La Motte, as if suddenly recollecting himself, resumed his wonted solemnity: “I am to blame,” said he, thus to give way to joy, when I am still, perhaps, surrounded by danger. Let us secure a retreat while it is yet in our power,” continued he, “in a few hours the King’s officers may search for me again.”

Louis comprehended his father’s words, and immediately relieved his apprehensions by the following relation:

“A letter from Monsieur Nemours, containing an account of your flight from Paris, reached me at Peronne, where I was then upon duty with my regiment. He mentioned, that you was gone towards the south of France, but as he had not since heard from you, he was ignorant of the place of your refuge. It was about this time that I was dispatched into Flanders; and, being unable to obtain farther intelligence of you, I passed some weeks of very painful solicitude. At the conclusion of the campaign, I obtained leave of absence, and immediately set out for Paris, hoping to learn from Nemours, where you had found an asylum.

“Of this, however, he was equally ignorant with myself. He informed me that you had once before written to him from D — , upon your second day’s journey from Paris, under an assumed name, as had been agreed upon; and that you then said the fear of discovery would prevent your hazarding another letter. He, therefore, remained ignorant of your abode, but said, he had no doubt you had continued your journey to the southward. Upon this slender information I quitted Paris in search of you, and proceeded immediately to V — , where my inquiries, concerning your farther progress, were successful as far as M — . There they told me you had staid some time, on account of the illness of a young lady; a circumstance which perplexed me much, as I could not imagine what young lady would accompany you. I proceeded, however, to L — ; but there all traces of you seemed to be lost. As I sat musing at the window of the inn, I observed some scribbling on the glass, and the curiosity of idleness prompted me to read it. I thought I knew the characters, and the lines I read confirmed my conjecture, for I remembered to have heard you often repeat them.

“Here I renewed my inquiries concerning your route, and at length I made the people of the inn recollect you, and traced you as far as Auboine. There I again lost you, till upon my return from a fruitless inquiry in the neighbourhood, the landlord of the little inn where I lodged, told me he believed he had heard news of you, and immediately recounted what had happened at a blacksmith’s shop a few hours before.

“His description of Peter was so exact, that I had not a doubt it was you who inhabited the abbey; and, as I knew your necessity for concealment,

Peter’s denial did not shake my confidence. The next morning, with the assistance of my landlord, I found my way hither, and, having searched every visible part of the fabric, I began to credit Peter’s assertion; your appearance, however, destroyed this fear, by proving that the place was still inhabited, for you disappeared so instantaneously, that I was not certain it was you whom I had seen. I continued seeking you till near the close of day, and till then scarcely quitted the chambers whence you had disappeared. I called on you repeatedly, believing that my voice might convince you of your mistake. At length, I retired to pass the night at a cottage near the border of the forest.

“I came early this morning to renew my inquiries, and hoped that, believing yourself safe, you would emerge from concealment. But how was I disappointed to find the abbey as silent and solitary as I had left it the preceding evening! I was returning once more from the great hall, when the voice of this young lady caught my ear, and effected the discovery I had so anxiously sought.”

This little narrative entirely dissipated the late apprehensions of La Motte; but he now dreaded that the inquiries of his son, and his own obvious desire of concealment, might excite a curiosity amongst the people of Auboine, and lead to a discovery of his true circumstances. However, for the present he determined to dismiss all painful thoughts, and endeavour to enjoy the comfort which the presence of his son had brought him. The furniture was removed to a more habitable part of the abbey, and the cells were again abandoned to their own glooms.

The arrival of her son seemed to have animated Madame La Motte with new life, and all her afflictions were, for the present, absorbed in joy. She often gazed silently on him with a mother’s fondness, and her partiality heightened every improvement which time had wrought in his person and manner. He was now in his twenty-third year; his person was manly and his air military; his manners were unaffected and graceful, rather than dignified; and though his features were irregular, they composed a countenance, which, having seen it once, you would seek again.

She made eager inquiries after the friends she had left at Paris, and learned, that within the few months of her absence, some had died and others quitted the place. La Motte also learned, that a very strenuous search for him had been prosecuted at Paris; and, though this intelligence

was only what he had before expected, it shocked him so much, that he now declared it would be expedient to remove to a distant country. Louis did not scruple to say, that he thought he would be as safe at the abbey as at any other place; and repeated what Nemours had said, that the King's officers had been unable to trace any part of his route from Paris.

"Besides," resumed Louis, "this abbey is protected by a supernatural power, and none of the country people dare approach it."

"Please you, my young master," said Peter who was waiting in the room, we were frightened enough the first night we came here, and I, myself, God forgive me! thought the place was inhabited by devils, but they were only owls, and such like, after all."

"Your opinion was not asked," said La Motte, "learn to be silent."

Peter was abashed. When he had quitted the room, La Motte asked his son with seeming carelessness, what were the reports circulated by the country people? "O! Sir," replied Louis, "I cannot recollect half of them. I remember, however, they said, that, many years ago, a person (but nobody had ever seen him, so we may judge how far the report ought to be credited) a person was privately brought to this abbey, and confined in some part of it, and that there were strong reasons to believe he came unfairly to his end."

La Motte sighed "They farther said," continued Louis, "that the spectre of the deceased had ever since watched nightly among the ruins: and to make the story more wonderful, for the marvellous is the delight of the vulgar, they added, that there was a certain part of the ruin, from whence no person that had dared to explore it, had ever returned. Thus people, who have few objects of real interest to engage their thoughts, conjure up for themselves imaginary ones."

La Motte sat musing. "And what were the reasons," said he, at length awaking from his reverie, "they pretended to assign, for believing the person confined here was murdered?"

"They did not use a term so positive as that," replied Louis.

"True," said La Motte, recollecting himself, "they only said he came unfairly to his end."

"That is a nice distinction," said Adeline.

"Why I could not well comprehend what these reasons were," resumed Louis, "the people indeed say, that the person, who was brought here, was

never known to depart, but I do not find it certain that he ever arrived; that there was strange privacy and mystery observed, while he was here, and that the abbey has never since been inhabited by its owner. There seems, however, to be nothing in all this that deserves to be remembered." La Motte raised his head, as if to reply, when the entrance of Madame turned the discourse upon a new subject, and it was not resumed that day.

Peter was now dispatched for provisions, while La Motte and Louis retired to consider how far it was safe for them to continue at the abbey. La Motte, notwithstanding the assurances lately given him, could not but think that Peter's blunders and his son's inquiries might lead to a discovery of his residence. He revolved this in his mind for some time, but at length a thought struck him, that the latter of these circumstances might considerably contribute to his security. "If you," said he to Louis, "return to the inn at Auboine, from whence you were directed here, and without seeming to intend giving intelligence, do give the landlord an account of your having found the abbey uninhabited, and then add, that you had discovered the residence of the person you sought in some distant town, it would suppress any reports that may at present exist, and prevent the belief of any in future. And if, after all this, you can trust yourself for presence of mind and command of countenance, so far as to describe some dreadful apparition, I think these circumstances, together with the distance of the Abbey, and the intricacies of the forest, could entitle me to consider this place as my castle."

Louis agreed to all that his father had proposed, and, on the following day executed his commission with such success, that the tranquillity of the abbey may be then said to have been entirely restored.

Thus ended this adventure, the only one that had occurred to disturb the family, during their residence in the forest. Adeline, removed from the apprehension of those evils, with which the late situation of La Motte had threatened her, and from the depression which her interest in his occasioned her, now experienced, a more than usual complacency of mind. She thought too that she observed in Madame La Motte a renewal of her former kindness, and this circumstance awakened all her gratitude, and imparted to her a pleasure as lively as it was innocent. The satisfaction with which the presence of her son inspired Madame La Motte, Adeline

mistook for kindness to herself, and she exerted her whole attention in an endeavour to become worthy of it.

But the joy which his unexpected arrival had given to La Motte quickly began to evaporate, and the gloom of despondency again settled on his countenance. He returned frequently to his haunt in the forest — the same mysterious sadness tinctured his manner and revived the anxiety of Madame La Motte, who was resolved to acquaint her son with this subject of distress, and solicit his assistance to penetrate its source.

Her jealousy of Adeline, however, she could not communicate, though it again tormented her, and taught her to misconstrue with wonderful ingenuity every look and word of La Motte, and often to mistake the artless expressions of Adeline’s gratitude and regard for those of warmer tenderness. Adeline had formerly accustomed herself to long walks in the forest, and the design Madame had formed of watching her steps, had been frustrated by the late circumstances, and was now entirely overcome by her sense of its difficulty and danger. To employ Peter in the affair, would be to acquaint him with her fears, and to follow her herself, would most probably betray her scheme, by making Adeline aware of her jealousy. Being thus restrained by pride and delicacy, she was obliged to endure the pangs of uncertainty concerning the greatest part of her suspicions.

To Louis, however, she related the mysterious change in his father’s temper. He listened to her account with very earnest attention, and the surprize and concern impressed upon his countenance spoke how much his heart was interested. He was, however, involved in equal perplexity with herself upon this subject, and readily undertook to observe the motions of La Motte, believing his interference likely to be of equal service both to his father and his mother. He, saw in some degree, the suspicions of his mother, but as he thought she wished to disguise her feelings, he suffered her to believe that she succeeded.

He now inquired concerning Adeline, and listened to her little history, of which his mother gave a brief relation, with great apparent interest. So much pity did he express for her condition, and so much indignation at the unnatural conduct of her father, that the apprehensions which Madame La Motte began to form, of his having discovered her jealousy, yielded to those of a different kind. She perceived that the beauty of Adeline had already fascinated his imagination, and she feared that her amiable

manners would soon impress his heart. Had her first fondness for Adeline continued, she would still have looked with displeasure upon their attachment, as an obstacle to the promotion and the fortune she hoped to see one day enjoyed by her son. On these she rested all her future hopes of prosperity, and regarded the matrimonial alliance which he might form as the only means of extricating his family from their present difficulties. She, therefore, touched lightly upon Adeline's merit, joined coolly with Louis in compassionating her misfortunes, and with her censure of the father's conduct, mixed an implied suspicion of that of Adeline's. The means she employed to repress the passions of her son, had a contrary effect. The indifference, which she repressed towards Adeline, increased his pity for her destitute condition, and the tenderness, with which she affected to judge the father, heightened his honest indignation at his character.

As he quitted Madame La Motte, he saw his father cross the lawn and enter the deep shade of the forest on the left. He judged this to be a good opportunity of commencing his plan, and, quitting the abbey, slowly followed at a distance. La Motte continued to walk straight forward, and seemed so deeply wrapt in thought, that he looked neither to the right or left, and scarcely lifted his head from the ground. Louis had followed him near half a mile, when he saw him suddenly strike into an avenue of the forest, which took a different direction from the way he had hitherto gone. He quickened his steps that he might not lose sight of him, but, having reached the avenue, found the trees so thickly interwoven, that La Motte was already hid from his view.

He continued, however, to pursue the way before him: it conducted him through the most gloomy part of the forest he had yet seen, till at length it terminated in an obscure recess, overarched with high trees, whose interwoven branches secluded the direct rays of the sun, and admitted only a sort of solemn twilight. Louis looked around in search of La Motte, but he was no where to be seen. While he stood surveying the place, and considering what farther should be done, he observed, through the gloom, an object at some distance, but the deep shadow that fell around prevented his distinguishing what it was.

In advancing, he perceived the ruins of a small building, which, from the traces that remained, appeared to have been a tomb. As he gazed upon

it, “Here,” said he, “are probably deposited the ashes of some ancient monk, once an inhabitant of the abbey; perhaps, of the founder, who, after having spent a life of abstinence and prayer, sought in heaven the reward of his forbearance upon earth. Peace be to his soul! but did he think a life of mere negative virtue deserved an eternal reward? Mistaken man! reason, had you trusted to its dictates, would have informed you, that the active virtues, the adherence to the golden rule, ‘Do as you would be done unto,’ could alone deserve the favour of a Deity, whose glory is benevolence.”

He remained with his eyes fixed upon the spot, and presently saw a figure arise under the arch of the sepulchre. It started, as if on perceiving him, and immediately disappeared. Louis, though unused to fear, felt at that moment an uneasy sensation, but almost it immediately struck him that this was La Motte himself. He advanced to the ruin and called him. No answer was returned, and he repeated the call, but all was yet still as the grave. He then went up to the archway and endeavoured to examine the place where he had disappeared, but the shadowy obscurity rendered the attempt fruitless. He observed, however, a little to the right, an entrance to the ruin, and advanced some steps down a kind dark of passage, when, recollecting that this place might be the haunt of banditti, his danger alarmed him, and he retreated with precipitation.

He walked toward the abbey by the way he came, and finding no person followed him, and believing himself again in safety, his former surmise returned, and he thought it was La Motte he had seen. He mused upon this strange possibility, and endeavoured to assign a reason for so mysterious a conduct, but in vain. Notwithstanding this, his belief of it strengthened, and he entered the abbey under as full a conviction as the circumstances would admit of, that it was his father who had appeared in the sepulchre. On entering what was now used as a parlour, he was much surprised to find him quietly seated there with Madame La Motte and Adeline, and conversing as if he had been returned some time.

He took the first opportunity of acquainting his mother with his late adventure, and of inquiring how long La Motte had been returned before him, when, learning that it was near half an hour, his surprise increased, and he knew not what to conclude.

Meanwhile, a perception of the growing partiality of Louis co-operated with the canker of suspicion, to destroy in Madame La Motte that affection which pity and esteem had formerly excited for Adeline. Her unkindness was now too obvious to escape the notice of her to whom it was directed, and, being noticed, it occasioned an anguish which Adeline found it very difficult to endure. With the warmth and candour of youth, she sought an explanation of this change of behaviour, and an opportunity of exculpating herself from any intention of provoking it. But this Madame La Motte artfully evaded, while at the same time she threw out hints, that involved Adeline in deeper perplexity, and served to make her present affliction more intolerable.

“I have lost that affection,” she would say, “which was my all. It was my only comfort — yet I have lost it — and this without even knowing my offence. But I am thankful I have not merited unkindness, and, though she has abandoned me, I shall always love her.”

Thus distressed, she would frequently leave the parlour, and, retiring to her chamber, would yield to a despondency, which she had never known till now.

One morning, being unable to sleep, she arose at a very early hour. The faint light of day now trembled through the clouds, and, gradually spreading from the horizon, announced the rising sun. Every feature of the landscape was slowly unveiled, moist with the dews of night, and brightening with the dawn, till at length the sun appeared and shed the full flood of day. The beauty of the hour invited her to walk, and she went forth into the forest to taste the sweets of morning. The carols of new-waked birds saluted her as she passed, and the fresh gale came scented with the breath of flowers, whose tints glowed more vivid through the dew drops that hung on then leaves.

She wandered on without noticing the distance, and, following the windings of the river, came to a dewy glade, whose woods, sweeping down to the very edge of the water, formed a scene so sweetly romantic, that she seated herself at the foot of a tree, to contemplate its beauty. These images insensibly soothed her sorrow, and inspired her with that soft and pleasing melancholy, so dear to the feeling mind. For some time she sat lost in a reverie, while the flowers that grew on the banks beside her seemed to smile in new life, and drew from her a comparison with her own condition.

She mused and sighed, and then, in a voice, whose charming melody was modulated by the tenderness of her heart, she sung the following words:

SONNET, To the Lilly.

Soft silken flow’r! that in the dewy vale Unfolds thy modest beauties to the morn, And breath’st thy fragrance on her wand’ring gale, O’er earth’s green hills and shadowy vallies born;

When day has closed his dazzling eye, And dying gales sink soft away; When eve steals down the western sky, And mountains, woods, and vales decay;

Thy tender cups, that graceful swell, Droop sad beneath her chilly dews; Thy odours seek their silken cell, And twilight veils thy languid hues.

But soon, fair flow’r! the morn shall rise, And rear again thy pensive head; Again unveil thy snowy dyes, Again thy velvet foliage spread.

Sweet child of Spring! like thee, in sorrow’s shade, Full oft I mourn in tears, and droop forlorn: And O! like thine, may light my glooms pervade, And Sorrow fly before Joy’s living morn!

A distant echo lengthened out her tones, and she sat listening to the soft response, till repeating the last stanza of the Sonnet, she was answered by a voice almost as tender, and less distant. She looked round in surprise, and saw a young man in a hunter’s dress, leaning against a tree, and gazing on her with that deep attention, which marks an enraptured mind.

A thousand apprehensions shot athwart her busy thought; and she now first remembered her distance from the abbey. She rose in haste to be gone, when the stranger respectfully advanced; but, observing her timid looks and retiring steps, he paused. She pursued her way towards the abbey; and, though many reasons made her anxious to know whether she was followed, delicacy forbade her to look back. When she reached the abbey, finding the family was not yet assembled to breakfast, she retired to her chamber, where her whole thoughts were employed in conjectures concerning the stranger; believing that she was interested on this point, no farther than as it concerned the safety of La Motte, she indulged, without scruple, the remembrance of that dignified air and manner which so much distinguished the youth she had seen. After revolving the circumstance more deeply, she believed it impossible that a person of his appearance should be engaged in a stratagem to betray a fellow creature; and though she was destitute of a single circumstance that might assist her surmises of

who he was, or what was his business in an unfrequented forest, she rejected, unconsciously, every suspicion injurious to his character. Upon farther deliberation, therefore, she resolved not to mention this little circumstance to La Motte; well knowing, that though his danger might be imaginary, his apprehensions would be real, and would renew all the sufferings and perplexity, from which he was but just released. She resolved, however, to refrain, for some time, walking in the forest.

When she came down to breakfast, she observed Madame La Motte to be more than usually reserved. La Motte entered the room soon after her, and made some trifling observations on the weather; and, having endeavoured to support an effort at cheerfulness, sunk into his usual melancholy. Adeline watched the countenance of Madame with anxiety; and when there appeared in it a gleam of kindness, it was as sunshine to her soul: but she very seldom suffered Adeline thus to flatter herself. Her conversation was restrained, and often pointed at something more than could be understood. The entrance of Louis was a very seasonable relief to Adeline, who almost feared to trust her voice with a sentence, lest its trembling accents should betray her uneasiness.

“This charming morning drew you early from your chamber,” said Louis, addressing Adeline. “You had, no doubt, a pleasant companion too,” said Madame La Motte, “a solitary walk is seldom agreeable.”

“I was alone, Madam,” replied Adeline.

“Indeed! your own thoughts must be highly pleasing then.”

“Alas!” returned Adeline, a tear, spite of her efforts, starting to her eye, “there are now few subjects of pleasure left for them.”

“That is very surprising,” pursued Madame La Motte.

“Is it, indeed, surprising, Madam, for those who have lost their last friend to be unhappy?”

Madame La Motte’s conscience acknowledged the rebuke and she blushed. “Well,” resumed she, after a short pause, “that is not your situation, Adeline;” looking earnestly at La Motte. Adeline, whose innocence protected her from suspicion, did not regard this circumstance; but, smiling through her tears, said, she rejoiced to hear her say so. During this conversation, La Motte had remained absorbed in his own thoughts; and Louis, unable to guess at what it pointed, looked alternately at his mother and Adeline for an explanation. The latter he regarded with an

expression so full of tender compassion, that it revealed at once to Madame La Motte the sentiments of his soul; and she immediately replied to the last words of Adeline with a very serious air; “A friend is only estimable when our conduct deserves one; the friendship that survives the merit of its object, is a disgrace, instead of an honour, to both parties.”

The manner and emphasis with which she delivered these words, again alarmed Adeline, who mildly said, “she hoped she should never deserve such censure.” Madame was silent; but Adeline was so much shocked by what had already passed, that tears sprung from her eyes, and she hid her face with her handkerchief.

Louis now rose with some emotion; and La Motte, roused from his reverie, inquired what was the matter; but, before he could receive an answer, he seemed to have forgot that he had asked the question. “Adeline may give you her own account,” said Madam La Motte. “I have not deserved this,” said Adeline, rising, “but since my presence is displeasing, I will retire.”

She moved toward the door, when Louis, who was pacing the room in apparent agitation, gently took her hand, saying, “Here is some unhappy mistake,” and would have led her to the seat; but her spirits were too much depressed to endure longer restraint; and, withdrawing her hand, “Suffer me to go;” said she, “if there is any mistake, I am unable to explain it.” Saying this, she quitted the room. Louis followed her with his eyes to the door; when, turning to his mother, “Surely, Madam,” said he, “you are to blame: my life on it, she deserves your warmest tenderness.”

“You are very eloquent in her cause, Sir,” said Madame, “may I presume to ask what has interested you thus in her favour?”

“Her own amiable manners,” rejoined Louis, “which no one can observe without esteeming them.”

“But you may presume too much on your own observations; it is possible these amiable manners may deceive you.”

“Your pardon, Madam; I may, without presumption, affirm they cannot deceive me.”

“You have, no doubt, good reasons for this assertion, and I perceive, by your admiration of this artless innocent, she has succeeded in her design of entrapping your heart.”

“Without designing it, she has won my admiration, which would not have been the case, had she been capable of the conduct you mention.”

Madame La Motte was going to reply, but was prevented by her husband, who, again roused from his reverie, inquired into the cause of dispute; “Away with this ridiculous behaviour,” said he, in a voice of displeasure. “Adeline has omitted some household duty I suppose, and an offence so heinous deserves severe punishment, no doubt; but let me be no more disturbed with your petty quarrels; if you must be tyrannical, Madam, indulge your humour in private.”

Saying this, he abruptly quitted the room, and Louis immediately following, Madame was left to her own unpleasant reflections. Her ill-humour proceeded from the usual cause. She had heard of Adeline’s walk; and La Motte having gone forth into the forest at an early hour, her imagination, heated by the broodings of jealousy suggested that they had appointed a meeting. This was confirmed to her by the entrance of Adeline, quickly followed by La Motte; and her perceptions thus jaundiced by passion, neither the presence of her son, nor her usual attention to good manners, had been able to restrain her emotions. The behaviour of Adeline, in the late scene, she considered as a refined piece of art; and the indifference of La Motte asaffected. So true is it, that

— “Trifles, light as air, Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong As proof of Holy Writ.”

And so ingenious was she “to twist the true cause the “wrong way.”

Adeline had retired to her chamber to weep. When her first agitations were subsided, she took an ample view of her conduct; and perceiving nothing of which she could accuse herself, she became more satisfied; deriving her best comfort from the integrity of her intentions. In the moment of accusation, innocence may sometimes be oppressed with the punishment due only to guilt; but reflection dissolves the illusion of terror, and brings to the aching bosom the consolations of virtue.

When La Motte quitted the room, he had gone into the forest, which Louis observing, he followed and joined him, with an intention of touching upon the subject of his melancholy. “It is a fine morning, Sir,” said Louis, “if you will give me leave, I will walk with you.” La Motte, though, dissatisfied, did not object; and after they had proceeded some way, he

changed the course of his walk, striking into a path, contrary to that which Louis had observed him take on the foregoing day.

Louis remarked, that the avenue they had quitted was “more shady, and, therefore, more pleasant.” La Motte not seeming to notice this remark, “It leads to a singular spot,” continued he, “which I discovered yesterday.” La Motte raised his head; Louis proceeded to describe the tomb, and the adventure he had met with: during this relation, La Motte regarded him with attention, while his own countenance suffered various changes. When he had concluded, “You were very daring,” said La Motte, “to examine that place, particularly when you ventured down the passage: I would advise you to be more cautious how you penetrate the depths of this forest. I, myself, have not ventured beyond a certain boundary; and am, therefore, uninformed what inhabitants it may harbour. Your account has alarmed me,” continued he, “for if banditti are in the neighbourhood, I am not safe from their their depredations: ‘tis true, I have but little to lose, except my life.”

“And the lives of your family,” rejoined Louis,— “Of course,” said La Motte.

“It would be well to have more certainty upon that head,” rejoined Louis, I am considering how we may obtain it.”

“‘Tis useless to consider that,” said La Motte, “the inquiry itself brings danger with it; your life would, perhaps, be paid for the indulgence of your curiosity; our only chance of safety is by endeavouring to remain undiscovered. Let us move towards the abbey.”

Louis knew not what to think, but said no more upon the subject. La Motte soon after relapsed into a fit of musing; and his son now took occasion to lament that depression of spirits, which he had lately observed in him. “Rather lament the cause of it,” said La Motte with a sigh; “That I do, most sincerely, whatever it may be. May I venture to inquire, Sir, what is this cause?”

“Are, then, my misfortunes so little known to you,” rejoined La Motte, as to make that question necessary? Am I not driven from my home, from my friends, and almost from my country? And shall it be asked why I am afflicted?” Louis felt the justice of this reproof, and was a moment filent. “That you are afflicted, Sir, does not excite my surprise;” resumed he, “it would, indeed, be strange, were you not.”

“What then does excite your surprise?”

“The air of cheerfulness you wore when I first came hither.”

“You lately lamented that I was afflicted,” said La Motte, “and now seem not very well pleased that I once was cheerful. What is the meaning of this?”

“You much mistake me,” said his son, nothing could give me so much satisfaction as to see that cheerfulness renewed: the same cause of sorrow existed at that time, yet you was then cheerful.”

“That I was then cheerful,” said La Motte, “you might, without flattery, have attributed to yourself; your presence revived me, and I was relieved at the same time from a load of apprehensions.”

“Why, then, as the same cause exists, are you not still cheerful?”

“And why do you not recollect that it is your father you thus speak to?”

“I do, Sir, and nothing but anxiety for my father, could have urged me thus far: it is with inexpressible concern I perceive you have some secret cause of uneasiness; reveal it, Sir, to those who claim a share in all your affliction, and suffer them, by participation, to soften its severity.” Louis looked up, and observed the countenance of his father, pale as death: his lips trembled while he spoke. “Your penetration, however, you may rely upon it, has, in the present instance, deceived you. I have no subject of distress, but what you are already acquainted with, and I desire this conversation may never be renewed.”

“If it is your desire, of course, I obey,” said Louis; “but, pardon me, Sir, if”— “I will not pardon you, Sir,” interrupted La Motte, “let the discourse end here.” Saying this, he quickened his steps, and Louis, not daring to pursue, walked quietly on till he reached the abbey.

Adeline passed the greatest part of the day alone in her chamber, where, having examined her conduct, she endeavoured to fortify her heart against the unmerited displeasure of Madame La Motte. This was a task more difficult than that of self acquittance. She loved her, and had relied on her friendship, which, notwithstanding the conduct of Madame, still appeared valuable to her. It was true, she had not deserved to lose it, but Madame was so averse to explanation, that there was little probability of recovering it, however ill-founded might be the cause of her dislike. At length, she reasoned, or rather, perhaps, persuaded herself into tolerable composure;

for to resign a real good with contentment, is less an effort of reason than of temper.

For many hours she busied herself upon a piece of work, which she had undertaken for Madame La Motte; and this she did, without the least intention of conciliating her favour, but because she felt there was something in thus repaying unkindness, which was suitable to her own temper, her sentiments, and her pride. Self-love may be the center, round which the human affections move, for whatever motive conduces to self-gratification may be resolved into self-love; yet some of these affections are in their nature so refined — that though we cannot deny their origin, they almost deserve the name of virtue. Of this species was that of Adeline.

In this employment and in reading Adeline passed as much of the day as possible. From books, indeed, she had constantly derived her chief information and amusement: those belonging to La Motte were few, but well chosen; and Adeline could find pleasure in reading them more than once. When her mind was discomposed by the behaviour of Madame La Motte, or by a retrospection of her early misfortunes, a book was the opiate that lulled it to repose. La Motte had several of the best English poets, a language which Adeline had learned in the convent; their beauties, therefore, she was capable of tasting, and they often inspired her with enthusiastic delight.

At the decline of day, she quitted her chamber to enjoy the sweet evening hour, but strayed no farther than an avenue near the abbey, which fronted the west. She read a little, but, finding it impossible any longer to abstract her attention from the scene around, she closed the book, and yielded to the sweet complacent melancholy which the hour inspired. The air was still, the sun, sinking below the distant hill, spread a purple glow over the landscape, and touched the forest glades with softer light. A dewy freshness was diffused upon the air. As the sun descended, the dusk came silently on, and the scene assumed a solemn grandeur. As she mused, she recollected and repeated the following stanzas:

NIGHT.

Now Ev’ning fades! her pensive step retires, And Night leads on the dews, and shadowy hours; Her awful pomp of planetary fires, And all her train of visionary pow’rs.

These paint with fleeting shapes the dream of sleep, These swell the waking soul with pleasing dread; These through the glooms in forms terrific sweep, And rouse the thrilling horrors of the dead!

Queen of the solemn thought — mysterious Night! Whose step is darkness, and whose voice is fear! Thy shades I welcome with severe delight, And hail thy hollow gales, that sigh so drear!

When, wrapt in clouds, and riding in the blast, Thou roll'st the storm along the sounding shore, I love to watch the whelming billows cast On rocks below, and listen to the roar.

Thy milder terrors, Night, I frequent woo, Thy silent lightnings, and thy meteor's glare, Thy northern fires, bright with ensanguine hue, That light in heaven's high vault the fervid air.

But chief I love thee, when thy lucid car Sheds through the fleecy clouds a trembling gleam, And shews the misty mountain from afar, The nearer forest, and the valley's stream:

And nameless objects in the vale below, That floating dimly to the musing eye, Assume, at Fancy's touch, fantastic shew, And raise her sweet romantic visions high.

Then let me stand amidst thy glooms profound On some wild woody steep, and hear the breeze That swells in mournful melody around, And faintly dies upon the distant trees.

What melancholy charm steals o'er the mind! What hallow'd tears the rising rapture greet! While many a viewless spirit in the wind, Sighs to the lonely hour in accents sweet!

Ah! who the dear illusions pleas'd would yield, Which Fancy wakes from silence and from shades, For all the sober forms of Truth reveal'd, For all the scenes that Day's bright eye pervades!

On her return to the abbey she was joined by Louis, who, after some conversation, said, "I am much grieved by the scene to which I was witness this morning, and have longed for an opportunity of telling you so. My mother's behaviour is too mysterious to be accounted for, but it is not difficult to perceive she labours under some mistake. What I have to request is, that whenever I can be of service to you, you will command me."

Adeline thanked him for this friendly offer, which she felt more sensibly than she chose to express. "I am unconscious," said she, "of any offence

that may have deserved Madame La Motte's displeasure, and am, therefore, totally unable to account for it. I have repeatedly sought an explanation, which she has as anxiously avoided; it is better, therefore, to press the subject no farther. At the same time, Sir, suffer me to assure you, I have a just sense of your goodness." Louis sighed, and was silent. At length, "I wish you would permit me," resumed he, "to speak with my mother upon this subject. I am sure I could convince her of her error."

"By no means," replied Adeline, Madame La Motte's displeasure has given me inexpressible concern; but to compel her to an explanation, would only increase this displeasure, instead of removing it. Let me beg of you not to attempt it."

"I submit to your judgement," said Louis, "but, for once, it is with reluctance. I should esteem myself most happy, if I could be of service to you." He spoke this with an accent so tender, that Adeline, for the first time, perceived the sentiments of his heart. A mind more fraught with vanity than her's would have taught her long ago to regard the attentions of Louis, as the result of something more than well-bred gallantry. She did not appear to notice his last words, but remained silent, and involuntarily quickened her pace. Louis said no more, but seemed sunk in thought; and this silence remained uninterrupted, till they entered the abbey.

CHAPTER 6

“Hence, horrible shadow,!
Unreal mockery, hence!”
Macbeth.

Near a month elapsed without any remarkable occurrence: the melancholy of La Motte suffered little abatement; and the behaviour of Madame to Adeline, though somewhat softened, was still far from kind. Louis, by numberless little attentions, testified his growing affection for Adeline, who continued to treat them as passing civilities.

It happened, one stormy night, as they were preparing for rest, that they were alarmed by a trampling of horses near the abbey. The sound of several voices succeeded, and a loud knocking at the great gate of the hall soon after firmed the alarm. La Motte had little doubt that the officers of justice had at length discovered his retreat, and the perturbation of fear almost confounded his senses; he, however, ordered the lights to be extinguished, and a profound silence to be observed, unwilling to neglect even the slightest possibility of security. There was a chance, he thought, that the persons might suppose the place uninhabited, and believe they had mistaken the object of their search. His orders were scarcely obeyed, when the knocking was renewed, and with increased violence. La Motte now repaired to a small grated window in the portal of the gate, that he might observe the number and appearance of the strangers.

The darkness of the night baffled his purpose; he could only perceive a groupe of men on horseback; but, listening attentively, he distinguished a part of their discourse. Several of the men contended, that they had mistaken the place; till a person, who, from his authoritative voice, appeared to be their leader, affirmed, that the lights had issued from this spot, and he was positive there were persons within. Having said this, he again knocked loudly at the gate, and was answered only by hollow echoes. La Motte’s heart trembled at the sound, and he was unable to move.

After waiting some time, the strangers seemed as if in consultation, but their discourse was conducted in such a low tone of voice, that La Motte was unable to distinguish its purport. They withdrew from the gate, as if to

depart, but he presently thought he heard them amongst the trees on the other side of the fabric, and soon became convinced they had not left the abbey. A few minutes held La Motte in a state of torturing suspence; he quitted the grate, where Louis now stationed himself, for that part of the edifice which overlooked the spot where he supposed them to be waiting.

The storm was now loud, and the hollow blasts, which rushed among the trees, prevented his distinguishing any other sound. Once, in the pauses of the wind, he thought he heard distinct voices; but he was not long left to conjecture, for the renewed knocking at the gate again appalled him; and regardless of the terrors of Madame La Motte and Adeline, he ran to try his last chance of concealment, by means of the trapdoor.

Soon after, the violence of the assailants seeming to increase with every gust of the tempest, the gate, which was old and decayed, burst from its hinges, and admitted them to the hall. At the moment of their entrance, a scream from Madame La Motte, who stood at the door of an adjoining apartment, confirmed the suspicions of the principal stranger, who continued to advance, as fast as the darkness would permit him.

Adeline had fainted, and Madame La Motte was calling loudly for assistance, when Peter entered with lights, and discovered the hall filled with men, and his young mistress senseless upon the floor. A chevalier now advanced, and soliciting pardon of Madame for the rudeness of his conduct, was attempting an apology, when perceiving Adeline, he hastened to raise her from the ground, but Louis, who now returned, caught her in his arms, and desired the stranger not to interfere.

The person, to whom he spoke this, wore the star of one of the first orders in France, and had an air of dignity, which declared him to be of superior rank. He appeared to be about forty, but, perhaps, the spirit and fire of his countenance made the impression of time upon his features less perceptible. His softened aspect and insinuating manners, while, regardless of himself, he seemed attentive only to the condition of Adeline, gradually dissipated the apprehensions of Madame La Motte, and subdued the sudden resentment of Louis. Upon Adeline, who was yet insensible, he gazed with an eager admiration, which seemed to absorb all the faculties of his mind. She was, indeed, an object not to be contemplated with indifference.

Her beauty, touched with the languid delicacy of illness, gained from sentiment what it lost in bloom. The negligence of her dress, loosened for the purpose of freer respiration, discovered those glowing charms, which her auburn tresses, that fell in profusion over her bosom, shaded, but could not conceal.

There now entered another stranger, a young Chevalier, who, having spoken hastily to the elder, joined the general groupe that surrounded Adeline. He was of a person, in which elegance was happily blended with strength, and had a countenance animated, but not haughty; noble, yet expressive of peculiar sweetness. What rendered it at present more interesting, was the compassion he seemed to feel for Adeline, who now revived and saw him, the first object that met her eyes, bending over her in silent anxiety.

On perceiving him, a blush of quick surprize passed over her cheek, for she knew him to be the stranger she had seen in the forest. Her countenance instantly changed to the paleness of terror, when she observed the room crowded with people. Louis now supported her into another apartment, where the two Chevaliers, who followed her, again apologized for the alarm they had occasioned. The elder, turning to Madame La Motte, said, “You are, no doubt, Madam, ignorant that I am the proprietor of this abbey.” She started: “Be not alarmed, Madam, you are safe and welcome. This ruinous spot has been long abandoned by me, and if it has afforded you a shelter I am happy.” Madame La Motte expressed her gratitude for this condescension, and Louis declared his sense of the politeness of the Marquis de Montalt, for that was the name of the noble stranger.

“My chief residence,” said the Marquis, “is in a distant province, but I have a chateau near the borders of the forest, and in returning from an excursion, I have been benighted and lost my way. A light, which gleamed through the trees, attracted me hither, and, such was the darkness without, that I did not know it proceeded from the abbey till I came to the door.” The noble deportment of the strangers, the splendour of their apparel, and, above all, this speech dissipated every remaining doubt of Madame’s, and she was giving orders for refreshments to be set before them, when La Motte, who had listened, and was now convinced he had nothing to fear, entered the apartment.

He advanced towards the Marquis with a complacent air, but, as he would have spoke, the words of welcome faultered on his lips, his limbs trembled, and a ghastly paleness overspread his countenance. The Marquis was little less agitated, and, in the first moment of surprize, put his hand upon his sword, but, recollecting himself, he withdrew it, and endeavoured to obtain a command of features. A pause of agonizing silence ensued. La Motte made some motion towards the door, but his agitated frame refused to support him, and he sunk into a chair, silent and exhausted. The horror of his countenance, together with his whole behaviour, excited the utmost surprize in Madame, whose eyes inquired of the Marquis more than he thought proper to answer: his looks increased, instead of explaining the mystery, and expressed a mixture of emotions, which she could not analyse. Meanwhile, she endeavoured to soothe and revive her husband, but he repressed her efforts, and, averting his face, covered it with his hands.

The Marquis, seeming to recover his presence of mind, stepped to the door of the hall where his people were assembled, when La Motte, starting from his seat, with a frantic air, called on him to return. The Marquis looked back and stopped, but still hesitating whether to proceed; the supplications of Adeline, who was now returned, added to those of La Motte, determined him, and he sat down. “I request of you, my Lord,” said La Motte, “that we may converse for a few moments by ourselves.”

“The request is bold, and the indulgence, perhaps, dangerous,” said the Marquis: “it is more also than I will grant. You can have nothing to say, with which your family are not acquainted — speak your purpose and be brief.” La Motte’s complection varied to every sentence of this speech. “Impossible, my Lord,” said he; “my lips shall close for ever, ere they pronounce before another human being the words reserved for you alone. I entreat — I supplicate of you a few moments private discourse.” As he pronounced these words, tears swelled into his eyes, and the Marquis, softened by his distress, consented, though with evident emotion and reluctance, to his request.

La Motte took a light and led the Marquis to a small room in a remote part of the edifice, where they remained near an hour. Madame, alarmed by the length of their absence, went in quest of them: as she drew near, a curiosity, in such circumstances, perhaps not unjustifiable, prompted her

to listen. La Motte just then exclaimed— “The phrenzy of despair!” — some words followed, delivered in a low tone, which she could not understand— “I have suffered more than I can express,” continued he; “the same image has pursued me in my midnight dream, and in my daily wanderings. There is no punishment, snort of death, which I would not have endured, to regain the state of mind, with which I entered this forest. I again address myself to your compassion.”

A loud gust of wind, that burst along the passage where Madame La Motte stood, overpowered his voice and that of the Marquis, who spoke in reply: but she soon after distinguished these words,— “Tomorrow, my Lord, if you return to these ruins, I will lead you to the spot.”

“That is scarcely necessary, and may be dangerous,” said the Marquis. From “you, my Lord, I can excuse these doubts,” resumed La Motte; “but I will swear whatever you shall propose. Yes,” continued he, “whatever may be the consequence, I will swear to submit to your decree!” The rising tempest again drowned the sound of their voices, and Madame La Motte vainly endeavoured to hear those words, upon which, probably, hung the explanation of this mysterious conduct. They now moved towards the door, and she retreated with precipitation to the apartment where she had left Adeline, with Louis and the young Chevalier.

Hither the Marquis and La Motte soon followed, the first haughty and cool, the latter somewhat more composed than before, though the impression of horror was not yet faded from his countenance. The Marquis passed on to the hall where his retinue awaited: the storm was not yet subsided, but he seemed impatient to be gone, and ordered his people to be in readiness. La Motte observed a sullen silence, frequently pacing the room with hasty steps, and sometimes lost in reverie. Meanwhile, the Marquis, seating himself by Adeline, directed to her his whole attention, except when sudden fits of absence came over is mind and suspended him in silence: at these times the young Chevalier addressed Adeline, who, with diffidence and some agitation, shrunk from the observance of both.

The Marquis had been near two hours at the abbey, and the tempest still continuing, Madame La Motte offered him a bed. A look from her husband made her tremble for the consequence. Her offer was, however, politely declined, the Marquis being evidently as impatient to be gone, as his tenant appeared distressed by his presence. He often returned to the hall,

and from the gates raised a look of impatience to the clouds. Nothing was to be seen through the darkness of night — nothing heard but the howlings of the storm.

The morning dawned before he departed. As he was preparing to leave the abbey, La Motte again drew him aside, and held him for a few moments in close conversation. His impassioned gestures, which Madame La Motte observed from a remote part of the room, added to her curiosity a degree of wild apprehension, derived from the obscurity of the subject. Her endeavour to distinguish the corresponding words was baffled by the low voice in which they were uttered.

The Marquis and his retinue at length departed, and La Motte, having himself fastened the gates, silently and dejectedly withdrew to his chamber. The moment they were alone, Madame seized the opportunity of entreating her husband to explain the scene she had witnessed. “Ask me no questions,” said La Motte sternly, “for I will answer none. I have already forbade your speaking to me on this subject.”

“What subject?” said his wife. La Motte seemed to recollect himself— “No matter — I was mistaken — I thought you had repeated these questions before.”

“Ah!” said Madame La Motte, “it is then as I suspected: your former melancholy, and the distress of this night, have the same cause.”

“And why should you either suspect or inquire? Am I always to be persecuted with conjectures?”

“Pardon me, I meant not to persecute you; but my anxiety for your welfare will not suffer me to rest under this dreadful uncertainty. Let me claim the privilege of a wife, and share the affliction which oppresses you. Deny me not.” — La Motte interrupted her, “Whatever may be the cause of the emotions which you have witnessed, I swear that I will not now reveal it. A time may come, when I shall no longer judge concealment necessary; till then be silent, and desist from importunity; above all, forbear to remark to any one what you may have seen uncommon in me. Bury your surmise in your own bosom, as you would avoid my curse and my destruction.” The determined air with which he spoke this, while his countenance was overspread with a livid hue, made his wife shudder; and she forbore all reply.

Madame La Motte retired to bed, but not to rest. She ruminated on the past occurrence; and her surprize and curiosity, concerning the words and behaviour of her husband, were but more strongly stimulated by reflection. One truth, however, appeared; she could not doubt, but the mysterious conduct of La Motte, which had for so many months oppressed her with anxiety, and the late scene with the Marquis originated from the same cause. This belief, which seemed to prove how unjustly she had suspected Adeline, brought with it a pang of self-accusation. She looked forward to the morrow, which would lead the Marquis again to the abbey, with impatience. Wearied nature at length resumed her rights, and yielded a short oblivion of care.

At a late hour, the next day, the family assembled to breakfast. Each individual of the party appeared silent and abstracted, but very different was the aspect of their features, and still more the complection of their thoughts. La Motte seemed agitated by impatient fear, yet the sullenness of despair overspread his countenance. A certain wildness in his eye at times expressed the sudden start of horror, and again his features would sink into the gloom of despondency.

Madame La Motte seemed harrassed with anxiety; she watched every turn of her husband’s countenance, and impatiently waited the arrival of the Marquis. Louis was composed and thoughtful. Adeline seemed to feel her full share of uneasiness. She had observed the behaviour of La Motte the preceding night with much surprize, and the happy confidence she had hitherto reposed in him, was shaken. She feared also, lest the exigency of his circumstances should precipitate him again into the world, and that he would be either unable or unwilling to afford her a shelter beneath his roof.

During breakfast, La Motte frequently rose to the window, from whence he cast many an anxious look. His wife understood too well the cause of his impatience, and endeavoured to repress her own. In these intervals, Louis attempted by whispers to obtain some information from his father, but La Motte always returned to the table, where the presence of Adeline prevented farther discourse.

After breakfast, as he walked upon the lawn, Louis would have joined him, but La Motte peremptorily declared he intended to be alone, and soon

after, the Marquis having not yet arrived, proceeded to a greater distance from the abbey.

Adeline retired into their usual working room with Madame La Motte, who affected an air of cheerfulness, and even of kindness. Feeling the necessity of offering some reason for the striking agitation of La Motte, and of preventing the surprize, which the unexpected appearance of the Marquis would occasion Adeline, if she was left to connect it with his behaviour of the preceding night, she mentioned that the Marquis and La Motte had long been known to each other, and that this unexpected meeting, after an absence of many years, and under circumstances so altered and humiliating, on the part of the latter, had occasioned him much painful emotion. This had been heightened by a consciousness that the Marquis had formerly misinterpreted some circumstances in his conduct towards him, which had caused a suspension of their intimacy.

This account did not bring conviction to the mind of Adeline, for it seemed inadequate to the degree of emotion, the Marquis and La Motte had mutually betrayed. Her surprize was excited, and her curiosity awakened by the words, which were meant to delude them both. But she forbore to express her thoughts.

Madame proceeding with her plan, said, “The Marquis was now expected, and she hoped whatever differences remained, would be perfectly adjusted.” Adeline blushed, and endeavouring to reply, her lips faltered. Conscious of this agitation, and of the observance of Madame La Motte, her confusion increased, and her endeavours to suppress served only to heighten it. Still she tried to renew the discourse, and still she found it impossible to collect her thoughts. Shocked lest Madame should apprehend the sentiment, which had till this moment been concealed almost from herself, her colour fled, she fixed her eyes on the ground, and, for some time, found it difficult to respire. Madame La Motte inquired if she was ill, when Adeline, glad of the excuse, withdrew to the indulgence of her own thoughts, which were now wholly engrossed by the expectation of seeing again the young Chevalier, who had accompanied the Marquis.

As she looked from her room, she saw the Marquis on horseback, with several attendants, advancing at a distance, and she hastened to apprize Madame La Motte of his approach. In a short time, he arrived at the gates, and Madame and Louis went out to receive him, La Motte being not yet

returned. He entered the hall, followed by the young Chevalier, and accosting Madame with a sort of stately politeness, inquired for La Motte, whom Louis now went to seek.

The Marquis remained for a few minutes silent, and then asked of Madame La Motte “how her fair daughter did?” Madame understood it was Adeline he meant, and having answered his inquiry, and slightly said that she was not related to them, Adeline, upon some indication of the Marquis’s wish, was sent for. She entered the room with a modest blush and a timid air, which seemed to engage all his attention. His compliments she received with a sweet grace, but, when the younger Chevalier approached, the warmth of his manner rendered her’s involuntarily more reserved, and she scarcely dared to raise her eyes from the ground, lest they should encounter his.

La Motte now entered and apologized for his absence, which the Marquis noticed only by a slight inclination of his head, expressing at the same time by his looks, both distrust and pride. They immediately quitted the abbey together, and the Marquis beckoned his attendants to follow at a distance. La Motte forbade his son to accompany him, but Louis observed he took the way into the thickest part of the forest. He was lost in a chaos of conjecture concerning this affair, but curiosity and anxiety for his father induced him to follow at some distance.

In the mean time, the young stranger, whom the Marquis addressed by the name of Theodore, remained at the abbey with Madame La Motte and Adeline. The former, with all her address, could scarcely conceal her agitation during this interval. She moved involuntarily to the door, whenever she heard a footstep, and several times she went to the hall door, in order to look into the forest, but as often returned, checked by disappointment. No person appeared. Theodore seemed to address as much of his attention to Adeline, as politeness would allow him to withdraw from Madame La Motte. His manners so gentle, yet dignified, insensibly subdued her timidity, and banished her reserve. Her conversation no longer suffered a painful constraint, but gradually disclosed the beauties of her mind, and seemed to produce a mutual confidence. A similarity of sentiment soon appeared, and Theodore, by the impatient pleasure which animated his countenance, seemed frequently to anticipate the thought of Adeline.

To them the absence of the Marquis was short, though long to Madame La Motte, whose countenance brightened, when she heard the trampling of horses at the gate.

The Marquis appeared but for a moment, and passed on with La Motte to a private room, where they remained for some time in conference, immediately after which he departed. Theodore took leave of Adeline, who, as well as La Motte and Madame, attended them to the gates, with an expression of tender regret, and, often as he went, looked back upon the abbey, till the intervening branches intirely excluded it from his view.

The transient glow of pleasure diffused over the cheek of Adeline disappeared with the young stranger, and she sighed as she turned into the hall. The image of Thedoore pursued her to her chamber; she recollected with exactness every particular of his late conversation — his sentiments so congenial with her own — his manners so engaging — his countenance so animated — so ingenuous and so noble, in which manly dignity was blended with the sweetness of benevolence — these, and every other grace, she recollected, and a soft melancholy stole upon her heart. “I shall see him no more,” said she. A sigh, that followed, told her more of her heart than she wished to know. She blushed, and sighed again, and then suddenly recollecting herself, she endeavoured to divert her thoughts to a different subject. La Motte’s connection with the Marquis for some time engaged her attention, but, unable to develope the mystery that attended it, she sought a refuge from her own reflections in the more pleasing ones to be derived from books.

During this time, Louis, shocked and surprized at the extreme distress which his father had manifested upon the first appearance of the Marquis, addressed him upon the subject. He had no doubt that the Marquis was intimately concerned in the event which made it necessary for La Motte to leave Paris, and he spoke his thoughts without disguise, lamenting at the same time the unlucky chance, which had brought him to seek refuge in a place, of all others, the least capable of affording it — the estate of his enemy. La Motte did not contradict this opinion of his son’s, and joined in lamenting the evil fate which had conducted him thither.

The term of Louis’s absence from his regiment, was now nearly expired, and he took occasion to express his sorrow, that he must soon be obliged to leave his father in circumstances so dangerous as the present. “I should

leave you, Sir, with less pain," continued he, "was I sure I knew the full extent of your misfortunes. At present I am left to conjecture evils, which, perhaps, do not exist. Relieve me, Sir, from this state of painful uncertainty, and suffer me to prove myself worthy of your confidence."

"I have already answered you on this subject," said La Motte, "and forbade you to renew it. I am now obliged to tell you, I care not how soon you depart, if I am to be subjected to these inquiries." La Motte walked abruptly away, and left his son to doubt and concern.

The arrival of the Marquis had dissipated the jealous fears of Madame La Motte, and she awoke to a sense of her cruelty towards Adeline. When she considered her orphan state — the uniform affection which had appeared in her behaviour — the mildness and patience with which she had borne her injurious treatment, she was shocked, and took an early opportunity of renewing her former kindness. But she could not explain this seeming inconsistency of conduct, without betraying her late suspicions, which she now blushed to remember, nor could she apologise for her former behaviour, without giving this explanation.

She contented herself, therefore, with expressing in her manner the regard which was thus revived. Adeline was at first surprized, but she felt too much pleasure at the change to be scrupulous in inquiring its cause.

But, notwithstanding the satisfaction which Adeline received from the revival of Madame La Motte's kindness, her thoughts frequently recurred to the peculiar and forlorn circumstances of her condition. She could not help feeling less confidence than she had formerly done in the friendship of Madame La Motte, whose character now appeared less amiable than her imagination had represented it, and seemed strongly tinctured with caprice. Her thoughts often dwelt upon the strange introduction of the Marquis at the abbey, and on the mutual emotions and apparent dislike of La Motte and himself; and, under these circumstances, it equally excited her surprize that La Motte should chuse, and that the Marquis should permit him, to remain in his territory.

Her mind returned the oftener, perhaps, to this subject, because it was connected with Theodore; but it returned unconscious of the idea which attracted it. She attributed the interest she felt in the affair to her anxiety for the welfare of La Motte, and for her own future destination, which was now so deeply involved in his. Sometimes, indeed, she caught herself busy

in conjecture as to the degree of relationship in which Theodore stood to the Marquis, but she immediately checked her thoughts, and severely blamed herself for having suffered them to stray to an object, which she perceived was too dangerous to her peace.

CHAPTER 7

“Present ills
Are less than horrible imaginings.”

A Few days after the occurrence related in the preceding chapter, as Adeline was alone in her chamber, she was roused from a reverie by a trampling of horses near the gate, and, on looking from the casement, she saw the Marquis de Montalt enter the abbey. This circumstance surprized her, and an emotion, whose cause she did not trouble herself to inquire for, made her instantly retreat from the window. The same cause, however, led her thither again as hastily, but the object of her search did not appear, and she was in no haste to retire.

As she stood musing and disappointed, the Marquis came out with La Motte, and, immediately looking up, saw Adeline and bowed. She returned his compliment respectfully, and withdrew from the window, vexed at having been seen there. They went into the forest, but the Marquis’s attendants did not, as before, follow them thither. When they returned, which was not till after a considerable time, the Marquis immediately mounted his horse and rode away.

For the remainder of the day, La Motte appeared gloomy and silent, and was frequently lost in thought. Adeline observed him with particular attention and concern; she perceived that he was always more melancholy after an interview with the Marquis, and was now surprized to hear that the latter had appointed to dine the next day at the abbey.

When La Motte mentioned this, he added some high eulogiums on the character of the Marquis, and particularly praised his generosity and nobleness of soul. At this instant, Adeline recollected the anecdotes she had formerly heard concerning the abbey, and they threw a shadow over the brightness of that excellence, which La Motte now celebrated. The account, however, did not appear to deserve much credit; a part of it, as far as a negative will admit of demonstration, having been already proved false; for it had been reported, that the abbey was haunted, and no

supernatural appearance had ever been observed by the present inhabitants.

Adeline, however, ventured to inquire, whether it was the present Marquis of whom those injurious reports had been raised? La Motte answered her with a smile of ridicule; “Stories of ghosts and hobgoblins have always been admired and cherished by the vulgar,” said he. “I am inclined to rely upon my own experience, at least as much as upon the accounts of these peasants. If you have seen any thing to corroborate these accounts, pray inform me of it, that I may establish my faith.”

“You mistake me, Sir,” said she, “it was not concerning supernatural agency that I would inquire: I alluded to a different part of the report, which hinted, that some person had been confined here, by order of the Marquis, who was said to have died unfairly. This was alledged as a reason for the Marquis’s having abandoned the abbey.”

“All the mere coinage of idleness,” said La Motte; “a romantic tale to excite wonder: to see the Marquis is alone sufficient to refute this; and if we credit half the number of those stories that spring from the same source, we prove ourselves little superior to the simpletons who invent them. Your good sense, Adeline, I think, will teach you the merit of disbelief.”

Adeline blushed and was silent; but La Motte’s defence of the Marquis appeared much warmer and more diffuse than was consistent with his own disposition, or required by the occasion. His former conversation with Louis occurred to her, and she was the more surprised at what passed at present.

She looked forward to the morrow with a mixture of pain and pleasure; the expectation of seeing again the young Chevalier occupying her thoughts, and agitating them with a various emotion: now she feared his presence, and now she doubted whether he would come. At length she observed this, and blushed to find how much he engaged her attention. The morrow arrived — the Marquis came — but he came alone; and the sunshine of Adeline’s mind was clouded, though she was able to wear her usual air of cheerfulness. The Marquis was polite, affable, and attentive: to manners the most easy and elegant, was added the last refinement of polished life. His conversation was lively, amusing, sometimes even witty; and discovered great knowledge of the world; or, what is often mistaken

for it, an acquaintance with the higher circles, and with the topics of the day.

Here La Motte was also qualified to converse with him, and they entered into a discussion of the characters and manners of the age with great spirit, and some humour. Madame La Motte had not seen her husband so cheerful since they left Paris, and sometimes she could almost fancy she was there. Adeline listened, till the cheerfulness, which she had at first only assumed, became real. The address of the Marquis was so insinuating and affable, that her reserve insensibly gave way before it, and her natural vivacity resumed its long lost empire.

At parting, the Marquis told La Motte he rejoiced at having found so agreeable a neighbour. La Motte bowed. “I shall sometimes visit you,” continued he, “and I lament that I cannot at present invite Madame La Motte, and her fair friend to my chateau, but it is undergoing some repairs, which make it but an uncomfortable residence.”

The vivacity of La Motte disappeared. with his guest, and he soon’ relapsed into fits of silence and abstraction. “The Marquis is a very agreeable man,” said Madame La Motte. “Very agreeable,” replied he. “And seems to have an excellent heart,” she resumed. “An excellent one,” said La Motte.

“You seem discomposed, my dear; what has disturbed you?”

“Not in the least — I was only thinking, that with such agreeable talents, and such an excellent heart, it was a pity the Marquis should”— “What? my dear,” said Madame with impatience: “That the Marquis should — should suffer this abbey to fall into ruins,” replied La Motte.

“Is that all!” said Madame with disappointment.— “That is all, upon my honour,” said La Motte, and left the room.

Adeline’s spirits, no longer supported by the animated conversation of the Marquis, sunk into languor, and, when he departed, she walked pensively into the forest. She followed a little romantic path that wound along the margin of the stream, and was overhung with deep shades. The tranquillity of the scene, which autumn now touched with her sweetest tints, softened her mind to a tender kind of melancholy, and she suffered a tear, which, she knew not wherefore, had stolen into her eye, to tremble there unchecked. She came to a little lonely recess, formed by high trees; the wind sighed mournfully among the branches, and as it waved their

lofty heads scattered their leaves to the ground. She seated herself on a bank beneath, and indulged the melancholy reflections that pressed on her mind.

“O! could I dive into futurity and behold the events which await me!” said she; “I should, perhaps, by constant contemplation, be enabled to meet them with fortitude. An orphan in this wide world — thrown upon the friendship of strangers for comfort, and upon their bounty for the very means of existence, what but evil have I to expect! Alas, my father! how could you thus abandon your child — how leave her to the storms of life — to sink, perhaps, beneath them? Alas, I have no friend!”

She was interrupted by a rustling among the fallen leaves; she turned her head, and perceiving the Marquis’s young friend, arose to depart. “Pardon this intrusion,” said he, “your voice attracted me hither, and your words detained me: my offence, however, brings with it its own punishment, having learned your sorrows — how can I help feeling them myself? would that my sympathy, or my suffering, could rescue you from them!” — He hesitated— “Would that I could deserve the title of your friend, and be thought worthy of it by yourself!”

The confusion of Adeline’s thoughts could scarcely permit her to reply; she trembled and gently withdrew her hand, which he had taken, while he spoke. “You have, perhaps, heard, Sir, more than is true: I am, indeed, not happy, but a moment of dejection has made me unjust, and I am less unfortunate than I have represented. When I said I had no friend, I was ungrateful to the kindness of Monsieur and Madame La Motte, who have been more than friends — have been as parents to me.”

“If so, I honour them,” cried Theodore with warmth; “and if I did not feel it to be presumption, I would ask why you are unhappy? — But” — He paused. Adeline, raising her eyes, saw him gazing upon her with intense and eager anxiety, and her looks were again fixed upon the ground. “I have pained you,” said Theodore, “by an improper request. Can you forgive me, and also when I add, that it was an interest in your welfare, which urged my inquiry?”

“Forgiveness, Sir, it is unnecessary to ask. I am certainly obliged by the compassion you express. But the evening is cold, if you please, we will walk towards the abbey.” As they moved on, Theodore was for some time silent. At length, “It was but lately that I solicited your pardon,” said he,

“and I shall now, perhaps, have need of it again; but you will do me the justice to believe, that I have a strong, and, indeed, a pressing reason to inquire how nearly you are related to Monsieur La Motte.”

“We are not at all related,” said Adeline; “but the service he has done me I can never repay, and I hope my gratitude will teach me never to forget it.”

“Indeed!” said Theodore, surprized: “and may I ask how long you have known him?”

“Rather, Sir, let me ask, why these questions should be necessary?”

“You are just,” said he, with an air of self-condemnation, “my conduct has deserved this reproof; I should have been more explicit.” He looked as if his mind was labouring with something which he was unwilling to express. “But you know not how delicately I am circumstanced,” continued he, “yet I will aver, that my questions are prompted by the tenderest interest in your happiness — and even by my fears for your safety.” Adeline started. “I fear you are deceived,” said he, “I fear there’s danger near you.”

Adeline stopped, and, looking earnestly at him, begged he would explain himself. She suspected that some mischief threatened La Motte; and Theodore continuing silent, she repeated her request. “If La Motte is concerned in this danger,” said she, “let me entreat you to acquaint him with it immediately. He has but too many misfortunes to apprehend.”

“Excellent Adeline!” cried Theodore, “that heart must be adamant that would injure you. How shall I hint what I fear is too true, and how forbear to warn you of your danger without” — He was interrupted by a step among the trees, and presently after saw La Motte cross into the path they were in. Adeline felt confused at being thus seen with the Chevalier, and was hastening to join La Motte, but Theodore detained her, and entreated a moment’s attention. “There is now no time to explain myself,” said he; “yet what I would say is of the utmost consequence to yourself.”

“Promise, therefore, to meet me in some part of the forest at about this time tomorrow evening, you will then, I hope, be convinced, that my conduct is directed, neither by common circumstances, nor common regard.” Adeline shuddered at the idea of making an appointment; she hesitated, and at length entreated Theodore not to delay till tomorrow an explanation, which appeared to be so important, but to follow La Motte

and inform him of his danger immediately. “It is not with La Motte I would speak,” replied Theodore; “I know of no danger that threatens him — but he approaches, be quick, lovely Adeline, and promise to meet me.”

“I do promise,” said Adeline, with a faltering voice; “I will come to the spot where you found me this evening, an hour earlier tomorrow.” Saying this, she withdrew her trembling hand, which Theodore had pressed to his lips in token of acknowledgement, and he immediately disappeared.

La Motte now approached Adeline, who, fearing that he had seen Theodore, was in some confusion. “Whither is Louis gone so fast?” said La Motte. She rejoiced to find his mistake, and suffered him to remain in it. They walked pensively towards the abbey, where Adeline, too much occupied by her own thoughts to bear company, retired to her chamber. She ruminated upon the words of Theodore, and, the more she considered them, the more she was perplexed. Sometimes she blamed herself for having made an appointment, doubting whether he had not solicited it for the purpose of pleading a passion; and now delicacy checked this thought, and made her vexed that she had presumed upon having inspired one. She recollected the serious earnestness of his voice and manner, when he entreated her to meet him; and as they convinced her of the importance of the subject, she shuddered at a danger, which she could not comprehend, looking forward to the morrow with anxious impatience.

Sometimes too a remembrance of the tender interest he had expressed for her welfare, and of his correspondent look and air, would steal across her memory, awakening a pleasing emotion and a latent hope that she was not indifferent to him. From reflections like these she was roused by a summons to supper: the repast was a melancholy one, it being the last evening of Louis’s stay at the abbey. Adeline, who esteemed him, regretted his departure, while his eyes were often bent on her with a look, which seemed to express that he was about to leave the object of his affection. She endeavoured by her cheerfulness to reanimate the whole party, and especially Madame La Motte, who frequently shed tears.

“We shall soon meet again,” said Adeline, “I trust, in happier circumstances.” La Motte sighed. The countenance of Louis brightened at her words, “Do you wish it?” said he, with peculiar emphasis. “Most certainly I do,” she replied. “Can you doubt my regard for my best friends?”

“I cannot doubt any thing that is good of you,” said he.

“You forget you have left Paris,” said La Motte to his son, while a faint smile crossed his face, “such a compliment would there be in character with the place — in these solitary woods it is quite outré.”

“The language of admiration is not always that of compliment, Sir,” said Louis. Adeline, willing to change the discourse, asked, to what part of France he was going. He replied, that his regiment was now at Peronne, and he should go immediately thither. After some mention of indifferent subjects, the family withdrew for the night to their several chambers.

The approaching departure of her son occupied the thoughts of Madame La Motte, and she appeared at breakfast with eyes swoln with weeping. The pale countenance of Louis seemed to indicate that he had rested no better than his mother. When breakfast was over, Adeline retired for a while, that she might not interrupt, by her presence, their last conversation. As she walked on the lawn before the abbey she returned in thought to the occurrence of yesterday evening, and her impatience for the appointed interview increased. She was soon joined by Louis. “It was unkind of you to leave us,” said he, “in the last moments of my stay. Could I hope that you would sometimes remember me, when I am far away, I should depart with less sorrow.” He then expressed his concern at leaving her, and though he had hitherto armed himself with resolution to forbear a direct avowal of an attachment, which must be fruitless, his heart now yielded to the force of passion, and he told what Adeline every moment feared to hear.

“This declaration,” said Adeline, endeavouring to overcome the agitation it excited, “gives me inexpressible concern.”

“O, say not so!” interrupted Louis, “but give me some slender hope to support me in the miseries of absence. Say that you do not hate me — Say”— “That I do most readily say,” replied Adeline, in a tremulous voice; “if it will give you pleasure to be assured of my esteem and friendship — receive this assurance: — as the son of my best benefactors, you are entitled to”— “Name not benefits,” said Louis, “your merits outrun them all: and suffer me to hope for a sentiment less cool than that of friendship, as well as to believe that I do not owe your approbation of me to the actions of others. I have long borne my passion in silence, because I foresaw the difficulties that would attend it, nay, I have even

dared to endeavour to overcome it: I have dared to believe it possible, forgive the supposition, that I could forget you — and"— "You distress me," interrupted Adeline; "this is a conversation which I ought not to hear. I am above disguise, and, therefore, assure you, that, though your virtues will always command my esteem, you have nothing to hope from my love. Were it even otherwise, our circumstances would effectually decide for us. If you are really my friend, you will rejoice that I am spared this struggle between affection and prudence. Let me hope also, that time will teach you to reduce love within the limits of friendship."

"Never!" cried Louis vehemently: "Were this possible, my passion would be unworthy of its object." While he spoke, Adeline's favourite fawn came bounding towards her. This circumstance affected Louis even to tears. "This little animal," said he, after a short pause, "first conducted me to you: it was witness to that happy moment when I first saw you, surrounded by attractions too powerful for my heart; that moment is now fresh in my memory, and the creature comes even to witness this sad one of my departure." Grief interrupted his utterance.

When he recovered his voice, he said, "Adeline! when you look upon your little favourite and caress it, remember the unhappy Louis, who will then be far — far from you. Do not deny me the poor consolation of believing this!"

"I shall not require such a monitor to remind me of you," said Adeline with a smile; "your excellent parents and your own merits have sufficient claim upon my remembrance. Could I see your natural good sense resume its influence over passion, my satisfaction would equal my esteem for you."

"Do not hope it," said Louis, "nor will I wish it — for passion here is virtue." As he spoke, he saw La Motte turn round an angle of the abbey. "The moments are precious," said he, "I am interrupted. O! Adeline, farewell! and say, that you will sometimes think of me."

"Farewell," said Adeline, who was affected by his distress— "farewell! and peace attend you. I will think of you with the affection of a sister." — He sighed deeply, and pressed her hand; when La Motte, winding round another projection of the ruin, again appeared: Adeline left them together, and withdrew to her chamber, oppressed by the scene. Louis's passion and her esteem were too sincere not to inspire her with a strong degree of pity

for his unhappy attachment. She remained in her chamber till he had quitted the abbey, unwilling to subject him or herself to the pain of a formal parting.

As evening and the hour of appointment drew nigh, Adeline's impatience increased; yet, when the time arrived, her resolution failed, and she faltered from her purpose. There was something of indelicacy and dissimulation in an appointed interview, on her part, that shocked her. She recollected the tenderness of Theodore's manner, and several little circumstances which seemed to indicate that his heart was not unconcerned in the event. Again she was inclined to doubt, whether he had not obtained her consent to this meeting upon some groundless suspicion; and she almost determined not to go: yet it was possible Theodore's assertion might be sincere, and her danger real; the chance of this made her delicate scruples appear ridiculous; she wondered that she had for a moment suffered them to weigh against so serious an interest, and, blaming herself for the delay they had occasioned, hastened to the place of appointment.

The little path, which led to this spot, was silent and solitary, and when she reached the recess, Theodore had not arrived. A transient pride made her unwilling he should find that she was more punctual to his appointment than himself; and she turned from the recess into a track, which wound among the trees to the right. Having walked some way, without seeing any person, or hearing a footstep, she returned; but he was not come, and she again left the place. A second time she came back, and Theodore was still absent. Recollecting the time at which she had quitted the abbey, she grew uneasy, and calculated that the hour appointed was now much exceeded. She was offended and perplexed; but she seated herself on the turf, and was resolved to wait the event. After remaining here till the fall of twilight in fruitless expectation, her pride became more alarmed; she feared that he had discovered something of the partiality he had inspired, and believing that he now treated her with purposed neglect, she quitted the place with disgust and self-accusation.

When these emotions subsided, and reason resumed its influence, she blushed for what she termed this childish effervescence of self-love. She recollected, as if for the first time, these words of Theodore: "I fear you are deceived, and that some danger is near you." Her judgement now

acquitted the offender, and she saw only the friend. The import of these words, whose truth she no longer doubted, again alarmed her. Why did he trouble himself to come from the chateau, on purpose to hint her danger, if he did not wish to preserve her? And if he wished to preserve her, what but necessity could have withheld him from the appointment?

These reflections decided her at once. She resolved to repair on the following day at the same hour to the recess, whither the interest, which she believed him to take in her fate, would no doubt conduct him in the hope of meeting her. That some evil hovered over her she could not disbelieve, but what it might be, she was unable to guess. Monsieur and Madame La Motte were her friends, and who else, removed, as she now thought herself, beyond the reach of her father, could injure her? But why did Theodore say she was deceived? She found it impossible to extricate herself from the labyrinth of conjecture, but endeavoured to command her anxiety till the following evening. In the mean time she engaged herself in efforts to amuse Madame La Motte, who required some relief, after the departure of her son.

Thus oppressed by her own cares and interested by those of Madame La Motte, Adeline retired to rest. She soon lost her recollection, but it was only to fall into harrassed slumbers, such as but too often haunt the couch of the unhappy. At length her perturbed fancy suggested the following dream.

She thought she was in a large old chamber belonging to the abbey, more ancient and desolate, though in part furnished, than any she had yet seen. It was strongly barricadoed, yet no person appeared. While she stood musing and surveying the apartment, she heard a low voice call her, and, looking towards the place whence it came, she perceived by the dim light of a lamp a figure stretched on a bed that lay on the floor. The voice called again, and, approaching the bed, she distinctly saw the features of a man who appeared to be dying. A ghastly paleness overspread his countenance, yet there was an expression of mildness and dignity in it, which strongly interested her.

While she looked on him, his features changed and seemed convulsed in the agonies of death. The spectacle shocked her, and she started back, but he suddenly stretched forth his hand, and seizing her’s, grasped it with violence: she struggled in terror to disengage herself, and again looking on

his face, saw a man, who appeared to be about thirty, with the same features, but in full health, and of a most benign countenance. He smiled tenderly upon her and moved his lips, as if to speak, when the floor of the chamber suddenly opened and he sunk from her view. The effort she made to save herself from following awoke her. — This dream had so strongly impressed her fancy, that it was some time before she could overcome the terror it occasioned, or even be perfectly convinced she was in her own apartment. At length, however, she composed herself to sleep; again she fell into a dream.

She thought she was bewildered in some winding passages of the abbey; that it was almost dark, and that she wandered about a considerable time, without being able to find a door. Suddenly she heard a bell toll from above, and soon after a confusion of distant voices. She redoubled her efforts to extricate herself. Presently all was still, and, at length, wearied with the search, she sat down on a step that crossed the passage. She had not been long here, when she saw a light glimmer at a distance on the walls, but a turn in the passage, which was very long, prevented her seeing from what it proceeded. It continued to glimmer faintly for some time and then grew stronger, when she saw a man enter the passage, habited in a long black cloak, like those usually worn by attendants at funerals, and bearing a torch. He called to her to follow him, and led her through a long passage to the foot of a staircase. Here she feared to proceed, and was running back, when the man suddenly turned to pursue her, and with the terror, which this occasioned, she awoke.

Shocked by these visions, and more so by their seeming connection, which now struck her, she endeavoured to continue awake, left their terrific images should again haunt her mind: after some time, however, her harrassed spirits again sunk into slumber, though not to repose.

She now thought herself in a large old gallery, and saw at one end of it a chamber door standing a little open and a light within: she went towards it, and perceived the man she had before seen, standing at the door and beckoning her towards him. With the inconsistency so common in dreams she no longer endeavoured to avoid him, but advancing, followed him into a suite of very ancient apartments, hung with black, and lighted up as if for a funeral. Still he led her on, till she found herself in the same chamber she remembered to have seen in her former dream: a coffin, covered with a

pall, stood at the farther end of the room; some lights, and several persons surrounded it, who appeared to be in great distress.

Suddenly, she thought these persons were all gone, and that she was left alone; that she went up to the coffin, and while she gazed upon it, she heard a voice speak, as if from within, but saw nobody. The man she had before seen, soon after stood by the coffin, and, lifting the pall, she saw beneath it a dead person, whom she thought to be the dying Chevalier she had seen in her former dream: his features were sunk in death, but they were yet serene. While she looked at him, a stream of blood gushed from his side, and descending to the floor, the whole chamber was overflowed; at the same time some words were uttered in the voice she heard before; but the horror of the scene so entirely overcame her, that she started and awoke.

When she had recovered her recollection, she raised herself in the bed, to be convinced it was a dream she had witnessed, and the agitation of her spirits was so great, that she feared to be alone, and almost determined to call Annette. The features of the deceased person, and the chamber where he lay, were strongly impressed upon her memory, and she still thought she heard the voice and saw the countenance which her dream represented. The longer she considered these dreams, the more she was surprized: they were so very terrible, returned so often, and seemed to be so connected with each other, that she could scarcely think them accidental; yet, why they should be supernatural, she could not tell. She slept no more that night.

CHAPTER 8

— “When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
These are their reasons; they are natural;
For I believe they are portentous things.”
Julius Cæsar.

When Adeline appeared at breakfast, her harrassed and languid countenance struck Madame La Motte, who inquired if she was ill; Adeline, forcing a smile upon her features, said she had not rested well, for that she had had very disturbed dreams: she was about to describe them, but a strong and involuntary impulse prevented her. At the same time, La Motte ridiculed her concern so unmercifully, that she was almost ashamed to have mentioned it, and tried to overcome the remembrance of its cause.

After breakfast, she endeavoured to employ her thoughts by conversing with Madame La Motte; but they were really engaged by the incidents of the last two days; the circumstance of her dreams, and her conjectures concerning the information to be communicated to her by Theodore. They had thus sat for some time, when a sound of voices arose from the great gate of the abbey; and, on going to the casement, Adeline saw the Marquis and his attendants on the lawn below. The portal of the abbey concealed several people from her view, and among these it was possible might be Theodore, who had not yet appeared: she continued to look for him with great anxiety, till the Marquis entered the hall with La Motte, and some other persons, soon after which Madame went to receive him, and Adeline retired to her own apartment.

A message from La Motte, however, soon called her to join the party, where she vainly hoped to find Theodore. The Marquis arose as she approached, and, having paid her some general compliments, the conversation took a very lively turn. Adeline, finding it impossible to counterfeit cheerfulness, while her heart was sinking with anxiety and disappointment, took little part in it: Theodore was not once named. She would have asked concerning him, had it been possible to inquire with

propriety; but she was obliged to content herself with hoping, first, that he would arrive before dinner, and then before the departure of the Marquis.

Thus the day passed in expectation and disappointment. The evening was now approaching, and she was condemned to remain in the presence of the Marquis, apparently listening to a conversation, which, in truth, she scarcely heard, while the opportunity was, perhaps, escaping that would decide her fate. She was suddenly relieved from this state of torture, and thrown into one, if possible, still more distressing.

The Marquis inquired for Louis, and being informed of his departure, mentioned that Theodore Peyrou had that morning sat out for his regiment in a distant province. He lamented the loss he should sustain by his absence; and expressed some very flattering praise of his talents. The shock of this intelligence overpowered the long-agitated spirits of Adeline; the blood forsook her cheeks, and a sudden faintness came over her, from which she recovered only to a consciousness of having discovered her emotion, and the danger of relapsing into a second fit.

She retired to her chamber, where, being once more alone, her oppressed heart found relief from tears, in which she freely indulged. Ideas crowded so fast upon her mind, that it was long ere she could arrange them so as to produce any thing like reasoning. She endeavoured to account for the abrupt departure of Theodore. “Is it possible,” said she, “that he should take an interest in my welfare, and yet leave me exposed to the full force of a danger, which he himself foresaw? Or am I to believe that he has trifled with my simplicity for an idle frolic, and has now left me to the wondering apprehension he has raised? Impossible! a countenance so noble, and a manner so amiable, could never disguise a heart capable of forming so despicable a design. No! — whatever is reserved for me, let me not relinquish the pleasure of believing that he is worthy of my esteem.”

She was awakened from thoughts like these by a peal of distant thunder, and now perceived that the gloominess of evening was deepened by the coming storm; it rolled onward, and soon after the lightning began to flash along the chamber. Adeline was superior to the affectation of fear, and was not apt to be terrified; but she now felt it unpleasant to be alone, and, hoping that the Marquis might have left the abbey, she went down to the sitting room; but the threatening aspect of the Heavens had hitherto detained him, and now the evening tempest made him rejoice that he had

not quitted a shelter. The storm continued, and night came on. La Motte pressed his guest to take a bed at the abbey, and he, at length, consented; a circumstance, which threw Madame La Motte into some perplexity, as to the accommodation to be afforded him; after some time, she arranged the affair to her satisfaction; resigning her own apartment to the Marquis, and that of Louis to two of his superior attendants; Adeline, it was farther settled, should give up her room to Monsieur and Madame La Motte, and remove to an inner chamber, where a small bed, usually occupied by Annette, was placed for her.

At supper, the Marquis was less gay than usual; he frequently addressed Adeline, and his look and manner seemed to express the tender interest, which her indisposition, for she still appeared pale and languid, had excited. Adeline, as usual, made an effort to forget her anxiety, and appear happy; but the veil of assumed cheerfulness was too thin to conceal the features of sorrow; and her feeble smiles only added a peculiar softness to her air. The Marquis conversed with her on a variety of subjects, and displayed an elegant mind. The observations of Adeline, which, when called upon, she gave with reluctant modesty, in words at once simple and forceful, seemed to excite his admiration, which he sometimes betrayed by an inadvertent expression.

Adeline retired early to her room, which adjoined on one side to Madame La Motte’s, and on the other to the closet formerly mentioned. It was spacious and lofty, and what little furniture it contained was falling to decay; but, perhaps, the present tone of her spirits might contribute more than these circumstances to give that air of melancholy, which seemed to reign in it. She was unwilling to go to bed, left the dreams that had lately pursued her should return; and determined to sit up till she found herself oppressed by sleep, when it was probable her rest would be profound. She placed the light on a small table, and, taking a book, continued to read for above an hour, till her mind refused any longer to abstract itself from its own cares, and she sat for some time leaning pensively on her arm.

The wind was high, and as it whistled through the desolate apartment, and shook the feeble doors, she often started, and sometimes even thought she heard sighs between the pauses of the gust; but she checked these illusions, which the hour of the night and her own melancholy imagination conspired to raise. As she sat musing, her eyes fixed on the opposite wall,

she perceived the arras, with which the room was hung, wave backwards and forwards; she continued to observe it for some minutes, and then rose to examine it farther. It was moved by the wind; and she blushed at the momentary fear it had excited: but she observed that the tapestry was more strongly agitated in one particular place than elsewhere, and a noise that seemed something more than that of the wind issued thence. The old bedstead, which La Motte had found in this apartment, had been removed to accommodate Adeline, and it was behind the place where this had stood, that the wind seemed to rush with particular force: curiosity prompted her to examine still farther; she felt about the tapestry, and perceiving the wall behind shake under her hand, she lifted the arras, and discovered a small door, whose loosened hinges admitted the wind, and occasioned the noise she had heard.

The door was held only by a bolt, having undrawn which, and brought the light, she descended by a few steps into another chamber: she instantly remembered her dreams. The chamber was not much like that in which she had seen the dying Chevalier, and afterwards the bier; but it gave her a confused remembrance of one through which she had passed. Holding up the light to examine it more fully, she was convinced by its structure that it was part of the ancient foundation. A shattered casement, placed high from the floor, seemed to be the only opening to admit light. She observed a door on the opposite side of the apartment; and after some moments of hesitation, gained courage, and determined to pursue the inquiry. “A mystery seems to hang over these chambers,” said she, “which it is, perhaps, my lot to develope; I will, at least, see to what that door leads.”

She stepped forward, and having unclosed it, proceeded with faltering steps along a suite of apartments, resembling the first in style and condition, and terminating in one exactly like that where her dream had represented the dying person; the remembrance struck so forcibly upon her imagination, that she was in danger of fainting; and looking round the room, almost expected to see the phantom of her dream.

Unable to quit the place, she sat down on some old lumber to recover herself, while her spirits were nearly overcome by a superstitious dread, such as she had never felt before. She wondered to what part of the abbey these chambers belonged, and that they had so long escaped detection. The casements were all too high to afford any information from without. When

she was sufficiently composed to consider the direction of the rooms, and the situation of the abbey, there appeared not a doubt that they formed an interior part of the original building.

As these reflections passed over her mind, a sudden gleam of moonlight fell upon some object without the casement. Being now sufficiently composed to wish to pursue the inquiry; and believing this object might afford her some means of learning the situation of these rooms, she combated her remaining terrors, and, in order to distinguish it more clearly, removed the light to an outer chamber; but before she could return, a heavy cloud was driven over the face of the moon, and all without was perfectly dark: she stood for some moments waiting a returning gleam, but the obscurity continued. As she went softly back for the light, her foot stumbled over something on the floor, and while she stooped to examine it, the moon again shone, so that she could distinguish, through the casement, the eastern towers of the abbey. This discovery confirmed her former conjectures concerning the interior situation of these apartments. The obscurity of the place prevented her discovering what it was that had impeded her steps, but having brought the light forward, she perceived on the floor an old dagger: with a trembling hand she took it up, and upon a closer view perceived, that it was spotted and stained with rust.

Shocked and surprised, she looked round the room for some object that might confirm or destroy the dreadful suspicion which now rushed upon her mind; but she saw only a great chair, with broken arms, that stood in one corner of the room, and a table in a condition equally shattered, except that in another part lay a confused heap of things, which appeared to be old lumber. She went up to it, and perceived a broken bedstead, with some decayed remnants of furniture, covered with dust and cobwebs, and which seemed, indeed, as if they had not been moved for many years. Desirous, however, of examining farther, she attempted to raise what appeared to have been part of the bedstead, but it slipped from her hand, and, rolling to the floor, brought with it some of the remaining lumber. Adeline started aside and saved herself, and when the noise it made had ceased, she heard a small rustling sound, and as she was about to leave the chamber, saw something falling gently among the lumber.

It was a small roll of paper, tied with a string, and covered with dust. Adeline took it up, and on opening it perceived an handwriting. She

attempted to read it, but the part of the manuscript she looked at was so much obliterated, that she found this difficult, though what few words were legible impressed her with curiosity and terror, and induced her to return with it immediately to her chamber.

Having reached her own room, she fastened the private door, and let the arras fall over it as before. It was now midnight. The stillness of the hour, interrupted only at intervals by the hollow sighings of the blast, heightened the solemnity of Adeline's feelings. She wished she was not alone, and before she proceeded to look into the manuscript, listened whether Madame La Motte was not in her chamber: not the least sound was heard, and she gently opened the door. The profound silence within almost convinced her that no person was there; but willing to be farther satisfied, she brought the light and found the room empty. The lateness of the hour made her wonder that Madame La Motte was not in her chamber, and she proceeded to the top of the tower stairs, to hearken if any person was stirring.

She heard the sound of voices from below, and, amongst the rest, that of La Motte speaking in his usual tone. Being now satisfied that all was well, she turned towards her room, when she heard the Marquis pronounce her name with very unusual emphasis. She paused. "I adore her," pursued he, "and by heaven" — He was interrupted by La Motte, "My Lord, remember your promise."

"I do," replied the Marquis, "and I will abide by it. But we trifle. Tomorrow I will declare myself, and I shall then know both what to hope and how to act." Adeline trembled so excessively, that she could scarcely support herself: she wished to return to her chamber; yet she was too much interested in the words she had heard, not to be anxious to have them more fully explained. There was an interval of silence, after which they conversed in a lower tone. Adeline remembered the hints of Theodore, and determined, if possible, to be relieved from the terrible suspense she now suffered. She stole softly down a few steps, that she might catch the accents of the speakers, but they were so low, that she could only now and then distinguish a few words. "Her father, say you?" said the Marquis. "Yes, my Lord, her father. I am well informed of what I say." Adeline shuddered at the mention of her father, a new terror seized her, and with increasing eagerness she endeavoured to distinguish their words, but for

some time found this to be impossible. “Here is no time to be lost,” said the Marquis, “tomorrow then.” — She heard La Motte rise, and, believing it was to leave the room, she hurried up the steps, and having reached her chamber, sunk almost lifeless in a chair.

It was her father only of whom she thought. She doubted not that he had pursued and discovered her retreat, and, though this conduct appeared very inconsistent with his former behaviour in abandoning her to strangers, her fears suggested that it would terminate in some new cruelty. She did not hesitate to pronounce this the danger of which Theodore had warned her; but it was impossible to surmise how he had gained his knowledge of it, or how he had become sufficiently acquainted with her story, except through La Motte, her apparent friend and protector, whom she was thus, though unwillingly, led to suspect of treachery. Why, indeed, should La Motte conceal from her only his knowledge of her father’s intention, unless he designed to deliver her into his hands? Yet it was long ere she could bring herself to believe this conclusion possible. To discover depravity in those whom we have loved, is one of the most exquisite tortures to a virtuous mind, and the conviction is often rejected before it is finally admitted.

The words of Theodore, which told her he was fearful she was deceived, confirmed this most painful apprehension of La Motte, with another yet more distressing, that Madame La Motte was also united against her. This thought, for a moment, subdued terror and left her only grief; she wept bitterly. “Is this human nature?” cried she. “Am I doomed to find every body deceitful?” An unexpected discovery of vice in those, whom we have admired, inclines us to extend our censure of the individual to the species; we henceforth contemn appearances, and too hastily conclude that no person is to be trusted.

Adeline determined to throw herself at the feet of La Motte, on the following morning, and implore his pity and protection. Her mind was now too much agitated, by her own interests, to permit her to examine the manuscripts, and she sat musing in her chair, till she heard the steps of Madame La Motte, when she retired to bed. La Motte soon after came up to his chamber, and Adeline, the mild, persecuted Adeline, who had now passed two days of torturing anxiety, and one night of terrific visions, endeavoured to compose her mind to sleep. In the present state of her spirits, she quickly caught alarm, and she had scarcely fallen into a

slumber, when she was roused by a loud and uncommon noise. She listened, and thought the sound came from the apartments below, but in a few minutes there was a hasty knocking at the door of La Motte's chamber.

La Motte, who had just fallen asleep, was not easily to be roused, but the knocking increased with such violence, that Adeline, extremely terrified, arose and went to the door that opened from her chamber into his, with a design to call him. She was stopped by the voice of the Marquis, which she now clearly distinguished at the door. He called to La Motte to rise immediately, and Madame La Motte endeavoured at the same time to rouse her husband, who, at length, awoke in much alarm, and soon after, joining the Marquis, they went down stairs together. Adeline now dressed herself, as well as her trembling hands would permit, and went into the adjoining chamber, where she found Madame La Motte extremely surprized and terrified.

The Marquis, in the mean time, told La Motte, with great agitation, that he recollected having appointed some persons to meet him upon business of importance, early in the morning, and it was, therefore, necessary for him to set off for his chateau immediately. As he said this, and desired that his servants might be called, La Motte could not help observing the ashy paleness of his countenance, or expressing some apprehension that his Lordship was ill. The Marquis assured him he was perfectly well, but desired that he might set out immediately. Peter was now ordered to call the other servants, and the Marquis, having refused to take any refreshment, bade La Motte a hasty adieu, and, as soon as his people were ready, left the abbey.

La Motte returned to his chamber, musing on the abrupt departure of his guest, whose emotion appeared much too strong to proceed from the cause assigned. He appeased the anxiety of Madame La Motte, and at the same time excited her surprize by acquainting her with the occasion of the late disturbance. Adeline, who had retired from the chamber, on the approach of La Motte, looked out from her window on hearing the trampling of horses. It was the Marquis and his people, who just then passed at a little distance. Unable to distinguish who the persons were, she was alarmed at observing such a party about the abbey at that hour, and, calling to inform La Motte of the circumstance, was made acquainted with what had passed.

At length she retired to her bed, and her slumbers were this night undisturbed by dreams.

When she arose in the morning, she observed La Motte walking alone in the avenue below, and she hastened to seize the opportunity which now offered of pleading her cause. She approached him with faltering steps, while the paleness and timidity of her countenance discovered the disorder of her mind. Her first words, without entering upon any explanation, implored, his compassion. La Motte stopped, and, looking earnestly in her face, inquired whether any part of his conduct towards her merited the suspicion which her request implied. Adeline for a moment blushed that she had doubted his integrity, but the words she had overheard returned to her memory.

“Your behaviour, Sir,” said she, “I acknowledge to have been kind and generous, beyond what I had a right to expect, but” — and she paused. She knew not how to mention what she blushed to believe. La Motte continued to gaze on her in silent expectation, and at length desired her to proceed and explain her meaning. She entreated that he would protect her from her father. La Motte looked surprised and confused. “Your father!” said he. “Yes, Sir,” replied Adeline; “I am not ignorant that he has discovered my retreat. I have every thing to dread from a parent, who has treated me with such cruelty as you was witness of; and I again implore that you will save me from his hands.”

La Motte stood fixed in thought, and Adeline continued her endeavours to interest his pity. “What reason have you to suppose, or, rather, how have you learned, that your father pursues you?” The question confused Adeline, who blushed to acknowledge that she had overheard his discourse, and disdained to invent, or utter a falsity: at length she confessed the truth. The countenance of La Motte instantly changed to a savage fierceness, and, sharply rebuking her for a conduct, to which she had been rather tempted by chance, than prompted by design, he inquired what she had overheard, that could so much alarm her. She faithfully repeated the substance of the incoherent sentences that had met her ear; while she spoke, he regarded her with a fixed attention. “And was this all you heard? Is it from these few words that you draw such a positive conclusion? Examine them, and you will find they do not justify it.”

She now perceived, what the fervor of her fears had not permitted her to observe before, that the words, unconnectedly as she heard them, imported little, and that her imagination had filled up the void in the sentences, so as to suggest the evil apprehended. Notwithstanding this, her fears were little abated. “Your apprehensions are, doubtless, now removed,” resumed La Motte; “but to give you a proof of the sincerity which you have ventured to question, I will tell you they were just. You seem alarmed, and with reason. Your father has discovered your residence, and has already demanded you. It is true, that from a motive of compassion I have refused to resign you, but I have neither authority to withhold, or means to defend you. When he comes to enforce his demand, you will perceive this. Prepare yourself, therefore, for the evil, which you see is inevitable.”

Adeline, for some time, could speak only by her tears. At length, with a fortitude which despair had roused, she said, “I resign myself to the will of Heaven!” La Motte gazed on her in silence, and a strong emotion appeared in his countenance. He forbore, however, to renew the discourse, and withdrew to the abbey, leaving Adeline in the avenue, absorbed in grief.

A summons to breakfast hastened her to the parlour, where she passed the morning in conversation with Madame La Motte, to whom she told all her apprehensions, and expressed all her sorrow. Pity and superficial consolation was all that Madame La Motte could offer, though apparently much affected by Adeline’s discourse. Thus the hours passed heavily away, while the anxiety of Adeline continued to increase, and the moment of her fate seemed fast approaching. Dinner was scarcely over, when Adeline was surprized to see the Marquis arrive. He entered the room with his usual ease; and, apologizing for the disturbance he had occasioned on the preceding night, repeated what he had before told La Motte.

The remembrance of the conversation she had overheard, at first gave Adeline some confusion, and withdrew her mind from a sense of the evils to be apprehended from her father. The Marquis, who was, as usual, attentive to Adeline, seemed affected by her apparent indisposition, and expressed much concern for that dejection of spirits, which, notwithstanding every effort, her manner betrayed. When Madame La Motte withdrew, Adeline would have followed her, but the Marquis entreated a few moment’s attention, and led her back to her seat. La Motte immediately disappeared.

Adeline knew too well what would be the purport of the Marquis's discourse, and his words soon increased the confusion which her fears had occasioned. While he was declaring the ardour of his passion in such terms, as but too often make vehemence pass for sincerity, Adeline, to whom this declaration, if honourable, was distressing, and if dishonourable, was shocking, interrupted him and thanked him for the offer of a distinction, which, with a modest, but determined air, she said she must refuse. She rose to withdraw. "Stay, too lovely Adeline!" said he, "and if compassion for my sufferings will not interest you in my favour, allow a consideration of your own dangers to do so. Monsieur La Motte has informed me of your misfortunes, and of the evil that now threatens you; accept from me the protection which he cannot afford."

Adeline continued to move towards the door, when the Marquis threw himself at her feet, and, seizing her hand, impressed it with kisses. She struggled to disengage herself. "Hear me, charming Adeline! hear me," cried the Marquis; "I exist but for you. Listen to my entreaties and my fortune shall be yours. Do not drive me to despair by ill-judged rigour, or, because" —

"My Lord," interrupted Adeline, with an air of ineffable dignity, and still affecting to believe his proposal honourable, "I am sensible of the generosity of your conduct, and also flattered by the distinction you offer me. I will, therefore, say something more than is necessary to a bare expression of the denial which I must continue to give. I can not bestow my heart. You can not obtain more than my esteem, to which, indeed, nothing can so much contribute as a forbearance from any similar offers in future."

She again attempted to go, but the Marquis prevented her, and, after some hesitation, again urged his suit, though in terms that would no longer allow her to misunderstand him. Tears swelled into her eyes, but she endeavoured to check them, and with a look, in which grief and indignation seemed to struggle for preeminence, she said, "My Lord, this is unworthy of reply, let me pass."

For a moment, he was awed by the dignity of her manner, and he threw himself at her feet to implore forgiveness. But she waved her hand in silence and hurried from the room. When she reached her chamber, she locked the door, and, sinking into a chair, yielded to the sorrow that

pressed at her heart. And it was not the least of her sorrow, to suspect that La Motte was unworthy of her confidence; for it was almost impossible that he could be ignorant of the real designs of the Marquis. Madame La Motte, she believed, was imposed upon by a specious pretence of honourable attachment; and thus was she spared the pang which a doubt of her integrity would have added.

She threw a trembling glance upon the prospect around her. On one side was her father, whose cruelty had already been too plainly manifested; and on the other, the Marquis pursuing her with insult and vicious passion. She resolved to acquaint Madame La Motte with the purport of the late conversation, and, in the hope of her protection and sympathy, she wiped away her tears, and was leaving the room just as Madame La Motte entered it. While Adeline related what had passed, her friend wept, and appeared to suffer great agitation. She endeavoured to comfort her, and promised to use her influence in persuading La Motte to prohibit the addresses of the Marquis. “You know, my dear,” added Madame, “that our present circumstances oblige us to preserve terms with the Marquis, and you will, therefore, suffer as little resentment to appear in your manner towards him as possible; conduct yourself with your usual ease in his presence, and I doubt not this affair will pass over, without subjecting you to farther solicitation.”

“Ah, Madam!” said Adeline, “how hard is the task you assign me! I entreat you that I may never more be subjected to the humiliation of being in his presence, that, whenever he visits the abbey, I may be suffered to remain in my chamber.”

“This,” said Madame La Motte, “I would most readily consent to, would our situation permit it. But you well know our asylum in this abbey depends upon the goodwill of the Marquis, which we must not wantonly lose; and surely such a conduct as you propose would endanger this. Let us use milder measures, and we shall preserve his friendship, without subjecting you to any serious evil. Appear with your usual complacence: the task is not so difficult as you imagine.”

Adeline sighed. “I obey you, Madam,” said she; “it is my duty to do so; but I may be pardoned for saying — it is with extreme reluctance.” Madame La Motte promised to go immediately to her husband, and

Adeline departed, though not convinced of her safety, yet somewhat more at ease.

She soon after saw the Marquis depart, and, as there now appeared to be no obstacle to the return of Madame La Motte, she expected her with extreme impatience. After thus waiting near an hour in her chamber, she was at length summoned to the parlour, and there found Monsieur La Motte alone. He arose upon her entrance, and for some minutes paced the room in silence. He then seated himself, and addressed her: “What you have mentioned to Madame La Motte,” said he, “would give me much concern, did I consider the behaviour of the Marquis in a light so serious as she does. I know that young ladies are apt to misconstrue the unmeaning gallantry of fashionable manners, and you, Adeline, can never be too cautious in distinguishing between a levity of this kind, and a more serious address.”

Adeline was surprized and offended that La Motte should think so lightly both of her understanding and disposition as his speech implied. “Is it possible, Sir,” said she, “that you have been apprized of the Marquis’s conduct?”

“It is very possible, and very certain,” replied La Motte with some asperity; “and very possible, also, that I may see this affair with a judgement less discoloured by prejudice than you do. But, however, I shall not dispute this point. I shall only request, that, since you are acquainted with the emergency of my circumstances, you will conform to them, and not, by an ill-timed resentment, expose me to the enmity of the Marquis. He is now my friend, and it is necessary to my safety that he should continue such; but if I suffer any part of my family to treat him with rudeness, I must expect to see him my enemy. You may surely treat him with complaisance.” Adeline thought the term rudeness a harsh one, as La Motte applied it, but she forebore from any expression of displeasure. “I could have wished, Sir,” said she, “for the privilege of retiring whenever the Marquis appeared; but since you believe this conduct would affect your interest, I ought to submit.”

“This prudence and goodwill delight me,” said La Motte, “and since you wish to serve me, know that you cannot more effectually do it, than by treating the Marquis as a friend.” The word friend, as it stood connected with the Marquis, sounded dissonantly to Adeline’s ear; she hesitated and

looked at La Motte. “As your friend, Sir,” said she; “I will endeavour to” — treat him as mine, she would have said, but she found it impossible to finish the sentence. She entreated his protection from the power of her father.

“What protection I can afford is your’s,” said La Motte, “but you know how destitute I am both of the right and the means of resisting him, and also how much I require protection myself. Since he has discovered your retreat, he is probably not ignorant of the circumstances which detain me here, and if I oppose him, he may betray me to the officers of the law, as the surest method of obtaining possession of you. We are encompassed with dangers,” continued La Motte; “would I could see any method of extricating ourselves!”

“Quit this abbey,” said Adeline, and seek an asylum in Switzerland or Germany; you will then be freed from farther obligation to the Marquis and from the persecution you dread. Pardon me for thus offering advice, which is certainly, in some degree, prompted by a sense of my own safety, but which, at the same time, seems to afford the only means of ensuring your’s.”

“Your plan is reasonable,” said La Motte, “had I money to execute it. As it is I must be contented to remain here, as little known as possible, and defending myself by making those who know me my friends. Chiefly I must endeavour to preserve the favour of the Marquis. He may do much, should your father even pursue desperate measures. But why do I talk thus? Your father may ere this have commenced these measures, and the effects of his vengeance may now be hanging over my head. My regard for you, Adeline, has exposed me to this; had I resigned you to his will, I should have remained secure.”

Adeline was so much affected by this instance of La Motte’s kindness, which she could not doubt, that she was unable to express her sense of it. When she could speak, she uttered her gratitude in the most lively terms. “Are you sincere in these expressions?” said La Motte.

“Is it possible I can be less than sincere?” replied Adeline, weeping at the idea of ingratitude.— “Sentiments are easily pronounced,” said La Motte, “though they may have no connection with the heart; I believe them to be sincere so far only as they influence our actions.”

“What mean you, Sir?” said Adeline with surprize.

“I mean to inquire, whether, if an opportunity should ever offer of thus proving your gratitude, you would adhere to your sentiments?”

“Name one that I shall refuse,” said Adeline with energy.

“If, for instance, the Marquis should hereafter avow a serious passion for you, and offer you his hand, would no petty resentment, no lurking prepossession for some more happy lover prompt you to refuse it?”

Adeline blushed and fixed her eyes on the ground. “You have, indeed, Sir, named the only means I should reject of evincing my sincerity. The Marquis I can never love, nor, to speak sincerely, ever esteem. I confess the peace of one’s whole life is too much to sacrifice even to gratitude.” — La Motte looked displeased. “‘Tis as I thought,” said he; “these delicate sentiments make a fine appearance in speech, and render the person who utters them infinitely amiable; but bring them to the test of action, and they dissolve into air, leaving only the wreck of vanity behind.”

This unjust sarcasm brought tears to her eyes. “Since your safety, Sir, depends upon my conduct,” said she, resign me to my father. I am willing to return to him, since my stay here must involve you in new misfortune. Let me not prove myself unworthy of the protection I have hitherto experienced, by preferring my own welfare to yours. When I am gone, you will have no reason to apprehend the Marquis’s displeasure, which you may probably incur if I stay here: for I feel it impossible that I could even consent to receive his addresses, however honourable were his views.”

La Motte seemed hurt and alarmed. “This must not be,” said he; “let us not harrass ourselves by stating possible evils, and then, to avoid them, fly to those which are certain. No, Adeline, though you are ready to sacrifice yourself to my safety. I will not suffer you to do so. I will not yield you to your father, but upon compulsion. Be satisfied, therefore, upon this point. The only return I ask, is a civil deportment towards the Marquis.”

“I will endeavour to obey you, Sir,” said Adeline. — Madame La Motte now entered the room, and this conversation ceased. Adeline passed the evening in melancholy thoughts, and retired, as soon as possible, to her chamber, eager to seek in sleep a refuge from sorrow.

CHAPTER 9

“Full many a melancholy night
He watched the slow return of light,
And sought the powers of sleep;
To spread a momentary calm
O’er his sad couch, and in the balm
Of bland oblivion’s dews his burning eyes to steep.”
WARTON.

The MS. found by Adeline, the preceding night, had several times occurred to her recollection in the course of the day, but she had then been either too much interested by the events of the moment, or too apprehensive of interruption, to attempt a perusal of it. She now took it from the drawer in which it had been deposited, and, intending only to look cursorily over the few first pages, sat down with it by her bed side.

She opened it with an eagerness of inquiry, which the discoloured and almost obliterated ink but slowly gratified. The first words on the page were entirely lost, but those that appeared to commence the narrative were as follows:

“O! ye, whoever ye are, whom chance, or misfortune, may hereafter conduct to this spot — to ye I speak — to ye reveal the story of my wrongs, and ask ye to avenge them. Vain hope! yet it imparts some comfort to believe it possible that what I now write may one day meet the eye of a fellow creature; that the words, which tell my sufferings, may one day draw pity from the feeling heart.

“Yet stay your tears — your pity now is useless: long since have the pangs of misery ceased; the voice of complaining is passed away. It is weakness to wish for compassion which cannot be felt till I shall sink in the repose of death, and taste, I hope, the happiness of eternity!

“Know then, that on the night of the twelfth of October, in the year 1642, I was arrested on the road to Caux, and on the very spot where a column is erected to the memory of the immortal Henry, by four ruffians, who, after disabling my servant, bore me through wilds and woods to this abbey. Their demeanour was not that of common banditti, and I soon perceived they were employed by a superior power to perpetrate some dreadful purpose. Entreaties and bribes were vainly offered them to

discover their employer and abandon their design: they would not reveal even the least circumstance of their intentions.

“But when, after a long journey, they arrived at this edifice, their base employer was at once revealed, and his horrid scheme but too well understood. What a moment was that! All the thunders of Heaven seemed launched at this defenceless head! O fortitude! nerve my heart to” —

Adeline’s light was now expiring in the socket, and the paleness of the ink, so feebly shone upon, baffled her efforts to discriminate the letters: it was impossible to procure a light from below, without discovering that she was yet up; a circumstance, which would excite surprize and lead to explanations, such as she did not wish to enter upon. Thus compelled to suspend the inquiry, which so many attendant circumstances had rendered awfully interesting, she retired to her humble bed.

What she had read of the MS. awakened a dreadful interest in the fate of the writer, and called up terrific images to her mind. “In these apartments!” — said she, and she shuddered and closed her eyes. At length, she heard Madame La Motte enter her chamber, and the phantoms of fear beginning to dissipate, left her to repose.

In the morning, she was awakened by Madame La Motte, and found, to her disappointment, that she had slept so much beyond her usual time, as to be unable to renew the perusal of the MS. — La Motte appeared uncommonly gloomy, and Madame wore an air of melancholy, which Adeline attributed to the concern she felt for her. Breakfast was scarcely over, when the sound of horses feet announced the arrival of a stranger; and Adeline, from the oriel recess of the hall, saw the Marquis alight. She retreated with precipitation, and, forgetting the request of La Motte, was hastening to her chamber; but the Marquis was already in the hall, and seeing her leaving it, turned to La Motte with a look of inquiry. La Motte called her back, and by a frown too intelligent, reminded her of her promise. She summoned all her spirits to her aid, but advanced, notwithstanding, in visible emotion, while the Marquis addressed her as usual, the same easy gaiety playing upon his countenance and directing his manner.

Adeline was surprized and shocked at this careless confidence, which, however, by awakening her pride, communicated to her an air of dignity that abashed him. He spoke with hesitation, and frequently appeared

abstracted from the subject of discourse. At length arising, he begged Adeline would favour him with a few moments conversation. Monsieur and Madame La Motte were now leaving the room, when Adeline, turning to the Marquis, told him, “she would not hear any conversation, except in the presence of her friends.” But she said it in vain, for they were gone; and La Motte, as he withdrew, expressed by his looks how much an attempt to follow would displease him.

She sat for some time in silence, and trembling expectation. “I am sensible,” said the Marquis at length, “that the conduct to which the ardour of my passion lately betrayed me, has injured me in your opinion, and that you will not easily restore me to your esteem; but, I trust, the offer which I now make you, both of my title and fortune, will sufficiently prove the sincerity of my attachment, and atone for the transgression which love only prompted.”

After this specimen of common place verbosity, which the Marquis seemed to consider as a prelude to triumph, he attempted to impress a kiss upon the hand of Adeline, who, withdrawing it hastily, said, “You are already, my Lord, acquainted with my sentiments upon this subject, and it is almost unnecessary for me now to repeat, that I cannot accept the honour you offer me.”

“Explain yourself, lovely Adeline! I am ignorant that till now, I ever made you this offer.”

“Most true, Sir,” said Adeline, “and you do well to remind me of this, since, after having heard your former proposal, I can listen for a moment to any other.” She rose to quit the room. “Stay, Madam,” said the Marquis, with a look, in which offended pride struggled to conceal itself; “do not suffer an extravagant resentment to operate against your true interests; recollect the dangers that surround you, and consider the value of an offer, which may afford you at least an honourable asylum.”

“My misfortune, my Lord, whatever they are, I have never obtruded upon you; you will, therefore, excuse my observing, that your present mention of them conveys a much greater appearance of insult than compassion.” The Marquis, though with evident confusion, was going to reply; but Adeline would not be detained, and retired to her chamber. Destitute as she was, her heart revolted from the proposal of the Marquis, and she determined never to accept it. To her dislike of his general

disposition, and the aversion excited by his late offer, was added, indeed, the influence of a prior attachment, and of a remembrance, which she found it impossible to erase from her heart.

The Marquis stayed to dine, and, in consideration of La Motte, Adeline appeared at table, where the former gazed upon her with such frequent and silent earnestness, that her distress became insupportable, and when the cloth was drawn, she instantly retired. Madame La Motte soon followed, and it was not till evening that she had an opportunity of returning to the MS. When Monsieur and Madame La Motte were in their chamber, and all was still, she drew forth the narrative, and, trimming her lamp, sat down to read as follows:

"The ruffians unbound me from my horse, and led me through the hall up the spiral staircase of the abbey: resistance was useless, but I looked around in the hope of seeing some person less obdurate than the men who brought me hither; some one who might be sensible to pity, and capable, at least, of civil treatment. I looked in vain; no person appeared: and this circumstance confirmed my worst apprehensions. The secrecy of the business foretold a horrible conclusion. Having passed some chambers, they stopped in one hung with old tapestry. I inquired why we did not go on, and was told, I should soon know.

"At that moment, I expected to see the instrument of death uplifted, and silently recommended myself to God. But death was not then designed for me; they raised the arras, and discovered a door, which they then opened. Seizing my arms, they led me through a suite of dismal chambers beyond. Having reached the farthest of these, they again stopped: the horrid gloom of the place seemed congenial to murder, and inspired deadly thoughts. Again I looked round for the instrument of destruction, and again I was respited. I supplicated to know what was designed me; it was now unnecessary to ask who was the author of the design. They were silent to my question, but at length told me, this chamber was my prison. Having said this, and set down a jug of water, they left the room, and I heard the door barred upon me.

"O sound of despair! O moment of unutterable anguish! The pang of death itself is, surely, not superior to that I then suffered. Shut out from day, from friends, from life — for such I must foretell it — in the prime of my years, in the height of my transgressions, and left to imagine horrors

more terrible than any, perhaps, which certainty could give — I sink beneath the” —

Here several pages of the manuscript were decayed with damp and totally illegible. With much difficulty Adeline made out the following lines: “Three days have now passed in solitude and silence: the horrors of death are ever before my eyes, let me endeavour to prepare for the dreadful change! When I awake in the morning I think I shall not live to see another night; and, when night returns, that I must never more unclose my eyes on morning. Why am I brought hither — why confined thus rigorously — but for death! Yet what action of my life has deserved this at the hand of a fellow creature? — Of —

“O my children! O friends far distant! I shall never see you more — never more receive the parting look of kindness — never bestow a parting blessing! — Ye know not my wretched state — alas! ye cannot know it by human means. Ye believe me happy, or ye would fly to my relief. I know that what I now write cannot avail me, yet there is comfort in pouring forth my griefs; and I bless that man, less savage than his fellows, who has supplied me these means of recording them. Alas! he knows full well, that from this indulgence he has nothing to fear. My pen can call no friends to succour me, nor reveal my danger ere it is too late. O! ye, who may hereafter read what I now write, give a tear to my sufferings: I have wept often for the distresses of my fellow creatures!”

Adeline paused. Here the wretched writer appealed directly to her heart; he spoke in the energy of truth, and, by a strong illusion of fancy, it seemed as if his past sufferings were at this moment present. She was for some time unable to proceed, and sat in musing sorrow. “In these very apartments,” said she, “this poor sufferer was confined — here he” — Adeline started, and thought she heard a sound; but the stillness of night was undisturbed.— “In these very chambers,” said she, “these lines were written — these lines, from which he then derived a comfort in believing they would hereafter be read by some pitying eye: this time is now come. Your miseries, O injured being! are lamented, where they were endured. Here, where you suffered, I weep for your sufferings!”

Her imagination was now strongly impressed, and to her distempered senses the suggestions of a bewildered mind appeared with the force of reality. Again she started and listened, and thought she heard “Here”

distinctly repeated by a whisper immediately behind her. The terror of the thought, however, was but momentary, she knew it could not be; convinced that her fancy had deceived her, she took up the MS. and again began to read.

“For what am I reserved! Why this delay? If I am to die — why not quickly? Three weeks have I now passed within these walls, during which time, no look of pity has softened my afflictions; no voice, save my own, has met my ear. The countenances of the ruffians who attend me, are stern and inflexible, and their silence is obstinate. This stillness is dreadful! O! ye, who have known what it is to live in the depths of solitude, who have passed your dreary days without one sound to cheer you; ye, and ye only, can tell what now I feel; and ye may know how much I would endure to hear the accents of a human voice.

“O dire extremity! O state of living death! What dreadful stillness! All around me is dead; and do I really exist, or am I but a statue? Is this a vision? Are these things real? Alas, I am bewildered! — this deathlike and perpetual silence — this dismal chamber — the dread of farther sufferings have disturbed my fancy. O for some friendly breast to lay my weary head on! some cordial accents to revive my soul!

“I write by stealth. He who furnished me with the means, I fear, has suffered for some symptoms of pity he may have discovered for me; I have not seen him for several days: perhaps he is inclined to help me, and for that reason is forbid to come. O that hope! but how vain. Never more must I quit these walls while life remains. Another day is gone, and yet I live; at this time tomorrow night my sufferings may be sealed in death. I will continue my journal nightly, till the hand that writes shall be stopped by death: when the journal ceases, the reader will know I am no more. Perhaps, these are the last lines I shall ever write”

Adeline paused, while her tears fell fast. “Unhappy man!” she exclaimed, “and was there no pitying soul to save thee! Great God! thy ways are wonderful!” While she sat musing, her fancy, which now wandered in the regions of terror, gradually subdued reason. There was a glass before her upon the table, and she feared to raise her looks towards it, lest some other face than her own should meet her eyes: other dreadful ideas, and strange images of fantastic thought now crossed her mind.

A hollow sigh seemed to pass near her. “Holy Virgin, protect me!” cried she, and threw a fearful glance round the room; “this is surely something more than fancy.” Her fears so far overcame her, that she was several times upon the point of calling up part of the family, but unwillingness to disturb them, and a dread of ridicule, withheld her. She was also afraid to move and almost to breathe. As she listened to the wind, that murmured at the casements of her lonely chamber, she again thought she heard a sigh. Her imagination refused any longer the controul of reason, and, turning her eyes, a figure, whose exact form she could not distinguish, appeared to pass along an obscure part of the chamber: a dreadful chillness came over her, and she sat fixed in her chair. At length a deep sigh somewhat relieved her oppressed spirits, and her senses seemed to return.

All remaining quiet, after some time she began to question whether her fancy had not deceived her, and she so far conquered her terror as to desist from calling Madame La Motte: her mind was, however, so much disturbed, that she did not venture to trust herself that night again with the MS.; but, having spent some time in prayer, and in endeavouring to compose her spirits, she retired to bed.

When she awoke in the morning, the cheerful sunbeams played upon the casements, and dispelled the illusions of darkness: her mind, soothed and invigorated by sleep, rejected the mystic and turbulent promptings of imagination. She arose refreshed and thankful; but, upon going down to breakfast, this transient gleam of peace fled upon the appearance of the Marquis, whose frequent visits at the abbey, after what had passed, not only displeased, but alarmed her. She saw that he was determined to persevere in addressing her, and the boldness and insensibility of this conduct, while it excited her indignation, increased her disgust. In pity to La Motte, she endeavoured to conceal these emotions, though she now thought that he required too much from her complaisance, and began seriously to consider how she might avoid the necessity of continuing it. The Marquis behaved to her with the most respectful attention; but Adeline was silent and reserved, and seized the first opportunity of withdrawing.

As she passed up the spiral staircase, Peter entered the hall below, and, seeing Adeline, he stopped and looked earnestly at her: she did not observe him, but he called her softly, and she then saw him make a signal as if he

had something to communicate. In the next instant La Motte opened the door of the vaulted room, and Peter hastily disappeared. She proceeded to her chamber, ruminating upon this signal, and the cautious manner in which Peter had given it.

But her thoughts soon returned to their wonted subjects. Three days were now passed, and she heard no intelligence of her father; she began to hope that he had relented from the violent measures hinted at by La Motte, and that he meant to pursue a milder plan: but when she considered his character, this appeared improbable, and she relapsed into her former fears. Her residence at the abbey was now become painful, from the perseverance of the Marquis, and the conduct which La Motte obliged her to adopt; yet she could not think without dread of quitting it to return to her father.

The image of Theodore often intruded upon her busy thoughts, and brought with it a pang, which his strange departure occasioned. She had a confused notion, that his fate was somehow connected with her own; and her struggles to prevent the remembrance of him, served only to shew how much her heart was his.

To divert her thoughts from these subjects, and gratify the curiosity so strongly excited on the preceding night, she now took up the MS. but was hindered from opening it by the entrance of Madame La Motte, who came to tell her the Marquis was gone. They passed their morning together in work and general conversation; La Motte not appearing till dinner, when he said little, and Adeline less. She asked him, however, if he had heard from her father? “I have not heard from him,” said La Motte; but there is good reason, as I am informed by the Marquis, to believe he is not far off.”

Adeline was shocked, yet she was able to reply with becoming firmness. “I have already, Sir, involved you too much in my distress, and now see that resistance will destroy you, without serving me; I am, therefore, contented to return to my father, and thus spare you farther calamity.”

“This is a rash determination,” replied La Motte, “and if you pursue it, I fear you will severely repent. I speak to you as a friend, Adeline, and desire you will endeavour to listen to me without prejudice. The Marquis, I find, has offered you his hand. I know not which circumstance most excites my surprize, that a man of his rank and consequence should solicit a marriage with a person without fortune, or ostensible connections; or

that a person so circumstanced should even for a moment reject the advantages thus offered her. You weep, Adeline, let me hope that you are convinced of the absurdity of this conduct, and will no longer trifle with your good fortune. The kindness I have shewn you must convince you of my regard, and that I have no motive for offering you this advice but your advantage. It is necessary, however, to say, that, should your father not insist upon your removal, I know not how long my circumstances may enable me to afford even the humble pittance you receive here. Still you are silent."

The anguish which this speech excited, suppressed her utterance, and she continued to weep. At length she said, Suffer me, Sir, to go back to my father; I should, indeed, make an ill return for the kindness you mention, could I wish to stay, after what you now tell me; and to accept the Marquis, I feel to be impossible." The remembrance of Theodore arose to her mind, and she wept aloud.

La Motte sat for some time musing. "Strange infatuation," said he; "is it possible that you can persist in this heroism of romance, and prefer a father so inhuman as yours, to the Marquis de Montalt! A destiny so full of danger to a life of splendour and delight!"

"Pardon me," said Adeline, "a marriage with the Marquis would be splendid, but never happy. His character excites my aversion, and I entreat, Sir, that he may no more be mentioned."

CHAPTER 1 0

“Nor are those empty hearted, whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.” Lear.

The conversation related in the last chapter was interrupted by the entrance of Peter, who, as he left the room, looked significantly at Adeline and almost beckoned. She was anxious to know what he meant, and soon after went into the hall, where she found him loitering. The moment he saw her, he made a sign of silence and beckoned her into the recess. “Well, Peter, what is it you would say?” said Adeline.

“Hush, Ma’mselle; for Heaven’s sake speak lower: if we should be overheard, we are all blown up.” — Adeline begged him to explain what he meant. “Yes, Ma’mselle, that is what I have wanted all day long. I have watched and watched for an opportunity, and looked and looked, till I was afraid my master himself would see me: but all would not do; you would not understand.”

Adeline entreated he would be quick. “Yes, Ma’am, but I’m so afraid we shall be seen; but I would do much to serve such a good young lady, for I could not bear to think of what threatened you, without telling you of it.”

“For God’s sake, said Adeline, speak quickly, or we shall be interrupted.”

“Well, then; but you must first promise by the Holy Virgin never to say it was I that told you, My master would” —

“I do, I do!” said Adeline.

“Well, then — on Monday evening as I — hark! did not I hear a step? do, Ma’mselle, just step this way to the cloisters. I would not for the world we should be seen. I’ll go out at the hall door and you can go through the passage. I would not for the world we should be seen.” — Adeline was much alarmed by Peter’s words, and hurried to the cloisters. He quickly appeared, and, looking cautiously round, resumed his discourse. “As I was saying, Ma’mselle, Monday night, when the Marquis slept here, you know he sat up very late, and I can guess, perhaps, the reason of that. Strange things came out, but it is not my business to tell all I think.”

“Pray do speak to the purpose,” said Adeline impatiently, “what is this danger which you say threatens me? Be quick, or we shall be observed.”

“Danger enough, Ma’mselle,” replied Peter, “if you knew all, and when you do, what will it signify, for you can’t help yourself. But that’s neither here nor there: I was resolved to tell you, though I may repent it.”

“Or rather you are resolved not to tell me,” said Adeline; “for you have made no progress towards it. But what do you mean? You was speaking of the Marquis.”

“Hush, Ma’am, not so loud. The Marquis, as I said, sat up very late and my master sat up with him. One of his men went to bed in the oak room, and the other stayed to undress his Lord. So as we were sitting together — Lord have mercy! it made my hair stand on end! I tremble yet. So as we were sitting together, — but as sure as I live yonder is my master: I caught a glimpse of him between the trees, if he sees me it is all over with us. I’ll tell you another time.” So saying, he hurried into the abbey, leaving Adeline in a state of alarm, curiosity, and vexation. She walked out into the forest, ruminating upon Peter’s words, and endeavouring to guess to what they alluded; there Madame La Motte joined her, and they conversed on various topics till they reached the abbey.

Adeline watched in vain through that day for an opportunity of speaking with Peter. While he waited at supper, she occasionally observed his countenance with great anxiety, hoping it might afford her some degree of intelligence on the subject of her fears. When she retired, Madame La Motte accompanied her to her chamber, and continued to converse with her for a considerable time, so that she had no means of obtaining an interview with Peter. — Madame La Motte appeared to labour under some great affliction, and when Adeline, noticing this, entreated to know the cause of her dejection, tears started into her eyes, and she abruptly left the room.

This behaviour of Madame La Motte concurred with Peter’s discourse, to alarm Adeline, who sat pensively upon her bed, given up to reflection, till she was roused by the sound of a clock which stood in the room below, and which now struck twelve. She was preparing for rest, when she recollected the MS. and was unable to conclude the night without reading it. The first words she could distinguish were the following: Again I return to this poor consolation — again I have been permitted to see another day. It is now midnight! My solitary lamp burns beside me; the time is awful, but to me the silence of noon is as the silence of midnight: a deeper gloom

is all in which they differ. The still, unvarying hours are numbered only by my sufferings! Great God! when shall I be released!

But whence this strange confinement? I have never injured him. If death is designed me, why this delay; and for what but death am I brought hither? This abbey — alas!" — Here the MS. was again illegible, and for several pages Adeline could only make out disjointed sentences.

"O bitter draught! when, when shall I have rest! O my friends! will none of ye fly to aid me; will none of ye avenge my sufferings? Ah! when it is too late — when I am gone for ever, ye will endeavour to avenge them.

Once more is night returned to me. Another day has passed in solitude and misery. I have climbed to the casement, thinking the view of nature would refresh my soul, and somewhat enable me to support these afflictions. Alas! even this small comfort is denied me, the windows open towards other parts of this abbey, and admit only a portion of that day which I must never more fully behold. Laft night! laft night! O scene of horror!"

Adeline shuddered. She feared to read the coming sentence, yet curiosity prompted her to proceed. Still she paused: an unaccountable dread came over her. "Some horrid deed has been done here," said she; "the reports of the peasants are true. Murder has been committed." The idea shrilled her with horror. She recollected the dagger which had impeded her steps in the secret chamber, and this circumstance served to confirm her most terrible conjectures. She wished to examine it, but it lay in one of these chambers, and she feared to go in quest of it.

"Wretched, wretched victim!" she exclaimed, "could no friend rescue thee from destruction! O that I had been near! yet what could I have done to save thee? Alas! nothing. I forget that even now, perhaps, I am like thee abandoned to dangers, from which I have no friend to succour me. Too surely I guess the author of thy miseries!" She stopped, and thought she heard a sigh, such as, on the preceding night, had passed along the chamber. Her blood was chilled and she sat motionless. The lonely situation of her room, remote from the rest of the family, (for she was now in her old apartment, from which Madame La Motte had removed) who were almost beyond call, struck so forcibly upon her imagination, that she with difficulty preserved herself from fainting. She sat for a considerable

time, but all was still. When she was somewhat recovered, her first design was to alarm the family; but farther reflection again withheld her.

She endeavoured to compose her spirits, and addressed a short prayer to that Being who had hitherto protected her in every danger. While she was thus employed, her mind gradually became elevated and reassured; a sublime complacency filled her heart, and she sat down once more to pursue the narrative.

Several lines that immediately followed were obliterated. —

“He had told me I should not be permitted to live long, not more than three days, and bade me chuse whether I would die by poison or the sword. O the agonies of that moment! Great God! thou seest my sufferings! I often viewed, with a momentary hope of escaping, the high grated windows of my prison — all things within the compass of possibility I was resolved to try, and with an eager desperation I climbed towards the casements, but my foot slipped, and falling back to the floor, I was stunned by the blow. On recovering, the first sounds I heard were the steps of a person entering my prison. A recollection of the past returned, and deplorable was my condition. I shuddered at what was to come. The same man approached; he looked at me at first with pity, but his countenance soon recovered its natural ferocity. Yet he did not then come to execute the purposes of his employer: I am reserved to another day — Great God, thy will be done!”

Adeline could not go on. All the circumstances that seemed to corroborate the fate of this unhappy man, crowded upon her mind. The reports concerning the abbey — the dreams, which had forerun her discovery of the private apartments — the singular manner in which she had found the MS. and the apparition, which she now believed she had really seen. She blamed herself for having not yet mentioned the discovery of the manuscript and chambers to La Motte, and resolved to delay the disclosure no longer than the following morning. The immediate cares that had occupied her mind, and a fear of losing the manuscript before she had read it, had hitherto kept her silent.

Such a combination of circumstances she believed could only be produced by some supernatural power, operating for the retribution of the guilty. These reflections filled her mind with a degree of awe, which the loneliness of the large old chamber in which she sat, and the hour of the

night, soon heightened into terror. She had never been superstitious, but circumstances so uncommon had hitherto conspired in this affair, that she could not believe them accidental. Her imagination, wrought upon by these reflections, again became sensible to every impression, she feared to look round, lest she should again see some dreadful phantom, and she almost fancied she heard voices swell in the storm, which now shook the fabric.

Still she tried to command her feelings so as to avoid disturbing the family, but they became so painful, that even the dread of La Motte's ridicule had hardly power to prevent her quitting the chamber. Her mind was now in such a state, that she found it impossible to pursue the story in the MS. though, to avoid the tortures of suspense, she had attempted it. She laid it down again, and tried to argue herself into composure. "What have I to fear?" said she, "I am at least innocent, and I shall not be punished for the crime of another."

The violent gust of wind that now rushed through the whole suit of apartments, shook the door that led from her late bedchamber to the private rooms so forcibly, that Adeline, unable to remain longer in doubt, ran to see from whence the noise issued. The arras, which concealed the door, was violently agitated, and she stood for a moment observing it in indescribable terror, till believing it was swayed by the wind, she made a sudden effort to overcome her feelings, and was stooping to raise it. At that instant, she thought she heard a voice. She stopped and listened, but every thing was still; yet apprehension so far overcame her, that she had no power, either to examine, or to leave the chambers.

In a few moments the voice returned, she was now convinced she had not been deceived, for, though low, she heard it distinctly, and was almost sure it repeated her own name. So much was her fancy affected, that she even thought it was the same voice she had heard in her dreams. This conviction entirely subdued the small remains of her courage, and, sinking into a chair, she lost all recollection.

How long she remained in this state she knew not, but when she recovered, she exerted all her strength, and reached the winding staircase, where she called aloud. No one heard her, and she hastened, as fast as her feebleness would permit, to the chamber of Madame La Motte. She tapped gently at the door, and was answered by Madame, who was alarmed at

being awakened at so unusual an hour, and believed that some danger threatened her husband. When she understood that it was Adeline, and that she was unwell, she quickly came to her relief. The terror that was yet visible in Adeline's countenance excited her inquiries, and the occasion of it was explained to her.

Madame was so much discomposed by the relation that she called La Motte from his bed, who, more angry at being disturbed than interested for the agitation he witnessed, reproved Adeline for suffering her fancies to overcome her reason. She now mentioned the discovery she had made of the inner chambers and the manuscript, circumstances, which roused the attention of La Motte so much, that he desired to see the MS. and resolved to go immediately to the apartments described by Adeline.

Madame La Motte endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose; but La Motte, with whom opposition had always an effect contrary to the one designed, and who wished to throw father ridicule upon the terrors of Adeline, persisted in his intention. He called to Peter to attend with a light, and insisted that Madame La Motte and Adeline should accompany him; Madame La Motte desired to be excused, and Adeline, at first, declared she could not go; but he would be obeyed.

They ascended the tower, and entered the first chambers together, for each of the party was reluctant to be the last; in the second chamber all was quiet and in order. Adeline presented the MS. and pointed to the arras which concealed the door: La Motte lifted the arras, and opened the door; but Madame La Motte and Adeline entreated to go no farther — again he called to them to follow. All was quiet in the first chamber; he expressed his surprise that the room should so long have remained undiscovered, and was proceeding to the second, but suddenly stopped. "We will defer our examination till tomorrow," said he, "the damps of these apartments are unwholesome at any time; but they strike one more sensibly at night. I am chilled. Peter, remember to throw open the windows early in the morning, that the air may circulate."

"Lord bless your honour," said Peter, "don't you see, I can't reach them? Besides, I don't believe they are made to open; see what strong iron bars there are; the room looks, for all the world, like a prison; I suppose this is the place the people meant, when they said, nobody that had been in ever came out." La Motte, who, during this speech, had been looking

attentively at the high windows, which, if he had seen them at first, he had certainly not observed; now interrupted the eloquence of Peter, and bade him carry the light before them. They all willingly quitted these chambers, and returned to the room below, where a fire was lighted, and the party remained together for some time.

La Motte, for reasons best known to himself, attempted to ridicule the discovery and fears of Adeline, till she, with a seriousness that checked him, entreated he would desist. He was silent, and soon after, Adeline, encouraged by the return of daylight, ventured to her chamber, and, for some hours, experienced the blessing of undisturbed repose.

On the following day, Adeline's first care was to obtain an interview with Peter, whom she had some hopes of seeing as she went down stairs; he, however, did not appear, and she proceeded to the sitting room, where she found La Motte, apparently much disturbed. Adeline asked him if he had looked at the MS. "I have run my eye over it," said he, "but it is so much obscured by time that it can scarcely be decyphered. It appears to exhibit a strange romantic story; and I do not wonder, that after you had suffered its terrors to impress your imagination, you fancied you saw spectres, and heard wondrous noises."

Adeline thought La Motte did not chuse to be convinced, and she, therefore, forbore reply. During breakfast, she often looked at Peter, (who waited) with anxious inquiry; and, from his countenance, was still more assured, that he had something of importance to communicate. In the hope of some conversation with him, she left the room as soon as possible, and repaired to her favourite avenue, where she had not long remained when he appeared. "God bless you! Ma'amselle," said he, "I'm sorry I frighted you so last night."

"Frighted me," said Adeline; "how was you concerned in that?"

He then informed her, that when he thought Monsieur and Madame La Motte were asleep, he had stole to her chamber door, with an intention of giving her the sequel of what he had begun in the morning; that he had called several times as loudly as he dared, but receiving no answer, he believed she was asleep, or did not chuse to speak with him, and he had, therefore, left the door. This account of the voice she had heard relieved Adeline's spirits; she was even surprised that she did not know it, till

remembering the perturbation of her mind for some time preceding, this surprise disappeared.

She entreated Peter to be brief in explaining the danger with which she was threatened. “If you’ll let me go on my own way, Ma’am, you’ll soon know it; but if you hurry me, and ask me questions, here and there, out of their places, I don’t know what I am saying.”

“Be it so;” said Adeline, “only remember that we may be observed.”

“Yes, Ma’amselle, I’m as much afraid of that as you are, for I believe I should be almost as ill off; however, that is neither here nor there, but I’m sure, if you stay in this old abbey another night, it will be worse for you; for, as I said before, I know all about it.”

“What mean you, Peter?”

“Why, about this scheme that’s going on.”

“What, then, is my father?” —

“Your father,” interrupted Peter; “Lord bless you, that is all fudge, to frighten you; your father, nor nobody else has ever sent after you; I dare say, he knows no more of you than the Pope does — not he.” Adeline looked displeased. “You trifle,” said she, “if you have any thing to tell, say it quickly; I am in haste.”

“Bless you, young Lady, I meant no harm, I hope you’re not angry; but I’m sure you can’t deny that your father is cruel. But, as I was saying, the Marquis de Montalt likes you; and he and my master (Peter looked round) have been laying their heads together about you.” Adeline turned pale — she comprehended a part of the truth, and eagerly entreated him to proceed.

“They have been laying their heads together about you. This is what Jacques, the Marquis’s man, tells me: Says he, Peter, you little know what is going on — I could tell all if I chose it, but it is not for those who are trusted to tell again. I warrant now your master is close enough with you. Upon which I was piqued, and resolved to make him believe I could be trusted as well as he. Perhaps not, says I, perhaps I know as much as you, though I do not chuse to brag on’t; and I winked. — Do you so? says he, then you are closer than I thought for. She is a fine girl, says he, meaning you, Ma’amselle; but she is nothing but a poor foundling after all — so it does not much signify.” “I had a mind to know farther what he meant — so I did not knock him down. By seeming to know as much as he, I at last

made him discover all, and he told me — but you look pale, Ma'amselle, are you ill?

"No," said Adeline, in a tremulous accent, and scarcely able to support herself, "pray proceed."

"And he told me, that the Marquis had been courting you a good while, but you would not listen to him, and had even pretended he would marry you, and all would not do. As for marriage, says I, I suppose she knows the Marchioness is alive; and I'm sure she is not one for his turn upon other terms."

"The Marchioness is really living then!" said Adeline.

"O yes, Ma'amselle! we all know that, and I thought you had known it "too."— "We shall see that, replies Jacques; at least, I believe, that our "master will outwit her." — I stared; I could not help it.— "Aye, says he, you know your master has agreed to give her up to my Lord."

"Good God! what will become of me?" exclaimed Adeline.

"Aye, Ma'amselle, I am sorry for you; but hear me out. When Jacques said this, I quite forgot myself. I'll never believe it, said I; I'll never believe my master would be guilty of such a base action: he'll not give her up, or I'm no Christian."— "Oh! said Jacques, for that matter, I thought you'd known all, else I should not have said a word about it. However, you may soon satisfy yourself by going to the parlour door, as I have done; they're in consultation about it now, I dare say."

"You need not repeat any more of this conversation," said Adeline; "but tell me the result of what you heard from the parlour."

"Why, Ma'amselle, when he said this, I took him at his word and went to the door, where, sure enough, I heard my master and the Marquis talking about you. They said a great deal, which I could make nothing of; but, at last, I heard the Marquis say, You know the terms; on these terms only will I consent to bury the past in ob — ob — oblivion — that was the word. Monsieur La Motte then told the Marquis, if he would return to the abbey upon such a night, meaning this very night, Ma'amselle, every thing should be prepared according to his wishes; Adeline shall then be yours, my Lord, said he, — you are already acquainted with her chamber."

At these words, Adeline clasped her hands and raised her eyes to Heaven in silent despair. — Peter went on. "When I heard this, I could not doubt what Jacques had said.— "Well, said he, what do you think of it now?" —

Why, that my master’s a rascal, says “I.”— “It’s well you don’t think mine “one too, says he.”— “Why, as for that matter, says I” — Adeline, interrupting him, inquired if he had heard any thing farther. “Just then,” said Peter, “we heard Madame La Motte come out from another room, and so we made haste back to the kitchen.”

“She was not present at this conversation then?” said Adeline. “No, Ma’amselle, but my master has told her of it, I warrant.” Adeline was almost as much shocked by this apparent perfidy of Madame La Motte, as by a knowledge of the destruction that threatened her. After musing a few moments in extreme agitation, “Peter,” said she, “you have a good heart, and feel a just indignation at your master’s treachery — will you assist me to escape?”

“Ah, Ma’amselle! said he, “how can I assist you; besides, where can we go? I have no friends about here, no more than yourself.”

“O!” replied Adeline, in extreme emotion, “we fly from enemies; strangers may prove friends: assist me but to escape from this forest, and you will claim my eternal gratitude: I have no fears beyond it.”

“Why, as for this forest,” replied Peter, “I am weary of it myself; though, when we first came, I thought it would be fine living here, at least, I thought it was very different from any life I had ever lived before. But these ghosts that haunt the abbey, I am no more a coward than other men, but I don’t like them: and then there is so many strange reports abroad; and my master — I thought I could have served him to the end of the world, but now I care not how soon I leave him, for his behaviour to you, Ma’amselle.”

“You consent, then, to assist me in escaping?” said Adeline with eagerness.

“Why as to that, Ma’amselle, I would willingly if I knew where to go. To be sure, I have a sister lives in Savoy, but that is a great way off: and I have saved a little money out of my wages, but that won’t carry us such a long journey.”

“Regard not that,” said Adeline, “if I was once beyond this forest, I would then endeavour to take care of myself, and repay you for your kindness.”

“O! as for that, Madam” —

“Well, well, Peter, let us consider how we may escape. This night, say you, this night — the Marquis is to return?”

“Yes, Ma’amselle, to-night, about dark. I have just thought of a scheme: My master’s horses are grazing in the forest, we may take one of them, and send it back from the first stage: but how shall we avoid being seen? besides, if we go off in the daylight, he will soon pursue and overtake us; and if you stay till night, the Marquis will be come, and then there is no chance. If they miss us both at the same time too, they’ll guess how it is, and set off directly. Could not you contrive to go first and wait for me till the hurly-burly’s over? Then, while they’re searching in the place under ground for you, I can slip away, and we should be out of their reach, before they thought of pursuing us.”

Adeline agreed to the truth of all this, and was somewhat surprized at Peter’s sagacity. She inquired if he knew of any place in the neighbourhood of the abbey, where she could remain concealed till he came with a horse. “Why yes, Madam, there is a place, now I think of it, where you may be safe enough, for nobody goes near: but they say it’s haunted, and, perhaps, you would not like to go there.” Adeline, remembering the last night, was somewhat startled at this intelligence; but a sense of her present danger pressed again upon her mind, and overcame every other apprehension. “Where is this place?” said she, “if it will conceal me, I shall not hesitate to go.”

“It is an old tomb that stands in the thickest part of the forest about a quarter of a mile off the nearest way, and almost a mile the other. When my master used to hide himself so much in the forest, I have followed him somewhere thereabouts, but I did not find out the tomb till t’other day. However, that’s neither here nor there; if you dare venture to it, Ma’amselle, I’ll shew you the nearest way.” So saying, he pointed to a winding path on the right. Adeline, having looked round, without perceiving any person near, directed Peter to lead her to the tomb: they pursued the path, till turning into a gloomy romantic part of the forest, almost impervious to the rays of the sun, they came to the spot whither Louis had formerly traced his father.

The stillness and solemnity of the scene struck awe upon the heart of Adeline, who paused and surveyed it for some time in silence. At length, Peter led her into the interior part of the ruin, to which they descended by

several steps. “Some old Abbot,” said he, “was formerly buried here, as the Marquis’s people say; and it’s like enough that he belonged to the abbey yonder. But I don’t see why he should take it in his head to walk; he was not murdered, surely?”

“I hope not,” said Adeline.

“That’s more than can be said for all that lies buried at the abbey though, and” — Adeline interrupted him; “Hark! surely, I hear a noise;” said she, “Heaven protect us from discovery!” They listened, but all was still, and they went on. Peter opened a low door, and they entered upon a dark passage, frequently obstructed by loose fragments of stone, and along which they moved with caution. “Whither “are we going?” said Adeline— “I scarcely know myself,” said Peter, for I never was so far before; but the place seems quiet enough.” Something obstructed his way; it was a door, which yielded to his hand, and discovered a kind of cell, obscurely seen by the twilight admitted through a grate above. A partial gleam shot athwart the place, leaving the greatest part of it in shadow.

Adeline sighed as she surveyed it. “This is a frightful spot,” said she, “but if it will afford me a shelter, it is a palace. Remember, Peter, that my peace and honour depend upon your faithfulness; be both discrete and resolute. In the dusk of the evening I can pass from the abbey with least danger of being observed, and in this cell I will wait your arrival. As soon as Monsieur and Madame La Motte are engaged in searching the vaults, you will bring here a horse; three knocks upon the tomb shall inform me of your arrival. For Heaven’s sake be cautious, and be punctual.”

“I will, Ma’amselle, let come what may.”

They reascended to the forest, and Adeline, fearful of observation, directed Peter to run first to the abbey, and invent some excuse for his absence, if he had been missed. When she was again alone, she yielded to a flood of tears, and indulged the excess of her distress. She saw herself without friends, without relations, destitute, forlorn, and abandoned to the worst of evils. Betrayed by the very persons, to whose comfort she had so long administered, whom she had loved as her protectors, and revered as her parents! These reflections touched her heart with the most afflicting sensations, and the sense of her immediate danger was for a while absorbed in the grief occasioned by a discovery of such guilt in others.

At length she roused all her fortitude, and turning towards the abbey, endeavoured to await with patience the hour of evening, and to sustain an appearance of composure in the presence of Monsieur and Madame La Motte. For the present she wished to avoid seeing either of them, doubting her ability to disguise her emotions: having reached the abbey, she, therefore, passed on to her chamber. Here she endeavoured to direct her attention to indifferent subjects, but in vain; the danger of her situation, and the severe disappointment she had received, in the character of those whom she had so much esteemed, and even loved, pressed hard upon her thoughts. To a generous mind few circumstances are more afflicting than a discovery of perfidy in those whom we have trusted, even though it may fail of any absolute inconvenience to ourselves. The behaviour of Madame La Motte in thus, by concealment, conspiring to her destruction, particularly shocked her.

“How has my imagination deceived me!” said she; “what a picture did “it draw of the goodness of the world! And must I then believe that every body is cruel and deceitful? No — let me still be deceived, and still suffer, rather than be condemned to a state of such wretched suspicion.” She now endeavoured to extenuate the conduct of Madame La Motte, by attributing it to a fear of her husband. “She dare not oppose his will,” said she, “else she would warn me of my danger, and assist me to escape from it. No — I will never believe her capable of conspiring my ruin. Terror alone keeps her silent.”

Adeline was somewhat comforted by this thought. The benevolence of her heart taught her, in this instance, to sophisticate. She perceived not, that by ascribing the conduct of Madame La Motte to terror, she only softened the degree of her guilt, imputing it to a motive less depraved, but not less selfish. She remained in her chamber till summoned to dinner, when, drying her tears, she descended with faltering steps and a palpitating heart to the parlour. When she saw La Motte, in spite of all her efforts, she trembled and grew pale: she could not behold, even with apparent indifference, the man who she knew had destined her to destruction. He observed her emotion, and inquiring if she was ill, she saw the danger to which her agitation exposed her. Fearful lest La Motte should suspect its true cause, she rallied all her spirits, and, with a look of complacency, answered she was well.

During dinner she preserved a degree of composure, that effectually concealed the varied anguish of her heart. When she looked at La Motte, terror and indignation were her predominant feelings; but when she regarded Madame La Motte, it was otherwise; gratitude for her former tenderness had long been confirmed into affection, and her heart now swelled with the bitterness of grief and disappointment. Madame La Motte appeared depressed, and said little. La Motte seemed anxious to prevent thought, by assuming a fictitious and unnatural gaiety: he laughed and talked, and threw off frequent bumpers of wine: it was the mirth of desperation. Madame became alarmed, and would have restrained him, but he persisted in his libations to Bacchus till reflection seemed to be almost overcome.

Madame La Motte, fearful that in the carelessness of the present moment he might betray himself, withdrew with Adeline to another room. Adeline recollected the happy hours she once passed with her, when confidence banished reserve, and sympathy and esteem dictated the sentiments of friendship: now those hours were gone for ever; she could no longer unbosom her griefs to Madame La Motte; no longer even esteem her. Yet, notwithstanding all the danger to which she was exposed by the criminal silence of the latter, she could not converse with her, consciously for the last time, without feeling a degree of sorrow, which wisdom may call weakness, but to which benevolence will allow a softer name.

Madame La Motte, in her conversation, appeared to labour under an almost equal oppression with Adeline: her thoughts were abstracted from the subject of discourse, and there were long and frequent intervals of silence. Adeline more than once caught her gazing with a look of tenderness upon her, and saw her eyes fill with tears. By this circumstance she was so much affected, that she was several times upon the point of throwing herself at her feet, and imploring her pity and protection. Cooler reflection shewed her the extravagance and danger of this conduct: she suppressed her emotions, but they at length compelled her to withdraw from the presence of Madame La Motte.

CHAPTER 1 1

Thou! to whom the world unknown
With all its shadowy shapes is shown;
Who seest appall’d th’ unreal scene,
While fancy lifts the veil between;
Ah, Fear! ah, frantic Fear!
I see, I see thee near!
I know thy hurry’d step, thy haggard eye!
Like thee I start, like thee disordered fly!
COLLINS.

Adeline anxiously watched from her chamber window the sun set behind the distant hills, and the time of her departure draw nigh: it set with uncommon splendour, and threw a fiery gleam athwart the woods, and upon some scattered fragments of the ruins, which she could not gaze upon with indifference. “Never, probably, again shall I see the sun sink below those hills,” said she, “or illumine this scene! Where shall I be when next it sets — where this time tomorrow? sunk, perhaps, in misery!” She wept to the thought. “A few hours,” resumed Adeline, “and the Marquis will arrive — a few hours, and this abbey will be a scene of confusion and tumult: every eye will be in search of me, every recess will be explored.” These reflections inspired her with new terror, and increased her impatience to be gone.

Twilight gradually came on, and she now thought it sufficiently dark to venture forth; but, before she went, she kneeled down and addressed herself to Heaven. She implored support and protection, and committed herself to the care of the God of mercies. Having done this, she quitted her chamber, and passed with cautious steps down the winding staircase. No person appeared, and she proceeded through the door of the tower into the forest. She looked around; the gloom of the evening obscured every object.

With a trembling heart she sought the path pointed out by Peter, which led to the tomb; having found it, she passed along forlorn and terrified. Often did she start as the breeze shook the light leaves of the trees, or as the bat fli[t]ted by, gamboling in the twilight; and often, as she looked back towards the abbey, thought she distinguished, amid the deepening gloom, the figures of men Having proceeded some way, she suddenly heard the feet of horses, and soon after a sound of voices, among which

she distinguished that of the Marquis: they seemed to come from the quarter she was approaching, and evidently advanced. Terror for some minutes arrested her steps; she stood in a state of dreadful hesitation: to proceed was to run into the hands of the Marquis; to return was to fall into the power of La Motte.

After remaining for some time uncertain whither to fly, the sounds suddenly took a different direction, and wheeled towards the abbey. Adeline had a short cessation of terror. She now understood that the Marquis had passed this spot only in his way to the abbey, and she hastened to secrete herself in the ruin. At length, after much difficulty, she reached it, the deep shades almost concealing it from her search. She paused at the entrance, awed by the solemnity that reigned within, and the utter darkness of the place; at length she determined to watch without till Peter should arrive. “If any person approaches,” said she, “I can hear them before they can see me, and I can then secrete myself in the cell.”

She leaned against a fragment of the tomb in trembling expectation, and, as she listened, no found broke the silence of the hour. The state of her mind can only be imagined, by considering that upon the present time turned the crisis of her fate. “They have now,” thought she, “discovered my flight; even now they are seeking me in every part of the abbey. I hear their dreadful voices call me; I see their eager looks.” The power of imagination almost overcame her. While she yet looked around, she saw lights moving at a distance; sometimes they glimmered between the trees, and sometimes they totally disappeared.

They seemed to be in a direction with the abbey; and she now remembered, that in the morning she had seen a part of the fabric through an opening in the forest. She had, therefore, no doubt that the lights she saw proceeded from people in search of her; who, she feared, not finding her at the abbey, might direct their steps towards the tomb. Her place of refuge now seemed too near her enemies to be safe, and she would have fled to a more distant part of the forest, but recollected that Peter would not know where to find her.

While these thoughts passed over her mind, she heard distant voices in the wind, and was hastening to conceal herself in the cell, when she observed the lights suddenly disappear. All was soon after hushed in silence and darkness, yet she endeavoured to find the way to the cell. She

remembered the situation of the outer door and of the passage, and having passed these she unclosed the door of the cell. Within it was utterly dark. She trembled violently, but entered; and, having felt about the walls, at length seated herself on a projection of stone.

She here again addressed herself to Heaven, and endeavoured to reanimate her spirits till Peter should arrive. Above half an hour elapsed in this gloomy recess, and no sound foretold his approach. Her spirits sunk, she feared some part of their plan was discovered, or interrupted, and that he was detained by La Motte. This conviction operated sometimes so strongly upon her fears, as to urge her to quit the cell alone, and seek in flight her only chance of escape.

While this design was fluctuating in her mind, she distinguished through the grate above a clattering of hoofs. The noise approached, and at length stopped at the tomb. In the succeeding moment she heard three strokes of a whip; her heart beat, and for some moments her agitation was such, that she made no effort to quit the cell. The strokes were repeated: she now roused her spirits, and, stepping forward, ascended to the forest. She called "Peter;" for the deep gloom would not permit her to distinguish either man or horse. She was quickly answered, "Hush! Ma'amselle, our voices will betray us."

They mounted and rode off as fast as the darkness would permit. Adeline's heart revived at every step they took. She inquired what had passed at the abbey, and how he had contrived to get away. "Speak softly, Ma'amselle; you'll know all by and bye, but I can't tell you now." He had scarcely spoke ere they saw lights move along at a distance; and coming now to a more open part of the forest, he sat off on a full gallop, and continued the pace till the horse could hold it no longer. They looked back, and no lights appearing, Adeline's terror subsided. She inquired again what had passed at the abbey, when her flight was discovered. "You may speak without fear of being heard," said she, "we are gone beyond their reach I hope."

"Why, Ma'amselle," said he, "you had not been gone long before the Marquis arrived, and Monsieur La Motte then found out you was fled. Upon this a great rout there was, and he talked a great deal with the Marquis."

"Speak louder," said Adeline, "I cannot hear you."

“I will, Ma’amselle.” —

“Oh! Heavens!” interrupted Adeline, What voice is this? It is not Peter’s. For God’s sake tell me who you are, and whither I am going?”

“You’ll know that soon enough, young lady,” answered the stranger, for it was indeed not Peter; “I am taking “you where my master ordered.” Adeline, not doubting he was the Marquis’s servant, attempted to leap to the ground, but the man, dismounting, bound her to the horse. One feeble ray of hope at length beamed upon her mind: she endeavoured to soften the man to pity, and pleaded with all the genuine eloquence of distress; but he understood his interest too well to yield even for a moment to the compassion, which, in spite of himself, her artless supplication inspired.

She now resigned herself to despair, and, in passive silence, submitted to her fate. They continued thus to travel, till a storm of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, drove them to the covert of a thick grove. The man believed this a safe situation, and Adeline was now too careless of life to attempt convincing him of his error. The storm was violent and long, but as soon as it abated they set off on full gallop, and having continued to travel for about two hours, they came to the borders of the forest, and, soon after, to a high lonely wall, which Adeline could just distinguish by the moonlight, which now streamed through the parting clouds.

Here they stopped; the man dismounted, and having opened a small door in the wall, he unbound Adeline, who shrieked, though involuntarily and in vain, as he took her from the horse. The door opened upon a narrow passage, dimly lighted by a lamp, which hung at the farther end. He led her on; they came to another door; it opened and disclosed a magnificent saloon, splendidly illuminated, and fitted up in the most airy and elegant taste.

The walls were painted in fresco, representing scenes from Ovid, and hung above with silk drawn up in festoons and richly fringed. The sofas were of a silk to suit the hangings. From the centre of the ceiling, which exhibited a scene from the Armida of Tasso, descended a silver lamp of Etruscan form: it diffused a blaze of light, that, reflected from large pier glasses, completely illuminated the saloon. Busts of Horace, Ovid, Anacreon, Tibullus, and Petronius Arbiter, adorned the recesses, and stands of flowers, placed in Etruscan vases, breathed the most delicious

perfume. In the middle of the apartment stood a small table, spread with a collation of fruits, ices, and liquors. No person appeared. The whole seemed the works of enchantment, and rather resembled the palace of a fairy than any thing of human conformation.

Adeline was astonished, and inquired where she was, but the man refused to answer her questions, and, having desired her to take some refreshment, left her. She walked to the windows, from which a gleam of moonlight discovered to her an extensive garden, where groves and lawns, and water glittering in the moonbeam, composed a scenery of varied and romantic beauty. “What can this mean!” said she: “Is this a charm to lure me to destruction?” She endeavoured, with a hope of escaping; to open the windows, but they were all fastened; she next attempted several doors, and found them also secured.

Perceiving all chance of escape was removed, she remained for some time given up to sorrow and reflection; but was at length drawn from her reverie by the notes of soft music, breathing such dulcet and entrancing sounds, as suspended grief, and waked the soul to tenderness and pensive pleasure. Adeline listened in surprize, and insensibly became soothed and interested; a tender melancholy stole upon her heart, and subdued every harsher feeling: but the moment the strain ceased, the enchantment dissolved, and she returned to a sense of her situation.

Again the music sounded— “music such as charmeth sleep” — and again she gradually yielded to its sweet magic. A female voice, accompanied by a lute, a hautboy, and a few other instruments, now gradually swelled into a tone so exquisite, as raised attention into ecstacy. It sunk by degrees, and touched a few simple notes with pathetic softness, when the measure was suddenly changed, and in a gay and airy melody Adeline distinguished the following words:

SONG.

Life’s a varied, bright illusion, Joy and sorrow — light and shade; Turn from sorrow’s dark suffusion, Catch the pleasures ere they fade.

Fancy paints with hues unreal, Smile of bliss, and sorrow’s mood; If they both are but ideal, Why reject the seeming good?

Hence! no more! ‘tis Wisdom calls ye, Bids ye court Time’s present aid; The future trust not — hope enthrals ye, “Catch the pleasures ere they fade.”

The music ceased, but the sound still vibrated on her imagination, and she was sunk in the pleasing languor they had inspired, when the door opened, and the Marquis de Montalt appeared. He approached the sofa where Adeline sat, and addressed her, but she heard not his voice — she had fainted. He endeavoured to recover her, and at length succeeded; but when she unclosed her eyes, and again beheld him, she relapsed into a state of insensibility, and having in vain tried various methods to restore her, he was obliged to call assistance. Two young women entered, and, when she began to revive, he left them to prepare her for his reappearance. When Adeline perceived that the Marquis was gone, and that she was in the care of women, her spirits gradually returned; she looked at her attendants, and was surprised to see so much elegance and beauty.

Some endeavour she made to interest their pity, but they seemed wholly insensible to her distress, and began to talk of the Marquis in terms of the highest admiration. They assured her it would be her own fault if she was not happy, and advised her to appear so in his presence. It was with the utmost difficulty that Adeline forebore to express the disdain which was rising to her lips, and that she listened to their discourse in silence. But she saw the inconvenience and fruitlessness of opposition, and she commanded her feelings.

They were thus proceeding in their praises of the Marquis, when he himself appeared, and, waving his hand, they immediately quitted the apartment. Adeline beheld him with a kind of mute despair, while he approached and took her hand, which she hastily withdrew, and turning from him with a look of unutterable distress, burst into tears. He was for some time silent, and appeared softened by her anguish. But again approaching, and addressing her in a gentle voice, he entreated her pardon for the step, which despair, and, as he called it, love had prompted. She was too much absorbed in grief to reply, till he solicited a return of his love, when her sorrow yielded to indignation, and she reproached him with his conduct. He pleaded that he had long loved and sought her upon honourable terms, and his offer of those terms he began to repeat, but, raising his eyes towards Adeline, he saw in her looks the contempt which he was conscious he deserved.

For a moment he was confused, and seemed to understand both that his plan was discovered and his person despised; but soon resuming his usual

command of feature, he again pressed his suit, and solicited her love. A little reflection shewed Adeline the danger of exasperating his pride, by an avowal of the contempt which his pretended offer of marriage excited; and she thought it not improper, upon an occasion in which the honour and peace of her life was concerned, to yield somewhat to the policy of dissimulation. She saw that her only chance of escaping his designs depended upon delaying them, and she now wished him to believe her ignorant that the Marchioness was living, and that his offers were delusive.

He observed her pause, and, in the eagerness to turn her hesitation to his advantage, renewed his proposal with increased vehemence.— "Tomorrow shall unite us, lovely Adeline; tomorrow you shall consent to become the Marchioness de Montalt. You will then return my love and" —

"You must first deserve my esteem, my Lord."

"I will — I do deserve it. Are you not now in my power, and do I not forbear to take advantage of your situation? Do I not make you the most honourable proposals?" — Adeline shuddered: "If you wish I should esteem you, my Lord, endeavour, if possible, to make me forget by what means I came into your power; if your views are, indeed, honourable, prove them so by releasing me from my confinement."

"Can you then wish, lovely Adeline, to fly from him who adores you?" replied the Marquis, with a studied air of tenderness. "Why will you exact so severe a proof of my disinterestedness, a disinterestedness which is not consistent with love? No, charming Adeline, let me at least have the pleasure of beholding you, till the bonds of the church shall remove every obstacle to my love. Tomorrow" —

Adeline saw the danger to which she was now exposed, and interrupted him. "Deserve my esteem, Sir, and then you will obtain it: as a first step towards which, liberate me from a confinement that obliges me to look on you only with terror and aversion. How can I believe your professions of love, while you shew that you have no interest in my happiness?" Thus did Adeline, to whom the arts and the practice of dissimulation were hitherto equally unknown, condescend to make use of them in disguising her indignation and contempt. But though these arts were adopted only for the purpose of self-preservation, she used them with reluctance, and almost with abhorrence; for her mind was habitually impregnated with the love of

virtue, in thought, word, and action, and, while her end in using them was certainly good, she scarcely thought that end could justify the means.

The Marquis persisted in his sophistry. “Can you doubt the reality of that love, which, to obtain you, has urged me to risque your displeasure? But have I not consulted your happiness, even in the very conduct which you condemn? I have removed you from a solitary and desolate ruin to a gay and splendid villa, where every luxury is at your command, and where every person shall be obedient to your wishes.”

“My first wish is to go hence,” said Adeline; “I entreat, I conjure you, my Lord, no longer to detain me. I am a friendless and wretched orphan, exposed to many evils, and, I fear, abandoned to misfortune: I do not wish to be rude; but allow me to say, that no misery can exceed that I shall feel in remaining here, or, indeed, in being any where pursued by the offers you make me!” Adeline had now forgot her policy: tears prevented her from proceeding, and she turned away her face to hide her emotion.

“By Heaven! Adeline, you do me wrong,” said the Marquis, rising from his seat, and seizing her hand; “I love, I adore you; yet you doubt my passion, and are insensible to my vows. Every pleasure possible to be enjoyed within these walls you shall partake, but beyond them you shall not go.” She disengaged her hand, and in silent anguish walked to a distant part of the saloon; deep sighs burst from her heart, and, almost fainting, she leaned on a window-frame for support.

The Marquis followed her; “Why thus obstinately persist in refusing to be happy?” said he; “recollect the proposal I have made you, and accept it, while it is yet in your power. Tomorrow a priest shall join our hands — Surely, being, as you are, in my power, it must be your interest to consent to this?” Adeline could answer only by tears; she despaired of softening his heart to pity, and feared to exasperate his pride by disdain. He now led her, and she suffered him, to a seat near the banquet, at which he pressed her to partake of a variety of confectionaries, particularly of some liquors, of which he himself drank freely: Adeline accepted only of a peach.

And now the Marquis, who interpreted her silence into a secret compliance with his proposal, resumed all his gaiety and spirit, while the long and ardent regards he bestowed on Adeline, overcame her with confusion and indignation. In the midst of the banquet, soft music again sounded the most tender and impassioned airs; but its effect on Adeline

was now lost, her mind being too much embarrassed and distressed by the presence of the Marquis, to admit even the soothings of harmony. A song was now heard, written with that sort of impotent art, by which some voluptuous poets believe they can at once conceal and recommend the principles of vice. Adeline received it with contempt and displeasure, and the Marquis, perceiving its effect, presently made a sign for another composition, which, adding the force of poetry to the charms of music, might withdraw her mind from the present scene, and enchant it in sweet delirium.

SONG OF A SPIRIT.

In the sightless air I dwell,
On the sloping sunbeams play;
Delve the cavern’s inmost cell,
Where never yet did daylight stray:
Dive beneath the green sea waves,
And gambol in the briny deeps;
Skim ev’ry shore that Neptune laves,
From Lapland’s plains to India’s steeps.
Oft I mount with rapid force
Above the wide earth’s shadowy zone;
Follow the day-star’s flaming course
Through realms of space to thought unknown:
And listen oft celestial sounds
That swell the air unheard of men,
As I watch my nightly rounds
O’er woody steep, and silent glen.
Under the shade of waving trees,
On the green bank of fountain clear,
At pensive eve I sit at ease,
While dying music murmurs near.
And oft, on point of airy clift,
That hangs upon the western main,
I watch the gay tints passing swift,
And twilight veil the liquid plain.

Then, when the breeze has sunk away,
And ocean scarce is heard to lave,
For me the sea-nymphs softly play
Their dulcet shells beneath the wave.
Their dulcet shells! I hear them now,
Slow swells the strain upon mine ear;
Now faintly falls — now warbles low,
Till rapture melts into a tear.
The ray that silvers o’er the dew,
And trembles through the leafy shade,
And tints the scene with softer hue,
Calls me to rove the lonely glade;
Or hie me to some ruin’d tower,
Faintly shewn by moonlight gleam,
Where the lone wanderer owns my power
In shadows dire that substance seem;
In thrilling sounds that murmur woe,
And pausing silence make more dread;
In music breathing from below
Sad solemn strains, that wake the dead.
Unseen I move — unknown am fear’d!
Fancy’s wildest dreams I weave;
And oft by bards my voice is heard
To die along the gales of eve.

When the voice ceased, a mournful strain, played with exquisite expression, sounded from a distant horn; sometimes the notes floated on the air in soft undulations — now they swelled into full and sweeping melody, and now died faintly into silence: when again they rose and trembled in sounds so sweetly tender, as drew tears from Adeline, and exclamations of rapture from the Marquis; he threw his arm round her, and would have pressed her towards him, but she liberated herself from his embrace, and with a look, on which was impressed the firm dignity of virtue, yet touched with sorrow, she awed him to forbearance. Conscious of a superiority, which he was ashamed to acknowledge, and endeavouring

to despise the influence which he could not resist, he stood for a moment the slave of virtue, though the votary of vice. Soon, however, he recovered his confidence, and began to plead his love; when Adeline, no longer animated by the spirit she had lately shewn, and sinking beneath the languor and fatigue which the various and violent agitations of her mind produced, entreated he would leave her to repose.

The paleness of her countenance, and the tremulous tone of her voice, were too expressive to be misunderstood; and the Marquis, bidding her remember tomorrow, with some hesitation, withdrew. The moment she was alone, she yielded to the bursting anguish of her heart, and was so absorbed in grief, that it was some time before she perceived she was in the presence of the young women, who had lately attended her, and had entered the saloon soon after the Marquis quitted it: they came to conduct her to her chamber. She followed them for some time in silence, till, prompted by desperation, she again endeavoured to awaken their compassion: but again the praises of the Marquis were repeated, and perceiving that all attempts to interest them in her favour were in vain, she dismissed them. She secured the door through which they had departed, and then, in the languid hope of discovering some means of escape, she surveyed her chamber. The airy elegance with which it was fitted up, and the luxurious accommodations with which it abounded, seemed designed to fascinate the imagination, and to seduce the heart. The hangings were of straw-coloured silk, adorned with a variety of landscapes and historical paintings, the subjects of which partook of the voluptuous character of the owner; the chimney-piece, of Parian marble, was ornamented with several reposing figures from the antique. The bed was of silk the colour of the hangings, richly fringed with purple and silver, and the head made in form of a canopy. The steps, which were placed near the bed to assist in ascending it, were supported by Cupids, apparently of solid silver. China vases, filled with persume, stood in several of the recesses, upon stands of the same structure as the toilet, which was magnificent, and ornamented with a variety of trinkets.

Adeline threw a transient look upon these various objects, and proceeded to examine the windows, which descended to the floor, and opened into balconies towards the garden she had seen from the saloon. They were now fastened, and her efforts to move them were ineffectual; at

length she gave up the attempt. A door next attracted her notice, which she found was not fastened; it opened upon a dressing closet, to which she descended by a few steps: two windows appeared, she hastened towards them; one refused to yield, but her heart beat with sudden joy when the other opened to her touch.

In the transport of the moment, she forgot that its distance from the ground might yet deny the escape she meditated. She returned to lock the door of the closet, to prevent a surprize, which, however, was unnecessary, that of the bedroom being already secured. She now looked out from the window; the garden lay before her, and she perceived that the window, which descended to the floor, was so near the ground, that she might jump from it with ease: almost in the moment she perceived this, she sprang forward and alighted safely in an extensive garden, resembling more an English pleasure ground, than a series of French parterres.

Thence she had little doubt of escaping, either by some broken fence, or low part of the wall; she tripped lightly along, for hope played round her heart. The clouds of the late storm were now dispersed, and the moonlight, which slept on the lawns and spangled the flowerets, yet heavy with rain-drops, afforded her a distinct view of the surrounding scenery: she followed the direction of the high wall that adjoined the chateau, till it was concealed from her sight by a thick wilderness, so entangled with boughs and obscured by darkness, that she feared, to enter, and turned aside into a walk on the right; it conducted her to the margin of a lake overhung with lofty trees.

The moonbeams dancing upon the waters, that with gentle undulation played along the shore, exhibited a scene of tranquil beauty, which would have soothed an heart less agitated than was that of Adeline: she sighed as she transiently surveyed it, and passed hastily on in search of the garden wall, from which she had now strayed a considerable way. After wandering for some time through alleys and over lawns, without meeting with any thing like a boundary to the grounds, she again found herself at the lake, and now traversed its border with the footsteps of despair: — tears rolled down her cheeks. The scene around exhibited only images of peace and delight; every object seemed to repose; not a breath waved the foliage, not a sound stole through the air: it was in her bosom only that tumult and distress prevailed. She still pursued the windings of the shore, till an

opening in the woods conducted her up a gentle ascent: the path now wound along the side of a hill, where the gloom was so deep, that it was with some difficulty she found her way: suddenly, however, the avenue opened to a lofty grove, and she perceived a light issue from a recess at some distance.

She paused, and her first impulse was to retreat, but listening and hearing no sound, a faint hope beamed upon her mind, that the person to whom the light belonged, might be won to favour her escape. She advanced, with trembling and cautious steps, towards the recess, that she might secretly observe the person, before she ventured to enter it. Her emotion increased as she approached, and having reached the bower, she beheld, through an open window, the Marquis, reclining on a sofa, near which stood a table, covered with fruit and wine. He was alone, and his countenance was flushed with drinking.

While she gazed, fixed to the spot by terror, he looked up towards the casement; the light gleamed full upon her face, but she stayed not to learn whether he had observed her, for, with the swiftness of sound, she left the place and ran, without knowing whether she was pursued. Having gone a considerable way, fatigue, at length, compelled her to stop, and she threw herself upon the turf, almost fainting with fear and languor. She knew if the Marquis detected her in an attempt to escape, he would, probably, burst the bounds which he had hitherto prescribed to himself, and that she had the most dreadful evils to expect. The palpitations of terror were so strong, that she could with difficulty breathe.

She watched and listened in trembling expectation, but no form met her eye, no sound her ear; in this state she remained a considerable time. She wept, and the tears she shed relieved her oppressed heart. “O my father!” said she, “why did you abandon your child? If you knew the dangers to which you have exposed her, you would, surely, pity and relieve her. Alas! shall I never find a friend; am I destined still to trust and be deceived? — Peter too, could he be treacherous?” She wept again, and then returned to a sense of her present danger, and to a consideration of the means of escaping it — but no means appeared.

To her imagination the grounds were boundless; she had wandered from lawn to lawn, and from grove to grove, without perceiving any termination to the place; the garden wall she could not find, but she resolved neither to

return to the chateau, nor to relinquish her search. As she was rising to depart, she perceived a shadow move along at some distance; she stood still to observe it. It slowly advanced and then disappeared, but presently she saw a person emerge from the gloom, and approach the spot where she stood. She had no doubt that the Marquis had observed her, and she ran with all possible speed to the shade of some woods on the left. Footsteps pursued her, and she heard her name repeated, while she in vain endeavoured to quicken her pace.

Suddenly the sound of pursuit turned, and sunk away in a different direction: she paused to take breath; she looked around and no person appeared. She now proceeded slowly along the avenue, and had almost reached its termination, when she saw the same figure emerge from the woods and dart across the avenue; it instantly pursued her and approached. A voice called her, but she was gone beyond its reach, for she had sunk senseless upon the ground: it was long before she revived, when she did, she found herself in the arms of a stranger, and made an effort to disengage herself.

“Fear nothing, lovely Adeline,” said he, “fear nothing: you are in the arms of a friend, who will encounter any hazard for your sake; who will protect you with his life.” He pressed her gently to his heart. “Have you then forgot me?” continued he. She looked earnestly at him, and was now convinced that it was Theodore who spoke. Joy was her first emotion; but, recollecting his former abrupt departure, at a time so critical to her safety, and that he was the friend of the Marquis, a thousand mingled sensations struggled in her breast, and overwhelmed her with mistrust, apprehension, and disappointment.

Theodore raised her from the ground, and while he yet supported her, “Let us immediately fly from this place,” said he; “a carriage waits to receive us; it shall go wherever you direct, and convey you to your friends.” This last sentence touched her heart: “Alas, I have no friends!” said she, “nor do I know whither to go.” Theodore gently pressed her hand between his, and, in a voice of the softest compassion, said, “My friends then shall be yours; suffer me to lead you to them. But I am in agony while you remain in this place; let us hasten to quit it.” Adeline was going to reply, when voices were heard among the trees, and Theodore, supporting

her with his arm, hurried her along the avenue: they continued their flight till Adeline, panting for breath, could go no farther.

Having paused a while, and heard no footsteps in pursuit, they renewed their course: Theodore knew that they were now not far from the garden wall; but he was also aware, that in the intermediate space several paths wound from remote parts of the grounds into the walk he was to pass, from whence the Marquis's people might issue and intercept him. He, however, concealed his apprehensions from Adeline, and endeavoured to soothe and support her spirits.

At length they reached the wall, and Theodore was leading her towards a low part of it, near which stood the carriage, when again they heard voices in the air. Adeline's spirits and strength were nearly exhausted, but she made a last effort to proceed, and she now saw the ladder at some distance by which Theodore had descended to the garden. "Exert yourself yet a little longer," said he, "and you will be in safety." He held the ladder while she ascended; the top of the wall was broad and level, and Adeline, having reached it, remained there till Theodore followed and drew the ladder to the other side.

When they had descended, the carriage appeared in waiting, but without the driver. Theodore feared to call, lest his voice should betray him; he, therefore, put Adeline into the carriage, and went himself in search of the postillion, whom he found asleep under a tree at some distance; having awakened him, they returned to the vehicle, which soon drove furiously away. Adeline did not yet dare to believe herself safe, but, after proceeding a considerable time without interruption, joy burst upon her heart, and she thanked her deliverer in terms of the warmest gratitude. The sympathy expressed in the tone of his voice and manner, proved that his happiness, on this occasion, almost equalled her own.

As reflection gradually stole upon her mind, anxiety superseded joy: in the tumult of the late moments, she thought only of escape, but the circumstances of her present situation now appeared to her, and she became silent and pensive: she had no friends to whom she could fly, and was going with a young Chevalier, almost a stranger to her, she knew not whither. She remembered how often she had been deceived and betrayed where she trusted most, and her spirits sunk: she remembered also the former attention which Theodore had shewn her, and dreaded lest his

conduct might be prompted by a selfish passion. She saw this to be possible, but she disdained to believe it probable, and felt that nothing could give her greater pain than to doubt the integrity of Theodore.

He interrupted her reverie, by recurring to her late situation at the abbey. “You would be much surprised,” said he, “and, I fear, offended, that I did not attend my appointment at the abbey, after the alarming hints I had given you in our last interview. That circumstance has, perhaps, injured me in your esteem, if, indeed, I was ever so happy as to possess it: but my designs were overruled by those of the Marquis de Montalt; and I think I may venture to assert, that my distress upon this occasion was, at least, equal to your apprehensions.”

Adeline said, “She had been much alarmed by the hints he had given her, and by his failing to afford farther information, concerning the subject of her danger; and” — She checked the sentence that hung upon her lips, for she perceived that she was unwarily betraying the interest he held in her heart. There were a few moments of silence, and neither party seemed perfectly at ease. Theodore, at length, renewed the conversation: “Suffer me to acquaint you,” said he, “with the circumstances that withheld me from the interview I solicited; I am anxious to exculpate myself.” Without waiting her reply, he proceeded to inform her, that the Marquis had, by some inexplicable means, learned or suspected the subject of their last conversation, and, perceiving his designs were in danger of being counteracted, had taken effectual means to prevent her obtaining farther intelligence of them. Adeline immediately recollected that Theodore and herself had been seen in the forest by La Motte, who had, no doubt, suspected their growing intimacy, and had taken care to inform the Marquis how likely he was to find a rival in his friend.

“On the day following that, on which I last saw you,” said Theodore, “the Marquis, who is my colonel, commanded me to prepare to attend my regiment, and appointed the following morning for my journey. This sudden order gave me some surprize, but I was not long in doubt concerning the motive for it: a servant of the Marquis, who had been long attached to me, entered my room soon after I had left his Lord, and expressing concern at my abrupt departure, dropped some hints respecting it, which excited my surprize. I inquired farther, and was confirmed in the

suspicions I had for some time entertained of the Marquis's designs upon you.

"Jacques farther informed me, that our late interview had been noticed and communicated to the Marquis. His information had been obtained from a fellow servant, and it alarmed me so much, that I engaged him to send me intelligence from time to time, concerning the proceedings of the Marquis. I now looked forward to the evening which would bring me again to your presence with increased impatience: but the ingenuity of the Marquis effectually counteracted my endeavours and wishes; he had made an engagement to pass the day at the villa of a nobleman some leagues distant, and, notwithstanding all the excuses I could offer, I was obliged to attend him. Thus compelled to obey, I passed a day of more agitation and anxiety than I had ever before experienced. It was midnight before we returned to the Marquis's chateau. I arose early in the morning to commence my journey, and resolved to seek an interview with you before I left the province.

"When I entered the breakfast room, I was much surprized to find the Marquis there already, who, commending the beauty of the morning, declared his intention of accompanying me as far as Chineau. Thus unexpectedly deprived of my last hope, my countenance, I believe, expressed what I felt, for the scrutinizing eye of the Marquis instantly changed from seeming carelessness to displeasure. The distance from Chineau to the abbey was, at least, twelve leagues; yet I had once some intention of returning from thence, when the Marquis should leave me, till I recollected the very remote chance there would even then be of seeing you alone, and also, that if I was observed by La Motte, it would awaken all his suspicions, and caution him against any future plan I might see it expedient to attempt: I, therefore, proceeded to join my regiment.

"Jacques sent me frequent accounts of the operations of the Marquis, but his manner of relating them was so very confused, that they only served to perplex and distress me. His last letter, however, alarmed me so much, that my residence in quarters became intolerable; and, as I found it impossible to obtain leave of absence, I secretly left the regiment, and concealed myself in a cottage about a mile from the chateau, that I might obtain the earliest intelligence of the Marquis's plans. Jacques brought me

daily information, and, at last, an account of the horrible plot which was laid for the following night.

“I saw little probability of warning you of your danger. If I ventured near the abbey, La Motte might discover me, and frustrate every attempt on my part to save you: yet I determined to encounter this risk for the chance of seeing you, and towards evening I was preparing to set out for the forest, when Jacques arrived and informed me, that you was to be brought to the chateau. My plan was thus rendered less difficult. I learned also, that the Marquis, by means of those refinements in luxury, with which he is but too well acquainted, designed, now that his apprehension of losing you was no more, to seduce you to his wishes, and impose upon you by a fictitious marriage. Having obtained information concerning the situation of the room allotted you, I ordered a chaise to be in waiting, and with a design of scaling your window, and conducting you thence, I entered the garden at midnight.”

Theodore having ceased to speak, “I know not how words can express my sense of the obligations I owe you,” said Adeline, “or my gratitude for your generosity.”

“Ah! call it not generosity,” he replied, “it was love.” He paused. Adeline was silent. After some moments of expressive emotion, he resumed; “But pardon this abrupt declaration; yet why do I call it abrupt, since my actions have already disclosed what my lips have never, till this instant, ventured to acknowledge.” He paused again. Adeline was still silent. “Yet do me the justice to believe, that I am sensible of the impropriety of pleading my love at present, and have been surprized into this confession. I promise also to forbear from a renewal of the subject, till you are placed in a situation, where you may freely accept or refuse, the sincere regards I offer you. If I could, however, now be certain that I possess your esteem, it would relieve me from much anxiety.”

Adeline felt surprized that he should doubt her esteem for him, after the signal and generous service he had rendered her; but she was not yet acquainted with the timidity of love. “Do you then,” said she, in a tremulous voice, believe me ungrateful? It is impossible I can consider your friendly interference in my behalf without esteeming you.” Theodore immediately took her hand and pressed it to his lips in silence. They were

both too much agitated to converse, and continued to travel for some miles without exchanging a word.

CHAPTER 1 2

“And Hope enchanted smil’d, and wav’d her golden hair;
And longer had she sung — but with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose.”
Ode To The Passions.

The dawn of morning now trembled through the clouds, when the travellers stopped at a small town to change horses. Theodore entreated Adeline to alight and take some refreshment, and to this she at length consented. But the people of the inn were not yet up, and it was some time before the knocking and roaring of the postillion could rouse them.

Having taken some slight refreshment, Theodore and Adeline returned to the carriage. The only subject upon which Theodore could have spoke with interest, delicacy forbade him at this time to notice; and after pointing out some beautiful scenery on the road, and making other efforts to support a conversation, he relapsed into silence. His mind, though still anxious, was now relieved from the apprehension that had long oppressed it. When he first saw Adeline, her loveliness made a deep impression on his heart: there was a sentiment in her beauty, which his mind immediately acknowledged, and the effect of which, her manners and conversation had afterwards confirmed. Her charms appeared to him like those since so finely described by an English poet:

“Oh! have you seen, bath’d in the morning dew, The budding rose its infant bloom display; When first its virgin tints unfold to view, It shrinks and scarcely trusts the blaze of day?

So soft, so delicate, so sweet she came, Youth’s damask glow just dawning on her cheek. I gaz’d, I sigh’d, I caught the tender flame, Felt the fond pang, and droop’d with passion weak.”

A knowledge of her destitute condition, and of the dangers with which she was environed, had awakened in his heart the tenderest touch of pity, and assisted the change of admiration into love. The distress he suffered, when compelled to leave her exposed to these dangers, without being able to warn her of them, can only be imagined. During his residence with his regiment, his mind was the constant prey of terrors, which he saw no means of combating, but by returning to the neighbourhood of the abbey,

where he might obtain early intelligence of the Marquis’s schemes, and be ready to give his assistance to Adeline.

Leave of absence he could not request, without betraying his design where most he dreaded it should be known, and, at length, with a generous rashness, which, though it defied law, was impelled by virtue, he secretly quitted his regiment. The progress of the Marquis’s plan he had observed, with trembling anxiety, till the night that was to decide the fate of Adeline and himself roused all his mind to action, and involved him in a tumult of hope and fear — horror and expectation.

Never, till the present hour, had he ventured to believe she was in safety. Now the distance they had gained from the chateau, without perceiving any pursuit, increased his best hopes. It was impossible he could sit by the side of his beloved Adeline, and receive assurances of her gratitude and esteem, without venturing to hope for her love. He congratulated himself as her preserver, and anticipated scenes of happiness when she should be under the protection of his family. The clouds of misery and apprehension disappeared from his mind, and left it to the sunshine of joy. When a shadow of fear would sometimes return, or when he recollected, with compunction, the circumstances under which he had left his regiment, stationed, as it was, upon the frontiers, and in a time of war, he looked at Adeline, and her countenance, with instantaneous magic, beamed peace upon his heart.

But Adeline had a subject of anxiety from which Theodore was exempt; the prospect of her future days was involved in darkness and uncertainty. Again she was going to claim the bounty of strangers — again going to encounter the uncertainty of their kindness; exposed to the hardships of dependance, or to the difficulty of earning a precarious livelihood. These anticipations obscured the joy occasioned by her escape, and by the affection which the conduct and avowal of Theodore had exhibited. The delicacy of his behaviour, in forbearing to take advantage of her present situation to plead his love, increased her esteem, and flattered her pride.

Adeline was lost in meditation upon subjects like these, when the postillion stopped the carriage; and pointing to part of a road, which wound down the side of a hill they had passed, said there were several horsemen in pursuit! Theodore immediately ordered him to proceed with all possible speed, and to strike out of the great road into the first obscure

way that offered. The postillion cracked his whip in the air, and sat off as if he was flying for life. In the mean while Theodore endeavoured to reanimate Adeline, who was sinking with terror, and who now thought, if she could only escape from the Marquis, she could defy the future.

Presently they struck into a bye lane, screened and overshadowed by thick trees; Theodore again looked from the window, but the closing boughs prevented his seeing far enough to determine whether the pursuit continued. For his sake Adeline endeavoured to disguise her emotions. “This lane,” said Theodore, “will certainly lead to a town or village, and then we have nothing to apprehend; for, though my single arm could not defend you against the number of our pursuers, I have no doubt of being able to interest some of the inhabitants in our behalf.”

Adeline appeared to be comforted by the hope this reflection suggested, and Theodore again looked back, but the windings of the road closed his view, and the rattling of the wheels overcame every other sound. At length he called to the postillion to stop, and having listened attentively, without perceiving any sound of horses, he began to hope they were now in safety. “Do you know where this road leads?” said he. The postillion answered that he did not, but he saw some houses through the trees at a distance, and believed it led to them. This was most welcome intelligence to Theodore, who looked forward and perceived the houses. The postillion sat off, “Fear nothing, my adored Adeline,” said he, “you are now safe; I will part with you but with life.” Adeline sighed, not for herself only, but for the danger to which Theodore might be exposed.

They had continued to travel in this manner for near half an hour, when they arrived at a small village, and soon after stopped at an inn, the best the place afforded. As Theodore lifted Adeline from the chaise, he again entreated her to dismiss her apprehensions, and spoke with a tenderness, to which she could reply only by a smile that ill concealed her anxiety. After ordering refreshments, he went out to speak with the landlord, but had scarcely left the room, when Adeline observed a party of horsemen enter the inn-yard, and she had no doubt these were the persons from whom they fled. The faces of two of them only were turned towards her, but she thought the figure of one of the others not unlike that of the Marquis.

Her heart was chilled, and for some moments the powers of reason forsook her. Her first design was to seek concealment; but while she

considered the means one of the horsemen looked up to the window near which she stood, and speaking to his companions, they entered the inn. To quit the room, without being observed, was impossible; to remain there, alone and unprotected as she was, would almost be equally dangerous. She paced the room in an agony of terror, often secretly calling on Theodore, and often wondering he did not return. These were moments of indescribable suffering. A loud and tumultuous sound of voices now arose from a distant part of the house, and she soon distinguished the words of the disputants. “I arrest you in the King’s name,” said one; “and bid you, at your peril, attempt to go from hence, except under a guard.”

The next minute Adeline heard the voice of Theodore in reply. “I do not mean to dispute the King’s orders,” said he, “and give you my word of honour not to go without you; but first unhand me, that I may return to that room; I have a friend there whom I wish to speak with.” To this proposal they at first objected, considering it merely as an excuse to obtain an opportunity of escaping; but, after much altercation and entreaty, his request was granted. He sprang forwards towards the room where Adeline remained, and while a serjeant and corporal followed him to the door, the two soldiers went out into the yard of the inn, to watch the windows of the apartment.

With an eager hand he unclosed the door, but Adeline hastened not to meet him, for she had fainted almost at the beginning of the dispute. Theodore called loudly for assistance, and the mistress of the inn soon appeared with her stock of remedies, which were administered in vain to Adeline, who remained insensible, and by breathing alone gave signs of her existence. The distress of Theodore was in the mean time heightened by the appearance of the officers, who, laughing at the discovery of his pretended friend, declared they could wait no longer. Saying this, they would have forced him from the inanimate form of Adeline, over whom he hung in unutterable anguish, when fiercely turning upon them, he drew his sword, and swore no power on earth should force him away before the lady recovered.

The men, enraged by the action and the determined air of Theodore, exclaimed, “Do you oppose the King’s orders?” and advanced to seize him, but he presented the point of his sword, and bid them at their peril approach. One of them immediately drew, Theodore kept his guard, but did

not advance. “I demand only to wait here till the lady recovers,” said he; “you understand the alternative.” The man, already exasperated by the opposition of Theodore, regarded the latter part of his speech as a threat, and became determined not to give up the point; he pressed forward, and while his comrade called the men from the yard, Theodore wounded him slightly in the shoulder, and received himself the stroke of a sabre on his head.

The blood gushed furiously from the wound; Theodore, staggering to a chair, sunk into it, just as the remainder of the party entered the room, and Adeline unclosed her eyes to see him ghastly pale, and covered with blood. She uttered an involuntary scream, and exclaiming, “they have murdered him,” nearly relapsed. At the sound of her voice he raised his head, and smiling held out his hand to her. “I am not much hurt,” said he saintly, “and shall soon be better, if indeed you are recovered.” She hastened towards him, and gave her hand. “Is nobody gone for a surgeon?” said she, with a look of agony. “Do not be alarmed,” said Theodore, “I am not so ill as you imagine.” The room was now crowded with people, whom the report of the affray had brought together; among these was a man, who acted as physician, apothecary, and surgeon to the village, and who now stepped forward to the assistance of Theodore.

Having examined the wound, he declined giving his opinion, but ordered the patient to be immediately put to bed, to which the officers objected, alledging that it was their duty to carry him to the regiment. “That cannot be done without great danger to his life,” replied the doctor; “and” —

“Oh! his life,” said the serjeant; “we have nothing to do with that, we must do our duty.” Adeline, who had hitherto stood in trembling anxiety, could now no longer be silent. “Since the surgeon,” said she, “has declared it his opinion, that this gentleman cannot be removed in his present condition, without endangering his life, you will remember, that if he dies, yours will probably answer it.”

“Yes,” rejoined the surgeon, who was unwilling to relinquish his patient, “I declare before these witnesses, that he cannot be removed with safety: you will do well, therefore, to consider the consequences. He has received a very dangerous wound, which requires the most careful treatment, and the event is even then doubtful; but, if he travels, a fever may ensue, and the wound will then be mortal.” Theodore heard this sentence with

composure, but Adeline could with difficulty conceal the anguish of her heart: she roused all her fortitude to suppress the tears that struggled in her eyes; and though she wished to interest the humanity, or to awaken the fears of the men, in behalf of their unfortunate prisoner, she dared not to trust her voice with utterance.

From this internal struggle she was relieved by the compassion of the people who filled the room, and becoming clamorous in the cause of Theodore, declared the officers would be guilty of murder if they removed him. “Why he must die at any rate,” said the serjeant, “for quitting his post, and drawing upon me in the execution of the King’s orders.” A faint sickness seized the heart of Adeline, and she leaned for support against Theodore’s chair, whose concern for himself was for a while suspended in his anxiety for her. He supported her with his arm, and forcing a smile, said in a low voice, which she only could hear, “This is a misrepresentation; I doubt not, when the affair is inquired into, it will be settled without any serious consequences.”

Adeline knew these words were uttered only to console her, and therefore did not give much credit to them, though Theodore continued to give her similar assurances of his safety. Meanwhile the mob, whose compassion for him had been gradually excited by the obduracy of the officer, were now roused to pity and indignation by the seeming certainty of his punishment, and the unfeeling manner in which it had been denounced. In a short time they became so much enraged, that, partly from a dread of farther consequences, and partly from the shame which their charges of cruelty occasioned, the serjeant consented that he should be put to bed, till his commanding officer might direct what was to be done. Adeline’s joy at this circumstance overcame for a moment the sense of her misfortunes, and of her situation.

She waited in an adjoining room the sentence of the surgeon, who was now engaged in examining the wound; and though the accident would in any other circumstances have severely afflicted her, she now lamented it the more, because she considered herself as the cause of it, and because the misfortune, by illustrating more fully the affection of her lover, drew him closer to her heart, and seemed, therefore, to sharpen the poignancy of her affliction. The dreadful assertion that Theodore, should he recover, would be punished with death, she scarcely dared to consider, but

endeavoured to believe that it was no more than a cruel exaggeration of his antagonist.

Upon the whole, Theodore's present danger, together with the attendant circumstances, awakened all her tenderness, and discovered to her the true state of her affections. The graceful form, the noble, intelligent countenance, and the engaging manners which she had at first admired in Theodore, became afterwards more interesting by that strength of thought, and elegance of sentiment, exhibited in his conversation. His conduct, since her escape, had excited her warmest gratitude, and the danger which he had now encountered in her behalf, called forth her tenderness, and heightened it into love. The veil was removed from her heart, and she saw, for the first time, its genuine emotions.

The surgeon at length came out of Theodore's chamber into the room where Adeline was waiting to speak with him. She inquired concerning the state of his wound. "You are a relation of the gentleman's, I presume, Madam; his sister, perhaps." The question vexed and embarrassed her, and, without answering it, she repeated her inquiry. "Perhaps, Madam, you are more nearly related," pursued the surgeon, seeming also to disregard her question, "perhaps you are his wife." Adeline blushed, and was about to reply, but he continued his speech. "The interest you take in his welfare is, at least, very flattering, and I would almost consent to exchange conditions with him, were I sure of receiving such tender compassion from so charming a lady." Saying this, he bowed to the ground. Adeline assuming a very reserved air, said, "Now, Sir, that you have concluded your compliment, you will, perhaps, attend to my question; I have inquired how you left your patient."

"That, Madam, is, perhaps, a question very difficult to be resolved; and it is likewise a very disagreeable office to pronounce ill news — I fear he will die." The surgeon opened his snuff-box and presented it to Adeline. "Die!" she exclaimed in a faint voice, "Die!"

"Do not be alarmed, Madam," resumed the surgeon, observing her grow pale, "do not be alarmed. It is possible that the wound may not have reached the — ," he stammered; "in that case the — ," stammering again, "is not affected; and if so, the interior membranes of the brain are not touched: in this case the wound may, perhaps, escape inflammation, and the patient may possibly recover. But if, on the other hand,— "

“I beseech you, Sir, to speak intelligibly,” interrupted Adeline, “and not to trifle with my anxiety. Do you really believe him in danger?

“In danger, Madam,” exclaimed the surgeon, “in danger! yes, certainly, in very great danger.” Saying this, he walked away with an air of chagrin and displeasure. Adeline remained for some moments in the room, in an excess of sorrow, which she found it impossible to restrain, and then drying her tears, and endeavouring to compose her countenance, she went to inquire for the mistress of the inn, to whom she sent a waiter. After expecting her in vain for some time, she rang the bell, and sent another message somewhat more pressing. Still the hostess did not appear, and Adeline, at length, went herself down stairs, where she found her, surrounded by a number of people, relating, with a loud voice and various gesticulations, the particulars of the late accident. Perceiving Adeline, she called out, “Oh! here is Mademoiselle herself,” and the eyes of the assembly were immediately turned upon her. Adeline, whom the crowd prevented from approaching the hostess, now beckoned her, and was going to withdraw, but the landlady, eager in the pursuit of her story, disregarded the signal. In vain did Adeline endeavour to catch her eye; it glanced every where but upon her, who was unwilling to attract the farther notice of the crowd by calling out.

“It is a great pity, to be sure, that he should be shot,” said the landlady, “he’s such a handsome man; but they say he certainly will if he recovers. Poor gentleman! he will very likely not suffer though, for the doctor says he will never go out of this house alive.” Adeline now spoke to a man who stood near, and desiring he would tell the hostess she wished to speak with her, left the place.

In about ten minutes the landlady appeared. “Alas! Madamoiselle,” said she, “your brother is in a sad condition; they fear he won’t get over it.” Adeline inquired whether there was any other medical person in the town than the surgeon whom she had seen. “Lord, Madam, this is a rare healthy place; we have little need of medicine people here; such an accident never happened in it before. The doctor has been here ten years, but there’s very bad encouragement for his trade, and I believe he’s poor enough himself. One of the sort’s quite enough for us.” Adeline interrupted her to ask some questions concerning Theodore, whom the hostess had attended to his chamber. She inquired how he had borne the dressing of the wound, and

whether he appeared to be easier after the operation; questions to which the hostess gave no very satisfactory answers. She now inquired whether there was any surgeon in the neighbourhood of the town, and was told there was not.

The distress visible in Adeline's countenance, seemed to excite the compassion of the landlady, who now endeavoured to console her in the best manner she was able. She advised her to send for her friends, and offered to procure a messenger. Adeline sighed and said it was unnecessary. "I don't know, Ma'amselle, what you may think necessary," continued the hostess, "but I know I should think it very hard to die in a strange place with no relations near me, and I dare say the poor gentleman thinks so himself; and, besides, who is to pay for his funeral if he dies?" Adeline begged she would be silent, and, desiring that every proper attention might be given, she promised her a reward for her trouble, and requested pen and ink immediately. "Ay, to be sure, Ma'amselle, that is the proper way; why your friends would never forgive you if you did not acquaint them; I know it by myself. And as for taking care of him, he shall have every thing the house affords, and I warrant there is never a better inn in the province, though the town is none of the biggest." Adeline was obliged to repeat her request for pen and ink, before the loquacious hostess would quit the room.

The thought of sending for Theodore's friends had, in the tumult of the late scenes, never occurred to her, and she was now somewhat consoled by the prospect of comfort which it opened for him. When the pen and ink were brought, she wrote the following note to Theodore.

"In your present condition, you have need of every comfort that can be procured you, and surely there is no cordial more valuable in illness, than the presence of a friend: suffer me, therefore, to acquaint your family with your situation; it will be a satisfaction to me, and, I doubt not, a consolation to you."

In a short time after she had sent the note, she received a message from Theodore, entreating most respectfully, but earnestly, to see her for a few minutes. She immediately went to his chamber, and found her worst apprehensions confirmed, by the languor expressed in his countenance, while the shock she received, together with her struggle to disguise her emotions, almost overcame her. "I thank you for this goodness," said he,

extending his hand, which she received, and, sitting down by the bed, burst into a flood of tears. When her agitation had somewhat subsided, and, removing her handkerchief from her eyes, she again looked on Theodore, a smile of the tenderest love expressed his sense of the interest she took in his welfare, and administered a temporary relief to her heart.

“Forgive this weakness,” said she; “my spirits have of late been so variously agitated” — Theodore interrupted her— “These tears are most flattering to my heart. But, for my sake, endeavour to support yourself: I doubt not I shall soon be better; the surgeon”— “I do not like him,” said Adeline, “but tell me how you find yourself?” He assured her that he was now much easier than he had yet been, and mentioning her kind note, he led to the subject, on account of which he had solicited to see her. “My family,” said he, “reside at a great distance from hence, and I well know their affection is such, that, were they informed of my situation, no consideration, however reasonable, could prevent their coming to my assistance; but before they can arrive, their presence will probably be unnecessary,” (Adeline looked earnestly at him) “I should probably be well,” pursued he, smiling, “before a letter could reach them; it would, therefore, occasion them unnecessary pain, and, moreover, a fruitless journey. For your sake, Adeline, I could wish they were here, but a few days will more fully shew the consequences of my wound: let us wait, at least, till then, and be directed by circumstances.”

Adeline forbore to press the subject farther, and turned to one more immediately interesting. “I much wish,” said she, “that you had a more able surgeon; you know the geography of the province better than I do; are we in the neighbourhood of any town likely to afford you other advice?”

“I believe not,” said he, “and this is an affair of little consequence, for my wound is so inconsiderable, that a very moderate share of skill may suffice to cure it. But why, my beloved Adeline, do you give way to this anxiety? Why suffer yourself to be disturbed by this tendency to forbode the worst? I am willing, perhaps, presumptuously so, to attribute it to your kindness, and suffer me to assure you, that, while it excites my gratitude, it increases my tenderest esteem. O Adeline! since you wish my speedy recovery, let me see you composed: while I believe you to be unhappy I cannot be well.” — She assured him she would endeavour to be, at least,

tranquil, and fearing the conversation, if prolonged, would be prejudicial to him, she left him to repose.

As she turned out of the gallery, she met the hostess, upon whom certain words of Adeline had operated as a talisman, transforming neglect and impertinence into officious civility. She came to inquire whether the gentleman above stairs had every thing that he liked, for she was sure it was her endeavour that he should. “I have got him a nurse, Ma’amselle, to attend him, and I dare say she will do very well, but I will look to that, for I shall not mind helping him myself sometimes. Poor gentleman! how patiently he bears it! One would not think now that he believes he is going to die; yet the doctor told him so himself, or, at least as good.” Adeline was extremely shocked at this imprudent conduct of the surgeon, and dismissed the landlady, after ordering a slight dinner.

Towards evening the surgeon again made his appearance, and, having passed some time with his patient, returned to the parlour, according to the desire of Adeline, to inform her of his condition. He answered Adeline’s inquiries with great solemnity. “It is impossible to determine positively, at present, Madam, but I have reason to adhere to the opinion I gave you this morning. I am not apt, indeed, to form opinions upon uncertain grounds. I will give you a singular instance of this: “It is not above a fortnight since I was sent for to a patient at some leagues distance. I was from home when the messenger arrived, and the case being urgent, before I could reach the patient, another physician was consulted, who had ordered such medicines as he thought proper, and the patient had been apparently relieved by them. His friends were congratulating themselves upon his improvement when I arrived, and had agreed in opinion with the physician, that there was no danger in his case. Depend upon it, said I, you are mistaken; these medicines cannot have relieved him; the patient is in the utmost danger. The patient groaned, but my brother physician persisted in affirming that the remedies he had prescribed would not only be certain, but speedy, some good effect having been already produced by them. Upon this I lost all patience, and adhering to my opinion, that these effects were fallacious and the case desperate, I assured the patient himself that his life was in the utmost danger. I am not one of those, Madam, who deceive their patients to the last moment; but you shall hear the conclusion.

“My brother physician was, I suppose, enraged by the firmness of my opposition, for he assumed a most angry look, which did not in the least affect me, and turning to the patient, desired he would decide, upon which of our opinions to rely, for he must decline acting with me. The patient did me the honour,” pursued the surgeon, with a smile of complacency, and smoothing his ruffles, “to think more highly of me than, perhaps, I deserved, for he immediately dismissed my opponent. I could not have believed, said he, as the physician left the room, I could not have believed that a man, who has been so many years in the profession, could be so wholly ignorant of it.

“I could not have believed it either, said I. — I am astonished that he was not aware of my danger, resumed the patient. — I am astonished likewise, replied I — I was resolved to do what I could for the patient, for he was a man of understanding, as you perceive, and I had a regard for him. I, therefore, altered the prescriptions, and myself administered the medicines; but all would not do, my opinion was verified, and he died even before the next morning.” — Adeline, who had been compelled to listen to this long story, sighed at the conclusion of it. “I don’t wonder that you are affected, Madam,” said the surgeon, “the instance I have related is certainly a very affecting one. It distressed me so much, that it was some time before I could think, or even speak concerning it. But you must allow, Madam,” continued he, lowering his voice and bowing with a look of self-congratulation, “that this was a striking instance of the infallibility of my judgement.”

Adeline shuddered at the infallibility of his judgement, and made no reply. “It was a shocking thing for the poor man,” resumed the surgeon.— “It was, indeed, very shocking,” said Adeline.— “It affected me a good deal when it happened,” continued he.— “Undoubtedly, Sir,” said Adeline.

“But time wears away the most painful impressions.”

“I think you mentioned it was about a fortnight since this happened.”

“Somewhere thereabouts,” replied the surgeon, without seeming to understand the observation.— “And will you permit me, Sir, to ask the name of the physician, who so ignorantly opposed you?”

“Certainly, Madam, it is Lafance.”

“He lives in the obscurity he deserves, no doubt,” said Adeline.

“Why no, Madam, he lives in a town of some note, at about the distance of four leagues from hence, and affords one instance, among many others, that the public opinion is generally erroneous. You will hardly believe it, but I assure you it is a fact, that this man comes into a great deal of practice, while I am suffered to remain here, neglected, and, indeed, very little known.”

During his narrative, Adeline had been considering by what means she could discover the name of the physician, for the instance that had been produced to prove his ignorance, and the infallibility of his opponent, had completely settled her opinion concerning them both. She now, more than ever, wished to deliver Theodore from the hands of the surgeon, and was musing on the possibility, when he, with so much self-security, developed the means.

She asked him a few more questions, concerning the state of Theodore’s wound, and was told it was much as it had been, but that some degree of fever had come on. “But I have ordered a fire to be made in the room,” continued the surgeon, “and some additional blankets to be laid on the bed; these, I doubt not, will have a proper effect. In the mean time, they must be careful to keep from him every kind of liquid, except some cordial draughts, which I shall send. He will naturally ask for drink, but it must, on no account, be given to him.”

“You do not approve, then, of the method, which I have somewhere heard of,” said Adeline, “of attending to nature in these cases.”

“Nature, Madam!” pursued he, “Nature is the most improper guide in the world. I always adopt a method directly contrary to what she would suggest; for what can be the use of Art, if she is only to follow Nature? This was my first opinion on setting out in life, and I have ever since strictly adhered to it. From what I have said, indeed, Madam, you may, perhaps, perceive that my opinions may be depended on; what they once are they always are, for my mind is not of that frivolous kind to be affected by circumstances.”

Adeline was fatigued by this discourse, and impatient to impart to Theodore her discovery of a physician, but the surgeon seemed by no means disposed to leave her, and was expatiating upon various topics, with new instances of his surprising sagacity, when the waiter brought a message that some person desired to see him. He was, however, engaged

upon too agreeable a topic to be easily prevailed upon to quit it, and it was not till after a second message was brought that he made his bow to Adeline and left the room. The moment he was gone she sent a note to Theodore, entreating his permission to call in the assistance of the physician.

The conceited manners of the surgeon had by this time given Theodore a very unfavourable opinion of his talents, and the last prescription had so fully confirmed it, that he now readily consented to have other advice. Adeline immediately inquired for a messenger, but recollecting that the residence of the physician was still a secret, she applied to the hostess, who being really ignorant of it, or pretending to be so, gave her no information. What farther inquiries she made were equally ineffectual, and she passed some hours in extreme distress, while the disorder of Theodore rather increased than abated.

When supper appeared, she asked the boy who waited, if he knew a physician of the name of Lafance, in the neighbourhood. “Not in the neighbourhood, Madam, but I know Doctor Lafance of Chancy, for I come from the town.” — Adeline inquired farther, and received very satisfactory answers. But the town was at some leagues distance, and the delay this circumstance must occasion again alarmed her; she, however, ordered a messenger to be immediately dispatched, and, having sent again to inquire concerning Theodore, retired to her chamber for the night.

The continued fatigue she had suffered for the last fourteen hours overcame anxiety, and her harrassed spirits sunk to repose. She slept till late in the morning, and was then awakened by the landlady, who came to inform her, that Theodore was much worse, and to inquire what should be done. Adeline, finding that the physician was not arrived, immediately arose, and hastened to inquire farther concerning Theodore. The hostess informed her, that he had passed a very disturbed night; that he had complained of being very hot, and desired that the fire in his room might be extinguished; but that the nurse knew her duty too well to obey him, and had strictly followed the doctor’s orders.

She added, that he had taken the cordial draughts regularly, but had, notwithstanding, continued to grow worse, and at last became light-headed. In the mean time the boy, who had been sent for the physician, was still absent:— “And no wonder,” continued the hostess; “why, only

consider, it’s eight leagues off, and the lad had to find the road, bad as it is, in the dark. But, indeed, Ma’amselle, you might as well have trusted our doctor, for we never want any body else, not we, in the town here; and if I might speak my mind, Jacques had better have been sent off for the young gentleman’s friends than for this strange doctor that no body knows.”

After asking some farther questions concerning Theodore, the answers to which rather increased than diminished her alarm, Adeline endeavoured to compose her spirits, and await in patience the arrival of the physician. She was now more sensible than ever of the forlornness of her own condition, and of the danger of Theodore’s, and earnestly wished that his friends could be informed of his situation; a wish which could not be gratified, for Theodore, who alone could acquaint her with their place of residence, was deprived of recollection.

When the surgeon arrived and perceived the situation of his patient, he expressed no surprize; but having asked some questions, and given a few general directions, he went down to Adeline. After paying her his usual compliments, he suddenly assumed an air of importance, “I am sorry, Madam,” said he, “that it is my office to communicate disagreeable intelligence, but I wish you to be prepared for the event, which, I fear, is approaching.” Adeline comprehended his meaning, and though she had hitherto given little faith to his judgement, she could not hear him hint at the immediate danger of Theodore without yielding to the influence of fear.

She entreated him to acquaint her with all he apprehended; and he then proceeded to say, that Theodore was, as he had foreseen, much worse this morning than he had been the preceding night; and the disorder having now affected his head, there was every reason to fear it would prove fatal in a few hours. “The worst consequences may ensue,” continued he; “if the wound becomes inflamed, there will be very little chance of his recovery.”

Adeline listened to this sentence with a dreadful calmness, and gave no utterance to grief, either by words or tears. The gentleman, I suppose, Madam, has friends, and the sooner you inform them of his condition the better. If they reside at any distance, it is indeed too late; but there are other necessary — you are ill, Madam.”

Adeline made an effort to speak, but in vain, and the surgeon now called loudly for a glass of water; she drank it, and a deep sigh that she uttered,

seemed somewhat to relieve her oppressed heart: tears succeeded. In the mean time, the surgeon perceiving she was better, though not well enough to listen to his conversation, took his leave, and promised to return in an hour. The physician was not yet arrived, and Adeline awaited his appearance with a mixture of fear and anxious hope.

About noon he came, and having been informed of the accident by which the fever was produced, and of the treatment which the surgeon had given it, he ascended to Theodore's chamber: in a quarter of an hour he returned to the room where Adeline expected him. "The gentleman is still delirious," said he, "but I have ordered him a composing draught."— "Is there any hope, Sir?" inquired Adeline. "Yes, Madam, certainly there is hope; the case at present is somewhat doubtful, but a few hours may enable me to judge with more certainty. In the mean time, I have directed that he shall be kept quiet, and be allowed to drink freely of some diluting liquids."

He had scarcely, at Adeline's request, recommended a surgeon, instead of the one at present employed, when the latter gentleman entered the room, and, perceiving the physician, threw a glance of mingled surprize and anger at Adeline, who retired with him to another apartment, where she dismissed him with a politeness, which he did not deign to return, and which he certainly did not deserve.

Early the following morning the surgeon arrived, but either the medicines, or the crisis of the disorder, had thrown Theodore into a deep sleep, in which he remained for several hours. The physician now gave Adeline reason to hope for a favourable issue, and every precaution was taken to prevent his being disturbed. He awoke perfectly sensible and free from fever, and his first words inquired for Adeline, who soon learned that he was out of danger.

In a few days he was sufficiently recovered to be removed from his chamber to a room adjoining, where Adeline met him with a joy, which she found it impossible to repress; and the observance of this lighted up his countenance with pleasure: indeed Adeline, sensible to the attachment he had so nobly testified, and softened by the danger he had encountered, no longer attempted to disguise the tenderness of her esteem, and was at length brought to confess the interest his first appearance had impressed upon her heart.

After an hour of affecting conversation, in which the happiness of a young and mutual attachment occupied all their minds, and excluded every idea not in unison with delight, they returned to a sense of their present embarrassments: Adeline recollected that Theodore was arrested for disobedience of orders, and deserting his post; and Theodore, that he must shortly be torn away from Adeline, who wound be left exposed to all the evils from which he had so lately rescued her. This thought overwhelmed his heart with anguish; and, after a long pause, he ventured to propose, what his wishes had often suggested, a marriage with Adeline before he departed from the village: this was the only means of preventing, perhaps, an eternal separation; and though he saw the many dangerous inconveniences to which she would be exposed, by a marriage with a man circumstanced like himself, yet these appeared so unequal to those she would otherwise be left to encounter alone, that his reason could no longer scruple to adopt what his affection had suggested.

Adeline was, for some time, too much agitated to reply; and though she had little to oppose to the arguments and pleadings of Theodore; though she had no friends to control, and no contrariety of interests to perplex her, she could not bring herself to consent thus hastily to a marriage with a man, of whom she had little knowledge, and to whose family and connections she had no sort of introduction. At length, she entreated he would drop the subject, and the conversation for the remainder of the day was more general, yet still interesting.

That similarity of taste and opinion, which had at first attracted them, every moment now more fully disclosed. Their discourse was enriched by elegant literature, and endeared by mutual regard. Adeline had enjoyed few opportunities of reading, but the books to which she had access, operating upon a mind eager for knowledge, and upon a taste peculiarly sensible of the beautiful and the elegant, had impressed all their excellencies upon her understanding. Theodore had received from nature many of the qualities of genius, and from education all that it could bestow; to these were added, a noble independency of spirit, a feeling heart, and manners, which partook of a happy mixture of dignity and sweetness.

In the evening, one of the officers, who, upon the representation of the serjeant, was sent by the persons employed to prosecute military

criminals, arrived at the village, and entering the apartment of Theodore, from which Adeline immediately withdrew, informed him, with an air of infinite importance, that he should set out on the following day for headquarters. Theodore answered, that he was not able to bear the journey, and referred him to his physician; but the officer replied, htat he should take no such trouble, it being certain that the physician might be instructed what to say, and that he should begin his journey on the morrow. “Here has been delay enough,” said he, “already, and you will have sufficient business on your hands when you reach headquarters;for the serjeant, whom you have severely wounded, intends to appear against you; and htis, with the offence you have committed by deserting your post”

Theodore’s eyes flashed fire, “Deserting!” said he, rising from his seat and darting a look of menace at his accuser, “who dares brand me with the name of deserter?” But instantly recollecting how much his conduct had appeared to justify the accusation, he endeavoured to stifle his emotions, and with a firm voice and composed manner, said, that when he reached headquarters, he should be ready to answer whatever might be brought against him, but that till then he should be silent. The boldness of the officer was repressed by the spirit and dignity with which Theodore spoke these words, and muttering a reply, that was scarecly audible, he left the room.

Theodore sat musing on the danger of his situation: he knew that he had much to apprehend from the peculiar circumstances attending his abrupt departure from his regiment, it having been stationed in a garrison town upon the Spanish frontiers; where the discipline was very severe, and from the power of his colonel, the Marquis de Montalt, whom pride and disappointment would now rouse to vengeance, and, probably, render indefatigable in the accomplishment of his destruction. But his thoughts soon fled from his own danger to that of Adeline, and, in the consideration of this, all his fortitude forsook him: he could not support the idea of leaving her exposed to the evils he foreboded, nor, indeed, of a separation so sudden as that which now threatened him; and when she again entered the room, he renewed his solicitations for a speedy marriage, with all the arguments that tenderness and ingenuity could suggest.

Adeline, when she learned that he was to depart on the morrow, felt as if bereaved of her last comfort. All the horrors of his situation arose to her

mind, and she turned from him in unutterable anguish. Considering her silence as a favourable presage, he repeated his entreaties that she would consent to be his, and thus give him a surety that their separation should not be eternal. Adeline sighed deeply to these words: “And who can know that our separation will not be eternal,” said she, “even if I could consent to the marriage you propose? But while you hear my determination, forbear to accuse me of indifference, for indifference towards you would, indeed, be a crime, after the services you have rendered me.”

“And is a cold sentiment of gratitude all that I must expect from you?” said Theodore. “I know that you are going to distress me with a proof of your indifference, which you mistake for the suggestions of prudence; and that I shall be compelled to look, without reluctance, upon the evils that may shortly await me. Ah, Adeline! if you mean to reject this, perhaps, the last proposal which I can ever make to you, cease, at least, to deceive yourself with an idea that you love me; that delirium is fading even from my mind.”

“Can you then so soon forget our conversation of this morning?” replied Adeline; “and can you think so lightly of me as to believe I would profess a regard, which I do not feel? If, indeed, you can believe this, I shall do well to forget that I ever made such an acknowledgement, and you, that you heard it.”

“Forgive me, Adeline, forgive the doubts and inconsistencies I have betrayed: let the anxieties of love, and the emergency of my circumstances, plead for me.” Adeline, smiling faintly through her tears, held out her hand, which he seized and pressed to his lips. “Yet do not drive me to despair by a rejection of my suit,” continued Theodore; “think what I must suffer to leave you here destitute of friends and protection.”

“I am thinking how I may avoid a situation so deplorable,” said Adeline. “They say there is a convent, which receives boarders, within a few miles, and thither I wish to go.”

“A convent!” rejoined Theodore, “would you go to a convent? Do you know the persecutions you would be liable to; and that if the Marquis should discover you, there is little probability the superior would resist his authority, or, at least, his bribes?”

“All this I have considered,” said Adeline, “and am prepared to encounter it, rather than enter into an engagement, which, at this time, can

be productive only of misery to us both."

"Ah, Adeline! could you think thus, if you truly loved? I see myself about to be separated, and that, perhaps, for ever, from the object of my tenderest affections — and I cannot but express all the anguish I feel — I cannot forbear to repeat every argument that may afford even the slightest possibility of altering your determination. But you, Adeline, you look with complacency upon a circumstance which tortures me with despair."

Adeline, who had long strove to support her spirits in his presence, while she adhered to a resolution which reason suggested, but which the pleadings of her heart powerfully opposed, was unable longer to command her distress, and burst into tears. Theodore was in the same moment convinced of his error, and shocked at the grief he had occasioned. He drew his chair towards her, and, taking her hand, again entreated her pardon, and endeavoured in the tenderest accents to soothe and comfort her.— "What a wretch was I to cause you this distress, by questioning that regard with which I can no longer doubt you honour me! Forgive me, Adeline; say but you forgive me, and, whatever may be the pain of this separation, I will no longer oppose it."

"You have given me some pain," said Adeline, "but you have not offended me." — She then mentioned some farther particulars concerning the convent. Theodore endeavoured to conceal the distress which the approaching separation occasioned him, and to consult with her on these plans with composure. His judgement by degrees prevailed over his passions, and he now perceived that the plan she suggested would afford her best chance of security. He considered, what in the first agitation of his mind had escaped him, that he might be condemned upon the charges brought against him, and that his death, should they have been married, would not only deprive her of her protector, but leave her more immediately exposed to the designs of the Marquis, who would, doubtless, attend his trial. Astonished that he had not noticed this before, and shocked at the unwariness by which he might have betrayed her into so dangerous a situation, he became at once reconciled to the idea of leaving her in a convent. He could have wished to place her in the asylum of his own family, but the circumstances under which she must be introduced were so awkward and painful, and, above all, the distance at which they resided, would render a journey so highly dangerous for her, that he

forbore to propose it. He entreated only that she would allow him to write to her; but recollecting that his letters might be a means of betraying the place of her residence to the Marquis, he checked himself: “I must deny myself even this melancholy pleasure,” said he, “lest my letters should discover your abode; yet how shall I be able to endure the impatience and uncertainty to which prudence condemns me! If you are in danger, I shall be ignorant of it; though, indeed, did I know it,” said he with a look of despair, “I could not fly to save you. O exquisite misery! ‘tis now only I perceive all the horrors of confinement— ‘tis now only that I understand all the value of liberty!”

His utterance was interrupted by the violent agitation of his mind; he rose from his chair, and walked with quick paces about the room. Adeline sat, overcome by the description which Theodore had given of his approaching situation, and by the consideration that she might remain in the most terrible suspense concerning his fate. She saw him in a prison — pale — emaciated, and in chains: — she saw all the vengeance of the Marquis descending upon him; and this for his noble exertions in her cause. Theodore, alarmed by the placid despair expressed in her countenance, threw himself into a chair by her’s, and, taking her hand, attempted to speak comfort to her, but the words faltered on his lips, and he could only bathe her hand with tears.

This mournful silence was interrupted by the arrival of the carriage at the inn, and Theodore, arising, went to the window that opened into the yard. The darkness of the night prevented his distinguishing the objects without, but a light now brought from the house shewed him a carriage and four, attended by several servants. Presently he saw a gentleman, wrapped up in a roquelaure, alight and enter the inn, and in the next moment he heard the voice of the Marquis.

He had flown to support Adeline, who was sinking with terror, when the door opened, and the Marquis, followed by the officers and several servants, entered. Fury flashed from his eyes, as they glanced upon Theodore, who hung over Adeline with a look of fearful solicitude

— “Seize that traitor,” said he, turning to the officers; “why have
you “suffered him to remain here so long?”

“I am no traitor,” said Theodore, with a firm voice, and the dignity of conscious worth, “but a defender of innocence, of one whom the treacherous Marquis de Montalt would destroy.”

“Obey your orders,” said the Marquis to the officers. Adeline shrieked, held faster by Theodore’s arm, and entreated the men not to part them. “Force only can effect it,” said Theodore, as he looked round for some instrument of defence, but he could see none, and in the same moment they surrounded and seized him. “Dread every thing from my vengeance,” said the Marquis to Theodore, as he caught the hand of Adeline, who had lost all power of resistance, and was scarcely sensible of what passed; “dread every thing from my vengeance; you know you have deserved it.”

“I defy your vengeance,” cried Theodore, “and dread only the pangs of conscience, which your power cannot inflict upon me, though your vices condemn you to its tortures.”

“Take him instantly from the room, and see that he is strongly fettered,” said the Marquis; “he shall soon know what a criminal, who adds insolence to guilt, may suffer.” — Theodore, exclaiming, “Oh Adeline! farewell!” “was now forced out of the room; while Adeline, whose torpid senses were roused by his voice and his last looks, fell at the feet of the Marquis, and with tears of agony implored compassion for Theodore: but her pleadings for his rival served only to irritate the pride and exasperate the hatred of the Marquis. He denounced vengeance on his head, and imprecations too dreadful for the spirits of Adeline, whom he compelled to rise; and then, endeavouring to stifle the emotions of rage, which the presence of Theodore had excited, he began to address her with his usual expressions of admiration.

The wretched Adeline, who, regardless of what he said, still continued to plead for her unhappy lover, was at length alarmed by the returning rage which the countenance of the Marquis expressed, and, exerting all her remaining strength, she sprung from his grasp towards the door of the room; but he seized her hand before she could reach it, and, regardless of her shrieks, bringing her back to her chair, was going to speak, when voices were heard in the passage, and immediately the landlord and his wife, whom Adeline’s cries had alarmed, entered the apartment. The Marquis, turning furiously to them, demanded what they wanted; but not

waiting for their answer, he bade them attend him, and quitting the room, she heard the door locked upon her.

Adeline now ran to the windows, which were unfastened, and opened into the inn-yard. All was dark and silent. She called aloud for help, but no person appeared; and the windows were so high, that it was impossible to escape unassisted. She walked about the room in an agony of terror and distress, now stopping to listen, and fancying she heard voices disputing below, and now quickening her steps, as suspense increased the agitation of her mind.

She had continued in this state for near half an hour, when she suddenly heard a violent noise in the lower part of the house, which increased till all was uproar and confusion. People passed quickly through the passages, and doors were frequently opened and shut. She called, but received no answer. It immediately occurred to her, that Theodore, having heard her screams, had attempted to come to her assistance, and that the bustle had been occasioned by the opposition of the officers. Knowing their fierceness and cruelty, she was seized with dreadful apprehensions for the life of Theodore.

A confused uproar of voices now sounded from below, and the screams of women convinced her there was fighting; she even thought she heard the clashing of swords; the image of Theodore, dying by the hands of the Marquis, now rose to her imagination, and the terrors of suspense became almost insupportable. She made a desperate effort to force the door, and again called for help, but her trembling hands were powerless, and every person in the house seemed to be too much engaged even to hear her. A loud shriek now pierced her ears, and, amidst the tumult that followed, she clearly distinguished deep groans. This confirmation of her fears deprived her of all her remaining spirits, and growing faint, she sunk almost lifeless into a chair near the door. The uproar gradually subsided till all was still, but nobody returned to her. Soon after she heard voices in the yard, but she had no power to walk across the room, even to ask the questions she wished, yet feared, to have answered.

About a quarter of an hour elapsed, when the door was unlocked, and the hostess appeared with a countenance as pale as death. “For God’s sake,” said Adeline, “tell me what has happened? Is he wounded? Is he killed?”

“He is not dead, Ma’amselle, but — He is dying then? — tell me where he is — let me go.”

“Stop, Ma’amselle,” cried the hostess, “you are to stay here, I only want the hartshorn out of that cupboard there.” Adeline tried to escape by the door, but the hostess, pushing her aside, locked it, and went down stairs.

Adeline’s distress now entirely overcame her, and she sat motionless, and scarcely conscious that she existed, till roused by a sound of footsteps near the door, which was again opened, and three men, whom she knew to be the Marquis’s servants, entered. She had sufficient recollection to repeat the questions she had asked the landlady, but they answered only that she must come with them, and that a chaise was waiting for her at the door. Still she urged her questions. “Tell me if he lives,” cried she.— “Yes, Ma’amselle, he is alive, but he is terribly wounded, and the surgeon is just come to him.” As they spoke they hurried her along the passage, and without noticing her entreaties and supplications to know whither she was going, they had reached the foot of the stairs, when her cries brought several people to the door. To these the hostess related, that the lady was the wife of a gentleman just arrived, who had overtaken her in her flight with a gallant; an account which the Marquis’s servants corroborated. “‘Tis the gentleman who has just fought the duel,” added the hostess, “and it was on her account.”

Adeline, partly disdaining to take any notice of this artful story, and partly from her desire to know the particulars of what had happened, contented herself with repeating her inquiries; to which one of the spectators at last replied, that the gentleman was desperately wounded. The Marquis’s people would now have hurried her into the chaise, but she sunk lifeless in their arms, and her condition so interested the humanity of the spectators, that, notwithstanding their belief of what had been said, they opposed the effort made to carry her, senseless as she was, into the carriage.

She was at length taken into a room, and, by proper applications, restored to her senses. There she so earnestly besought an explanation of what had happened, that the hostess acquainted her with some particulars of the late rencounter. “When the gentleman that was ill heard your screams, Madam,” said she, “he became quite outrageous, as they tell me, and nothing could pacify him. The Marquis, for they say he is a Marquis,

but you know best, was then in the room with my husband and I, and when he heard the uproar, he went down to see what was the matter; and when he came into the room where the Captain was, he found him struggling with the serjeant. Then the Captain was more outrageous than ever; and notwithstanding he had one leg chained, and no sword, he contrived to get the serjeant's cutlass out of the scabbard, and immediately flew at the Marquis, and wounded him desperately; upon which he was secured."—"It is the Marquis then who is wounded," said Adeline; "the other gentleman is not hurt?"

"No, not he," replied the hostess; but he will smart for it by and bye, for the Marquis swears he will do for him." Adeline, for a moment, forgot all her misfortunes and all her danger in thankfulness for the immediate escape of Theodore; and she was proceeding to make some farther inquiries concerning him, when the Marquis's servants entered the room, and declared they could wait no longer. Adeline, now awakened to a sense of the evils with which she was threatened, endeavoured to win the pity of the hostess, who, however, was, or affected to be, convinced of the truth of the Marquis's story, and, therefore, insensible to all she could urge. Again she addressed his servants, but in vain; they would neither suffer her to remain longer at the inn, or inform her whither she was going; but, in the presence of several persons, already prejudiced by the injurious assertions of the hostess, Adeline was hurried into the chaise, and her conductors mounting their horses, the whole party was very soon beyond the village.

Thus ended Adeline's share of an adventure, begun with a prospect not only of security, but of happiness; an adventure, which had attached her more closely to Theodore, and shewn him to be more worthy of her love; but which, at the same time, had distressed her by new disappointment, produced the imprisonment of her generous and now-adored lover, and delivered both himself and her into the power of a rival, irritated by delay, contempt, and opposition.

CHAPTER 1 3

“Nor sea, nor shade, nor shield, nor rock, nor cave,
Nor silent desarts, nor the sullen grave,
Where flame-ey’d Fury means to frown — can save.”

The surgeon of the place, having examined the Marquis’s wound, gave him an immediate opinion upon it, and ordered that he should be put to bed: but the Marquis, ill as he was, had scarcely any other apprehension than that of losing Adeline, and declared he should be able to begin his journey in a few hours. With this intention, he had began to give orders for keeping horses in readiness, when the surgeon persisting most seriously, and even passionately to exclaim, that his life would be the sacrifice of his rashness, he was carried to a bedchamber, where his valet alone was permitted to attend him.

This man, the convenient confidant of all his intrigues, had been the chief instrument in assisting his designs concerning Adeline, and was indeed the very person who had brought her to the Marquis’s villa on the borders of the forest. To him the Marquis gave his farther directions concerning her; and, foreseeing the inconvenience, as well as the danger of detaining her at the inn, he had ordered him, with several other servants, to carry her away immediately in a hired carriage. The valet having gone to execute his orders, the Marquis was left to his own reflections, and to the violence of contending passions.

The reproaches and continued opposition of Theodore, the favoured lover of Adeline, exasperated his pride, and roused all his malice. He could not for a moment consider this opposition, which was in some respects successful, without feeling an excess of indignation and inveteracy, such as the prospect of a speedy revenge could alone enable him to support.

When he had discovered Adeline’s escape from the villa, his surprize at first equalled his disappointment; and, after exhausting the paroxysms of his rage upon his domestics, he dispatched them all different ways in pursuit of her, going himself to the abbey, in the faint hope, that, destitute

as she was of other succour, she might have fled thither. La Motte, however, being as much surprized as himself, and as ignorant of the route which Adeline had taken, he returned to the villa, impatient of intelligence, and found some of his servants arrived, without any news of Adeline, and those who came afterwards were as successless as the first.

A few days after, a letter from the Lieutenant–Colonel of the regiment informed him, that Theodore had quitted his company, and had been for some time absent, nobody knew where. This information, confirming a suspicion which had frequently occurred to him, that Theodore had been by some means, or other, instrumental in the escape of Adeline, all his other passions became, for a time, subservient to his revenge, and he gave orders for the immediate pursuit and apprehension of Theodore: but Theodore, in the mean time, had been overtaken and secured.

It was in consequence of having formerly observed the growing partiality between him and Adeline, and of intelligence received from La Motte, who had noticed their interview in the forest, that the Marquis had resolved to remove a rival so dangerous to his love, and so likely to be informed of his designs. He had therefore told Theodore, in a manner as plausible as he could, that it would be necessary for him to join the regiment; a notice which affected him only as it related to Adeline, and which seemed the less extraordinary, as he had already been at the villa a much longer time than was usual with the officers invited by the Marquis. Theodore, indeed, very well knew the character of the Marquis, and had accepted his invitation rather from an unwillingness to shew any disrespect to his Colonel by a refusal, than from a sanguine expectation of pleasure.

From the men who had apprehended Theodore, the Marquis received the information, which had enabled him to pursue and recover Adeline; but, though he had now effected this, he was internally a prey to the corrosive effects of disappointed passion and exasperated pride. The anguish of his wound was almost forgotten in that of his mind, and every pang he felt seemed to increase his thirst of revenge, and to recoil with new torture upon his heart. While he was in this state, he heard the voice of the innocent Adeline imploring protection; but her cries excited in him neither pity or remorse; and when, soon after, the carriage drove away, and he was

certain both that she was secured, and Theodore was wretched, he seemed to feel some cessation of mental pain.

Theodore, indeed, did suffer all that a virtuous mind, labouring under oppression so severe, could feel; but he was, at least, free from those inveterate and malignant passions which tore the bosom of the Marquis, and which inflict upon the possessor a punishment more severe than any they can prompt him to imagine for another. What indignation he might feel towards the Marquis, was at this time secondary to his anxiety for Adeline. His captivity was painful, as it prevented his seeking a just and honourable revenge; but it was dreadful, as it withheld him from attempting the rescue of her whom he loved more than life.

When he heard the wheels of the carriage that contained her drive off, he felt an agony of despair which almost overcame his reason. Even the stern hearts of the soldiers who attended him were not wholly insensible to his wretchedness, and by venturing to blame the conduct of the Marquis, they endeavoured to console their prisoner. The physician, who was just arrived, entered the room during this paroxysm of his distress, and, both feeling and expressing much concern at his condition, inquired with strong surprize why he had been thus precipitately removed to a room so very unfit for his reception?

Theodore explained to him the reason of this, of the distress he suffered, and of the chains by which he was disgraced; and perceiving the physician listened to him with attention and compassion, he became desirous of acquainting him with some farther particulars, for which purpose he desired the soldiers to leave the room. The men, complying with his request, stationed themselves on the outside of the door.

He then related all the particulars of the late transaction, and of his connection with the Marquis. The physician attended to his narrative with deep concern, and his countenance frequently expressed strong agitation. When Theodore concluded, he remained for some time silent and lost in thought; at length, awaking from his reverie, he said, “I fear your situation is desperate. The character of the Marquis is too well known to suffer him either to be loved or respected; from such a man you have nothing to hope, for he has scarcely any thing to fear. I wish it was in my power to serve you, but I see no possibility of it.”

“Alas!” said Theodore, “my situation is indeed desperate, and — for that suffering angel” — deep sobs interrupted his voice, and the violence of his agitation would not allow him to proceed. The physician could only express the sympathy he felt for his distress, and entreat him to be more calm, when a servant entered the room from the Marquis, who desired to see the physician immediately. After some time, he said he would attend the Marquis, and having endeavoured to attain a degree of composure, which he found it difficult to assume, he wrung the hand of Theodore and quitted the room, promising to return before he left the house.

He found the Marquis much agitated both in body and mind, and rather more apprehensive for the consequences of the wound than he had expected. His anxiety for Theodore now suggested a plan, by the execution of which he hoped he might be able to serve him. Having felt his patient’s pulse, and asked some questions, he assumed a very serious look, when the Marquis, who watched every turn of his countenance, desired he would, without hesitation, speak his opinion.

“I am sorry to alarm you, my Lord, but here is some reason for apprehension: how long is it since you received the wound?”

“Good God! there is danger then!” cried the Marquis, adding some bitter execrations against Theodore.— “There certainly is danger;” replied the physician, “a few hours may enable me to determine its degree.”

“A few hours, Sir!” interrupted the Marquis; “a few hours!” The physician entreated him to be more calm. Confusion!” cried the Marquis, “A man in health may, with great composure, entreat a dying man to be calm. Theodore will be broke upon the wheel for it, however.”

“You mistake me, Sir,” said the physician, if I believed you a dying man, “or, indeed, very near death, I should not have spoken as I did. But it is of consequence I should know how long the wound has been inflicted.” The Marquis’s terror now began to subside, and he gave a circumstantial account of the affray with Theodore, representing that he had been basely used in an affair, where his own conduct had been perfectly just and humane. The physician heard this relation with great coolness, and when it concluded, without making any comment upon it, told the Marquis he would prescribe a medicine, which he wished him to take immediately.

The Marquis, again alarmed by the gravity of his manner, entreated he would declare most seriously, whether he thought him in immediate

danger. The physician hesitated, and the anxiety of the Marquis increased: “It is of consequence,” “said he, “that I should know my exact situation.” The physician then said, that if he had any worldly affairs to settle, it would be as well to attend to them, for that it was impossible to say what might be the event.

He then turned the discourse and said, he had just been with the young officer under arrest, who, he hoped, would not be removed at present, as such a procedure must endanger his life. The Marquis uttered a dreadful oath, and, cursing Theodore for having brought him to his present condition, said, he should depart with the guard that very night. Against the cruelty of this sentence, the physician ventured to expostulate; and endeavouring to awaken the Marquis to a sense of humanity, pleaded earnestly for Theodore. But these entreaties and arguments seemed, by displaying to the Marquis a part of his own character, to rouse his resentment, and rekindle all the violence of his passions.

The physician at length withdrew in despondency, after promising, at the Marquis’s request, not to leave the inn. He had hoped, by aggravating his danger, to obtain some advantages, both for Adeline and Theodore, but the plan had quite a contrary effect; for the apprehension of death, so dreadful to the guilty mind of the Marquis, instead of awakening penitence, increased his desire of vengeance against the man, who had brought him to such a situation. He determined to have Adeline conveyed, where Theodore, should he by any accident escape, could never obtain her; and thus to secure to himself, at least, some means of revenge. He knew, however, that when Theodore was once safely conveyed to his regiment, his destruction was certain, for should he even be acquitted of the intention of deserting, he would be condemned for having assaulted his superior officer.

The physician returned to the room where Theodore was confined. The violence of his distress was now subsided into a stern despair, more dreadful than the vehemence which had lately possessed him. The guard, in compliance with his request, having left the room, the physician repeated to him some part of his conversation with the Marquis. Theodore, after expressing his thanks, said, he had nothing more to hope. For himself he felt little; it was for his family, and for Adeline he suffered. He inquired what route she had taken, and though he had no prospect of deriving

advantage from the information, desired the physician to assist him in obtaining it; but the landlord and his wife either were, or affected to be, ignorant of the matter, and it was in vain to apply to any other person.

The serjeant now entered with orders from the Marquis for the immediate departure of Theodore, who heard the message with composure, though the physician could not help expressing his indignation at this precipitate removal, and his dread of the consequences that might attend it. Theodore had scarcely time to declare his gratitude for the kindness of this valuable friend, before the soldiers entered the room to conduct him to the carriage in waiting. As he bade him farewell, Theodore slipped his purse into his hand, and turning abruptly away, told the soldiers to lead on; but the physician stopped him, and refused the present with such serious warmth, that he was compelled to resume it: he wrung the hand of his new friend, and, being unable to speak, hurried away. The whole party immediately set off, and the unhappy Theodore was left to the remembrance of his past hopes and sufferings, to his anxiety for the fate of Adeline, the contemplation of his present wretchedness, and the apprehension of what might be reserved for him in future. For himself, indeed, he saw nothing but destruction, and was only relieved from total despair, by a feeble hope that she, whom he loved better than himself, might one time enjoy that happiness, of which he did not venture to look for a participation.

CHAPTER 1 4

“Have you the heart? When your head did but ach,
I knit my handkerchief about your brows,
And with my hand at midnight held up your head;
And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,
Still and anon cheer’d up the heavy time.”
KING JOHN.

“If the midnight bell
Did, with his iron tongue, and brazen mouth,
Sound one unto the drowsy race of night;
If this same were a church-yard where we stand,
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs;
Or if that surly spirit melancholy,
Had baked thy blood and made it heavy, thick;
Then, in despite of broad-eyed watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.”
KING JOHN.

Meanwhile the persecuted Adeline continued to travel, with little interruption, all night. Her mind suffered such a tumult of grief, regret, despair, and terror, that she could not be said to think. The Marquis’s valet, who had placed himself in the chaise with her, at first seemed inclined to talk, but her inattention soon silenced him, and left her to the indulgence of her own misery.

They seemed to travel through obscure lanes and bye-ways, along which the carriage drove as furiously as the darkness would permit: when the dawn appeared, she perceived herself on the borders of a forest, and renewed her entreaties to know whither she was going. The man replied, he had no orders to tell, but she would soon see. Adeline, who had hitherto supposed they were carrying her to the villa, now began to doubt it; and as every place appeared less terrible to her imagination than that, her despair began to abate, and she thought only of the devoted Theodore, whom she knew to be the victim of malice and revenge.

They now entered upon the forest, and it occurred to her that she was going to the abbey; for though she had no remembrance of the scenery, through which she passed, it was not the less probable that this was the forest of Fontangville, whose boundaries were by much too extensive to

have come within the circle of her former walks. This conjecture revived a terror, little inferior to that occasioned by the idea of going to the villa, for at the abbey she would be equally in the power of the Marquis, and also in that of her cruel enemy, La Motte. Her mind revolted at the picture her fancy drew, and as the carriage moved under the shades, she threw from the window a look of eager inquiry for some object which might confirm, or destroy her present surmise: she did not long look, before an opening in the forest shewed her the distant towers of the abbey— “I am, indeed, lost then!” said she, bursting into tears.

They were soon at the foot of the lawn, and Peter was seen running to open the gate, at which the carriage stopped. When he saw Adeline, he looked surprized and made an effort to speak, but the chaise now drove up to the abbey, where, at the door of the hall, La Motte himself appeared. As he advanced to take her from the carriage, an universal trembling seized her; it was with the utmost difficulty she supported herself, and for some moments she neither observed his countenance, nor heard his voice. He offered his arm to assist her into the abbey, which she at first refused, but having tottered a few paces, was obliged to accept; they then entered the vaulted room, where, sinking into a chair, a flood of tears came to her relief. La Motte did not interrupt the silence, which continued for some time, but paced the room in seeming agitation. When Adeline was sufficiently recovered to notice external objects, she observed his countenance, and there read the tumult of his soul, while he was struggling to assume a firmness, which his better feelings opposed.

La Motte now took her hand, and would have led her from the room, but she stopped, and, with a kind of desperate courage, made an effort to engage him to pity, and to save her. He interrupted her; “It is not in my power,” said he, in a voice of emotion; “I am not master of myself, or my conduct; inquire no farther — it is sufficient for you to know that I pity you; more I cannot do.” He gave her no time to reply, but, taking her hand, led her to the stairs of the tower, and from thence to the chamber she had formerly occupied.

“Here you must remain for the present,” said he, “in a confinement, which is, perhaps, almost as involuntary on my part as it can be on yours. I am willing to render it as easy as possible, and have, therefore, ordered some books to be brought you.”

Adeline made an effort to speak, but he hurried from the room, seemingly ashamed of the part he had undertaken, and unwilling to trust himself with her tears. She heard the door of the chamber locked, and then, looking towards the windows, perceived they were secured: the door that led to the other apartments was also fastened. Such preparation for security shocked her, and, hopeless as she had long believed herself, she now perceived her mind sink deeper in despair. When the tears she shed had somewhat relieved her, and her thoughts could turn from the subjects of her immediate concern, she was thankful for the total seclusion allotted her, since it would spare her the pain she must feel in the presence of Monsieur and Madame La Motte, and allow the unrestrained indulgence of her own sorrow and reflection; reflection which, however distressing, was preferable to the agony inflicted on the mind, when agitated by care and fear, it is obliged to assume an appearance of tranquillity.

In about a quarter of an hour, her chamber door was unlocked, and Annette appeared with refreshments and books: she expressed satisfaction at seeing Adeline again, but seemed fearful of speaking, knowing, probably, that it was contrary to the orders of La Motte, who, she said, was waiting at the bottom of the stairs. When Annette was gone, Adeline took some refreshment, which was indeed necessary; for she had tasted nothing since she left the inn. She was pleased, but not surprized, that Madame La Motte did not appear, who, it was evident, shunned her from a consciousness of her own ungenerous conduct, a consciousness, which offered some presumption, that she was still not wholly unfriendly to her. She reflected upon the words of La Motte, “I am not master of myself, or my conduct,” and though they afforded her no hope, she derived some comfort, poor as it was, from the belief that he pitied her. After some time spent in miserable reflection and various conjectures, her long-agitated spirits seemed to demand repose, and she laid down to sleep.

Adeline slept quietly for several hours, and awoke with a mind refreshed and tranquillized. To prolong this temporary peace, and to prevent, therefore, the intrusion of her own thoughts, she examined the books La Motte had sent her: among these she found some that in happier times had elevated her mind and interested her heart; their effect was now weakened, they were still, however, able to soften for a time the sense of her misfortunes.

But this Lethean medicine to a wounded mind was but a temporary blessing; the entrance of La Motte dissolved the illusions of the page, and awakened her to a sense of her own situation. He came with food, and having placed it on the table, left the room without speaking. Again she endeavoured to read, but his appearance had broken the enchantment — bitter reflection returned to her mind, and brought with it the image of Theodore — of Theodore lost to her for ever!

La Motte, mean while, experienced all the terrors that could be inflicted by a conscience not wholly hardened to guilt. He had been led on by passion to dissipation — and from dissipation to vice; but having once touched the borders of infamy, the progressive steps followed each other fast, and he now saw himself the pander of a villain, and the betrayer of an innocent girl, whom every plea of justice and humanity called upon him to protect. He contemplated his picture — he shrunk from it, but he could change its deformity only by an effort too nobly daring for a mind already effeminated by vice. He viewed the dangerous labyrinth into which he was led, and perceived, as if for the first time, the progression of his guilt; from this labyrinth he weakly imagined farther guilt could alone extricate him. Instead of employing his mind upon the means of saving Adeline from destruction, and himself from being instrumental to it, he endeavoured only to lull the pangs of conscience and to persuade himself into a belief that he must proceed in the course he had begun. He knew himself to be in the power of the Marquis, and he dreaded that power more than the sure, though distant punishment that awaits upon guilt. The honour of Adeline and the quiet of his own conscience he consented to barter for a few years of existence.

He was ignorant of the present illness of the Marquis, or he would have perceived that there was a chance of escaping the threatened punishment at a price less enormous than infamy, and he would, perhaps, have endeavoured to save Adeline and himself by flight. But the Marquis, foreseeing the possibility of this, had ordered his servants carefully to conceal the circumstance which detained him, and to acquaint La Motte that he should be at the abbey in a few days, at the same time directing his valet to await him there. Adeline, as he expected, had neither inclination nor opportunity to mention it, and thus La Motte remained ignorant of the

circumstance, which might have preserved him from farther guilt and Adeline from misery.

Most unwillingly had La Motte made his wife acquainted with the action, which had made him absolutely dependent upon the will of the Marquis, but the perturbation of his mind partly betrayed him: frequently in his sleep he muttered incoherent sentences, and frequently would start from his slumber and call, in passionate exclamation, upon Adeline. These instances of a disturbed mind had alarmed and terrified Madame La Motte, who watched while he slept and soon gathered from his words a confused idea of the Marquis's designs.

She hinted her suspicions to La Motte, who reproved her for having entertained them, but his manner, instead of repressing, increased her fears for Adeline; fears, which the conduct of the Marquis soon confirmed. On the night that he slept at the abbey, it had occurred to her, that whatever scheme was in agitation would now most probably be discussed, and anxiety for Adeline made her stoop to a meanness, which, in other circumstances, would have been despicable. She quitted her room, and, concealing herself in an apartment adjoining that in which she had left the Marquis and her husband, listened to their discourse. It turned upon the subject she had expected, and disclosed to her the full extent of their designs. Terrified for Adeline, and shocked at the guilty weakness of La Motte, she was for some time incapable of thinking, or determining how to proceed. She knew her husband to be under great obligation to the Marquis, whose territory thus afforded him a shelter from the world, and that it was in the power of the former to betray him into the hands of his enemies. She believed also that the Marquis would do this, if provoked, yet she thought, upon such an occasion, La Motte might find some way of appeasing the Marquis, without subjecting himself to dishonour. After some farther reflection, her mind became more composed, and she returned to her chamber, where La Motte soon followed. Her spirits, however, were not now in a state to encounter either his displeasure, or his opposition, which she had too much reason to expect, whenever she should mention the subject of her concern, and she, therefore, resolved not to notice it till the morrow.

On the morrow, she told La Motte all he had uttered in his dreams, and mentioned other circumstances, which convinced him it was in vain any

longer to deny the truth of her apprehensions. His wife then represented to him how possible it was to avoid the infamy, into which he was about to plunge, by quitting the territories of the Marquis, and pleaded so warmly for Adeline, that La Motte, in sullen silence, appeared to meditate upon the plan. His thoughts were, however, very differently engaged. He was conscious of having deserved from the Marquis a dreadful punishment, and knew that if he exasperated him by refusing to acquiesce with his wishes, he had little to expect from flight, for the eye of justice and revenge would pursue him with indefatigable research.

La Motte meditated how to break this to his wife, for he perceived that there was no other method of counteracting her virtuous compassion for Adeline, and the dangerous consequences to be expected from it, than by opposing it with terror for his safety, and this could be done only by shewing her the full extent of the evils that must attend the resentment of the Marquis. Vice had not yet so entirely darkened his conscience, but that the blush of shame stained his cheek, and his tongue faltered when he would have told his guilt. At length, finding it impossible to mention particulars, he told her that, on account of an affair, which no entreaties should ever induce him to explain, his life was in the power of the Marquis. “You see the alternative,” said he, “take your choice of evils, and, if you can, tell Adeline of her danger, and sacrifice my life to save her from a situation, which many would be ambitious to obtain.” — Madame La Motte, condemned to the horrible alternative of permitting the seduction of innocence, or of dooming her husband to destruction, suffered a distraction of thought, which defied all controul. Perceiving, however, that an opposition to the designs of the Marquis would ruin La Motte and avail Adeline little, she determined to yield and endure in silence.

At the time when Adeline was planning her escape from the abbey, the significant looks of Peter had led La Motte to suspect the truth and to observe them more closely. He had seen them separate in the hall in apparent confusion, and had afterwards observed them conversing together in the cloisters. Circumstances so unusual left him not a doubt that Adeline had discovered her danger, and was concerting with Peter some means of escape. Affecting, therefore, to be informed of the whole affair, he charged Peter with treachery towards himself, and threatened him with the vengeance of the Marquis if he did not disclose all he knew. The

menace intimidated Peter, and, supposing that all chance of assisting Adeline was gone, he made a circumstantial confession, and promised to forbear acquainting Adeline with the discovery of the scheme. In this promise he was seconded by inclination, for he feared to meet the displeasure, which Adeline, believing he had betrayed her, might express.

On the evening of the day, on which Adeline's intended escape was discovered, the Marquis designed to come to the abbey, and it had been agreed that he should then take Adeline to his villa. La Motte had immediately perceived the advantage of permitting Adeline to repair, in the belief of being undiscovered, to the tomb. It would prevent much disturbance and opposition, and spare himself the pain he must feel in her presence, when she should know that he had betrayed her. A servant of the Marquis might go, at the appointed hour, to the tomb, and wrapt in the disguise of night, might take her quietly thence in the character of Peter. Thus, without resistance, she would be carried to the villa, nor discover her mistake till it was too late to prevent its consequence.

When the Marquis did arrive, La Motte, who was not so much intoxicated by the wine he had drank, as to forget his prudence, informed him of what had happened and what he had planned, and the Marquis approving it, his servant was made acquainted with the signal, which afterwards betrayed Adeline to his power.

A deep consciousness of the unworthy neutrality she had observed in Adeline's concerns, made Madame La Motte anxiously avoid seeing her now that she was again in the abbey. Adeline understood this conduct, and she rejoiced that she was spared the anguish of meeting her as an enemy, whom she had once considered as a friend. Several days now passed in solitude, in miserable retrospection, and dreadful expectation. The perilous situation of Theodore was almost the constant subject of her thoughts. Often did she breathe an agonizing wish for his safety, and often look round the sphere of possibility in search of hope: but hope had almost left the horizon of her prospect, and when it did appear, it sprung only from the death of the Marquis, whose vengeance threatened most certain destruction.

The Marquis, mean while, lay at the inn at Baux, in a state of very doubtful recovery. The physician and surgeon, neither of whom he would dismiss, nor suffer to leave the village, proceeded upon contrary

principles, and the good effect of what the one prescribed, was frequently counteracted by the injudicious treatment of the other. Humanity alone prevailed on the physician to continue his attendance. The malady of the Marquis was also heightened by the impatience of his temper, the terrors of death, and the irritation of his passions. One moment he believed himself dying, another he could scarcely be prevented from attempting to follow Adeline to the abbey. So various were the fluctuations of his mind, and so rapid the schemes that succeeded each other, that his passions were in a continual state of conflict. The physician attempted to persuade him, that his recovery greatly depended upon tranquillity, and to prevail upon him to attempt, at least, some command of his feelings, but he was soon silenced, in hopeless disgust, by the impatient answers of the Marquis.

At length the servant, who had carried off Adeline, returned, and the Marquis having ordered him into his chamber, asked so many questions in a breath, that the man knew not which to answer. At length he pulled a folded paper from his pocket, which he said had been dropped in the chaise by Mademoiselle Adeline, and as he thought his lordship would like to see it, he had taken care of it. The Marquis stretched forth his hand with eagerness and received a note addressed to Theodore. On perceiving the superscription, the agitation of jealous rage for a moment overcame him, and he held it in his hand unable to open it.

He, however, broke the the seal, and found it to be a note of inquiry, written by Adeline to Theodore during his illness, and which, from some accident she had been prevented from sending him. The tender solicitude it expressed for his recovery stung the soul of the Marquis, and drew from him a comparison of her feelings on the illness of his rival and that of himself. “She could be solicitous for his recovery,” said he, “but for mine, she only dreads it.” As if willing to prolong the pain this little billet had excited, he then read it again. Again he cursed his fate and execrated his rival, giving himself up, as usual, to the transports of his passion. He was going to throw it from him, when his eyes caught the seal, and he looked earnestly at it. His anger seemed now to have subsided, he deposited the note carefully in his pocket-book, and was, for some time, lost in thought.

After many days of hopes and fears, the strength of his constitution overcame his illness, and he was well enough to write several letters, one of which he immediately sent off to prepare La Motte for his reception.

The same policy, which had prompted him to conceal his illness from La Motte, now urged him to say, what he knew would not happen, that he should reach the abbey on the day after his servant. He repeated this injunction, that Adeline should be strictly guarded, and renewed his promises of reward for the future services of La Motte.

La Motte, to whom each succeeding day had brought new surprize and perplexity concerning the absence of the Marquis, received this notice with uneasiness, for he had begun to hope that the Marquis had altered his intentions concerning Adeline, being either engaged in some new adventure, or obliged to visit his estates in some distant province: he would have been willing thus to have got rid of an affair, which was to reflect so much dishonour on himself.

This hope was now vanished, and he directed Madame to prepare for the reception of the Marquis. Adeline passed these days in a state of suspense, which was now cheered by hope, and now darkened by despair. This delay, so much exceeding her expectation, seemed to prove that the illness of the Marquis was dangerous; and when she looked forward to the consequences of his recovery, she could not be sorry that it was so. So odious was the idea of him to her mind, that she would not suffer her lips to pronounce his name, nor make the inquiry of Annette, which was of such consequence to her peace.

It was about a week after the receipt of the Marquis's letter, that Adeline one day saw from her window a party of horsemen enter the avenue, and knew them to be the Marquis and his attendants. She retired from the window in a state of mind not to be described, and, sinking into a chair, was for some time scarcely conscious of the objects around her. When she had recovered from the first terror, which his appearance excited, she again tottered to the window; the party was not in sight, but she heard the trampling of horses, and knew that the Marquis had wound round to the great gate of the abbey. She addressed herself to Heaven for support and protection, and her mind being now somewhat composed, sat down to wait the event.

La Motte received the Marquis with expressions of surprize at his long absence, and the latter, merely saying he had been detained by illness, proceeded to inquire for Adeline. He was told she was in her chamber, from whence she might be summoned if he wished to see her. The Marquis

hesitated, and at length excused himself, but desired she might be strictly watched. “Perhaps, my Lord,” said La Motte smiling, “Adeline’s obstinacy has been too powerful for your passion; you seem less interested concerning her than formerly.”

“O! by no means,” replied the Marquis; “she interests me, if possible, more than ever; so much, indeed, that I cannot have her too closely guarded; and I, therefore, beg La Motte, that you will suffer no body to attend her, but when you can observe them yourself. Is the room where she is confined sufficiently secure?” La Motte assured him it was; but at the same time expressed his wish that she was removed to the villa. “If by any means,” said he, “she should contrive to escape, I know what I must expect from your displeasure; and this reflection keeps my mind in continual anxiety.”

“This removal cannot be at present,” said the Marquis; “she is safer here, and you do wrong to disturb yourself with any apprehension of her escape, if her chamber is really so secure, as you represent it.”

“I can have no motive for deceiving you, my Lord, in this point.”

“I do not suspect you of any,” said the Marquis; “guard her carefully, and trust me, she will not escape. I can rely upon my valet, and if you wish it, he shall remain here.” La Motte thought there could be no occasion for him, and it was agreed that the man should go home.

The Marquis, after remaining about half an hour in conversation with La Motte, left the abbey, and Adeline saw him depart with a mixture of surprize and thankfulness that almost overcame her. She had waited in momentary expectation of being summoned to appear, and had been endeavouring to arm herself with resolution to support his presence. She had listened to every voice that sounded from below, and at every step that crossed the passage, her heart had palpitated with dread, lest it should be La Motte coming to lead her to the Marquis. This state of suffering had been prolonged almost beyond her power of enduring it, when she heard voices under her window, and rising, saw the Marquis ride away. After giving way to the joy and thankfulness that swelled her heart, she endeavoured to account for this circumstance, which, considering what had passed, was certainly very strange. It appeared, indeed, wholly inexplicable, and, after much fruitless inquiry, she quitted the subject, endeavouring to persuade herself that it could only portend good.

The time of La Motte's usual visitation now drew near, and Adeline expected it in the trembling hope of hearing that the Marquis had ceased his persecution; but he was, as usual, sullen and silent, and it was not till he was about to quit the room, that Adeline had the courage to inquire, when the Marquis was expected again? La Motte, opening the door to depart, replied, "On the following day," and Adeline, whom fear and delicacy embarrassed, saw she could obtain no intelligence of Theodore but by a direct question; she looked earnestly, as if she would have spoke, and he stopped, but she blushed and was still silent, till upon his again attempting to leave the room, she faintly called him back.

"I would ask," said she, "after that unfortunate chevalier who has incurred the resentment of the Marquis by endeavouring to serve me. Has the Marquis mentioned him?"

"He has," replied La Motte; "and your indifference towards the Marquis is now fully explained."

"Since I must feel resentment towards those who injure me," said Adeline, "I may surely be allowed to be grateful towards those who serve me. Had the Marquis deserved my esteem, he would, probably, have possessed it."

"Well, well," said La Motte, "this young hero, who, it seems, has been brave enough to lift his arm against his Colonel, is taken care of, and, I doubt not, will soon be sensible of the value of his quixotism." Indignation, grief, and fear, struggled in the bosom of Adeline; she disdained to give La Motte an opportunity of again pronouncing the name of Theodore; yet the uncertainty under which she laboured, urged her to inquire, whether the Marquis had heard of him since he left Caux? "Yes," said La Motte, "he has been safely carried to his regiment, where he is confined till the Marquis can attend to appear against him."

Adeline had neither power nor inclination to inquire farther, and La Motte quitting the chamber, she was left to the misery he had renewed. Though this information contained no new circumstance of misfortune, (for she now heard confirmed what she had always expected) a weight of new sorrow seemed to fall upon her heart, and she perceived that she had unconsciously cherished a latent hope of Theodore's escape before he reached the place of his destination. All hope was now, however, gone; he was suffering the miseries of a prison, and the tortures of apprehension

both for his own life and her safety. She pictured to herself the dark damp dungeon where he lay, loaded with chains, and pale with sickness and grief; she heard him, in a voice that thrilled her heart, call upon her name, and raise his eyes to Heaven in silent supplication: she saw the anguish of his countenance, the tears that fell slowly on his cheek, and remembering, at the same time, the generous conduct that had brought him to this abyss of misery, and that it was for her sake he suffered, grief resolved itself into despair, her tears ceased to flow, and she sunk silently into a state of dreadful torpor.

On the morrow the Marquis arrived, and departed as before. Several days then elapsed, and he did not appear, till one evening, as La Motte and his wife were in their usual sitting-room, he entered, and conversed for some time upon general subjects, from which, however, he by degrees fell into a reverie, and, after a pause of silence, he rose and drew La Motte to the window. “I would speak with you alone,” said he, “if you are at leisure; if not, another time will do.” La Motte, assuring him he was perfectly so, would have conducted him to another room, but the Marquis proposed a walk in the forest. They went out together, and when they had reached a solitary glade, where the spreading branches of the beech and oak deepened the shades of twilight, and threw a solemn obscurity around, the Marquis turned to La Motte, and addressed him: “Your condition, La Motte, is unhappy; this abbey is a melancholy residence for a man like you fond of society, and like you also qualified to adorn it.” La Motte bowed. “I wish it was in my power to restore you to the world,” continued the Marquis; “perhaps, if I knew the particulars of the affair which has driven you from it, I might perceive that my interest could effectually serve you. I think I have heard you hint it was an affair of honour.” La Motte was silent. “I mean not to distress you, however; nor is it common curiosity that prompts this inquiry, but a sincere desire to befriend you. You have already informed me of some particulars of your misfortunes. I think the liberality of your temper led you into expences which you afterwards endeavoured to retrieve by gaming.”

“Yes, my Lord,” said La Motte, “‘tis true that I dissipated the greater part of an affluent fortune in luxurious indulgences, and that I afterwards took unworthy means to recover it: but I wish to be spared upon this subject. I would, if possible, lose the remembrance of a transaction which

must for ever stain my character, and the rigorous effect of which, I fear, it is not in your power, my Lord, to soften."

"You may be mistaken on this point," replied the Marquis; "my interest at Court is by no means inconsiderable. Fear not from me any severity of censure; I am not at all inclined to judge harshly of the faults of others. I well know how to allow for the emergency of circumstances; and, I think, La Motte, you have hitherto found me your friend."

"I have, my Lord."

"And when you recollect, that I have forgiven a certain transaction of late date— "

"It is true, my Lord; and allow me to say, I have a just sense of your generosity. The transaction you allude to is by far the worst of my life; and what I have to relate cannot, therefore, lower me in your opinion. When I had dissipated the greatest part of my property in habits of voluptuous pleasure, I had recourse to gaming to supply the means of continuing them. A run of good luck, for some time, enabled me to do this, and encouraging my most sanguine expectations, I continued in the same career of success.

"Soon after this a sudden turn of fortune destroyed my hopes, and reduced me to the most desperate extremity. In one night my money was lowered to the sum of two hundred hundred louis. These I resolved to stake also, and with them my life; for it was my resolution not to survive their loss. Never shall I forget the horrors of that moment on which hung my fate, nor the deadly anguish that seized my heart when my last stake was gone. I stood for some time in a state of stupefaction, till roused to a sense of my misfortune, my passion made me pour forth execrations on my more fortunate rivals, and act all the frenzy of despair. During this paroxysm of madness, a gentleman, who had been a silent observer of all that passed, approached me. — Your are unfortunate, Sir, said he. — I need not be informed of that, Sir, I replied.

"You have, perhaps, been ill used, resumed he. — Yes, Sir, I am ruined, and, therefore, it may be said, I am ill used.

"Do you know the people you have played with?

"No; but I have met them in the first circles.

"Then I am, probably, mistaken, said he, and walked away. His last words roused me, and raised a hope that my money had not been fairly

lost. Wishing for farther information, I went in search of the gentleman, but he had left the rooms; I, however, stifled my transports, returned to the table where I had lost my money, placed myself behind the chair of one of the persons who had won it, and closely watched the game. For some time I saw nothing that could confirm my suspicions, but was at length convinced they were just.

“When the game was ended I called one of my adversaries out of the room, and telling him what I had observed, threatened instantly to expose him if he did not restore my property. The man was, for some time, as positive as myself; and, assuming the bully, threatened me with chastisement for my scandalous assertions. I was not, however, in a state of mind to be frightened, and his manner served only to exasperate my temper, already sufficiently inflamed by misfortune. After retorting his threats, I was about to return to the apartment we had left, and expose what had passed, when, with an insidious smile and a softened voice, he begged I would favour him with a few moments attention, and allow him to speak with the gentleman his partner. To the latter part of his request I hesitated, but, in the mean time, the gentleman himself entered the room. His partner related to him, in few words, what had passed between us, and the terror that appeared in his countenance sufficiently declared his consciousness of guilt.

“They then drew aside, and remained a few minutes in conversation together, after which they approached me with an offer, as they phrased it, of a compromise. I declared, however, against any thing of this kind, and swore, nothing less than the whole sum I had lost should content me. — Is it not possible, Monsieur, that you may be offered something as advantageous as the whole? — I did not understand their meaning, but, after they had continued for some time to give distant hints of the same sort, they proceeded to explain.

“Perceiving their characters wholly in my power, they wished to secure my interest to their party, and, therefore, informing me, that they belonged to an association of persons, who lived upon the folly and inexperience of others, they offered me a a share in their concern. My fortunes were desperate, and the proposal now made me would not only produce an immediate supply, but enable me to return to those scenes of dissipated

pleasure, to which passion had at first, and long habit afterwards, attached me. I closed with the offer, and thus sunk from dissipation into infamy."

La Motte paused, as if the recollection of these times filled him with remorse. The Marquis understood his feelings. "You judge too rigorously of yourself," said he; "there are few persons, let their appearance of honesty be what it may, who, in such circumstances, would have acted better than you have done. Had I been in your situation, I know not how I might have acted. That rigid virtue which shall condemn you, may dignify itself with the appellation of wisdom, but I wish not to possess it; let it still reside, where it generally is to be found, in the cold bosoms of those, who, wanting feeling to be men, dignify themselves with the title of philosophers. But pray proceed."

"Our success was for some time unlimited, for we held the wheel of fortune, and trusted not to her caprice. Thoughtless and voluptuous by nature, my expences fully kept pace with my income. An unlucky discovery of the practices of our party was at length made by a young nobleman, which obliged us to act for some time with the utmost circumspection. It would be tedious to relate the particulars, which made us at length so suspected, that the distant civility and cold reserve of our acquaintance rendered the frequenting public assemblies both painful and unprofitable. We turned our thoughts to other modes of obtaining money, and a swindling transaction, in which I engaged, to a very large amount, soon compelled me to leave Paris. You know the rest, my Lord."

La Motte was now silent, and the Marquis continued for some time musing. "You perceive, my Lord," at length resumed La Motte, "you perceive that my case is hopeless."

"It is bad, indeed, but not entirely hopeless. From my soul I pity you. Yet, if you should return to the world, and incur the danger of prosecution, I think my interest with the Minister might save you from any severe punishment. You seem, however, to have lost your relish for society, and, perhaps, do not wish to return to it."

"Oh! my Lord, can you doubt this? — But I am overcome with the excess of your goodness; would to Heaven it were in my power to prove the gratitude it inspires."

"Talk not of goodness," said the Marquis; "I will not pretend that my desire of serving you is unalloyed by any degree of self-interest. I will not

affect to be more than man, and trust me those who do are less. It is in your power to testify your gratitude, and bind me to your interest for ever." He paused. "Name but the means," cried La Motte, "name but the means, and if they are within the compass of possibility they shall be executed." The Marquis was still silent. "Do you doubt my sincerity, my Lord, that you are yet silent? Do you fear to repose a confidence in the man whom you have already loaded with obligation? who lives by your mercy, and almost by your means." The Marquis looked earnestly at him, but did not speak. "I have not deserved this of you, my Lord; speak, I entreat you."

"There are certain prejudices attached to the human mind," said the Marquis in a slow and solemn voice, "which it requires all our wisdom to keep from interfering with our happiness; certain set notions, acquired in infancy, and cherished involuntarily by age, which grow up and assume a gloss so plausible, that few minds, in what is called a civilized country, can afterwards overcome them. Truth is often perverted by education. While the refined Europeans boast a standard of honour, and a sublimity of virtue, which often leads them from pleasure to misery, and from nature to error, the simple, uninformed American follows the impulse of his heart, and obeys the inspiration of wisdom." The Marquis paused, and La Motte continued to listen in eager expectation.

"Nature, uncontaminated by false refinement," "resumed the Marquis, every where acts alike in the great occurrences of life. The Indian discovers his friend to be perfidious, and he kills him; the wild Asiatic does the same; the Turk, when ambition fires, or revenge provokes, gratifies his passion at the expence of life, and does not call it murder. Even the polished Italian, distracted by jealousy, or tempted by a strong circumstance of advantage, draws his stilletto, and accomplishes his purpose. It is the first proof of a superior mind to liberate itself from prejudices of country, or of education. You are silent, La Motte; are you not of my opinion?"

"I am attending, my Lord, to your reasoning."

"There are, I repeat it," said the Marquis, "people of minds so weak, as to shrink from acts they have been accustomed to hold wrong, however advantageous. They never suffer themselves to be guided by circumstances, but fix for life upon a certain standard, from which they

will, on no account, depart. Self-preservation is the great law of nature; when a reptile hurts us, or an animal of prey threatens us, we think no farther, but endeavour to annihilate it. When my life, or what may be essential to my life, requires the sacrifice of another, or even if some passion, wholly unconquerable, requires it, I should be a madman to hesitate. La Motte, I think I may confide in you — there are ways of doing certain things — you understand me. There are times, and circumstances, and opportunities — you comprehend my meaning."

"Explain yourself, my Lord."

"Kind services that — in short there are services, which excite all our gratitude, and which we can never think repaid. It is in your power to place me in such a situation."

"Indeed! my Lord, name the means."

"I have already named them. This abbey well suits the purpose; it is shut up from the eye of observation; any transaction may be concealed within its walls; the hour of midnight may witness the deed, and the morn shall not dawn to disclose it; these woods tell no tales. Ah! La Motte, am I right in trusting this business with you; may I believe you are desirous of serving me, and of preserving yourself?" The Marquis paused, and looked stedfastly at La Motte, whose countenance was almost concealed by the gloom of evening.

"My Lord, you may trust me in any thing; explain yourself more fully."

"What security will you give me for your faithfulness?"

"My life, my Lord; is it not already in your power?" The Marquis hesitated, and then said, "Tomorrow, about this time, I shall return to the abbey, and will then explain my meaning, if, indeed, you shall not already have understood it. You, in the mean time, will consider your own powers of resolution, and be prepared either to adopt the purpose I shall suggest, or to declare you will not." La Motte made some confused reply. "Farewel till tomorrow," said the Marquis; "remember that freedom and affluence are now before you." He moved towards the abbey, and, mounting his horse, rode off with his attendants. La Motte walked slowly home, musing on the late conversation.

CHAPTER 1 5

“Danger, whose limbs of giant mold
What mortal eye can fix’d behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form!
Howling amidst the midnight storm! —
And with him thousand phantoms join’d,
Who prompt to deeds accurs’d the mind! —
On whom that rav’ning brood of Fate,
Who lap the blood of Sorrow wait;
Who, Fear! this ghastly train can see,
And look not madly wild like thee!”
Collins.

The Marquis was punctual to the hour. La Motte received him at the gate, but he declined entering, and said he preferred a walk in the forest. Thither, therefore, La Motte attended him. After some general conversation, “Well,” said the Marquis, “have you considered what I said, and are you prepared to decide?”

“I have, my Lord, and will quickly decide, when you shall farther explain yourself. Till then I can form no resolution.” The Marquis appeared dissatisfied, and was a moment silent. “Is it then possible,” he at length resumed, “that you do not understand? This ignorance is surely affected. La Motte, I expect sincerity. Tell me, therefore, is it necessary I should say more?”

“It is, my Lord,” said La Motte immediately. “If you fear to confide in me freely, how can I fully accomplish your purpose?”

“Before I proceed farther,” said the Marquis, “let me administer some oath which shall bind you to secrecy. But this is scarcely necessary; for, could I even doubt your word of honour, the remembrance of a certain transaction would point out to you the necessity of being as silent yourself as you must wish me to be.” There was now a pause of silence, during which both the Marquis and La Motte betrayed some confusion. “I think, La Motte,” said he, “I have given you sufficient proof that I can be grateful: the services you have already rendered me with respect to Adeline have not been unrewarded.”

“True, my Lord, I am ever willing to acknowledge this, and am sorry it has not been in my power to serve you more effectually. Your farther

views respecting her I am ready to assist.”

“I thank you. — Adeline” — the Marquis hesitated.— “Adeline,” rejoined La Motte, eager to anticipate his wishes, “has beauty worthy of your pursuit. She has inspired a passion of which she ought to be proud, and, at any rate, she shall soon be yours. Her charms are worthy of” —

“Yes, yes,” interrupted the Marquis; “but” — he paused.— “But they have given you too much trouble in the pursuit,” said La Motte; “and to be sure, my Lord, it must be confessed they have; but this trouble is all over — you may now consider her as your own.”

“I would do so,” said the Marquis, fixing an eye of earnest regard upon La Motte— “I would do so.”

“Name your hour, my Lord; you shall not be interrupted. — Beauty such as Adeline’s” —

“Watch her closely,” interrupted the Marquis, “and on no account suffer her to leave her apartment. Where is she now?”

“Confined in her chamber.”

“Very well. But I am impatient.”

“Name your time, my Lord — tomorrow night.”

“Tomorrow night,” said the Marquis— “tomorrow night. Do you understand me now?”

“Yes, my Lord, this night, if you wish it so. But had you not better dismiss your servants, and remain yourself in the forest. You know the door that opens upon the woods from the west tower. Come thither about twelve — I will be there to conduct you to her chamber. Remember, then, my Lord, that to-night” —

“Adeline dies!” interrupted the Marquis, in a low voice scarcely human. “Do you understand me now?” — La Motte shrunk aghast— “My Lord!”

“La Motte!” said the Marquis. — There was a silence of several minutes, in which La Motte endeavoured to recover himself.— “Let me ask, my Lord, the meaning of this?” said he, when he had breath to speak. “Why should you wish the death of Adeline — of Adeline whom so lately you loved?”

“Make no inquiries for my motive,” said the Marquis; “but it is as certain as that I live that she you name must die. This is sufficient.” The surprise of La Motte equalled his horror. “The means are various,” resumed the Marquis. “I could have wished that no blood might be spilt;

and there are drugs sure and speedy in their effect, but they cannot be soon or safely procured. I also with it over

— it must be done quickly — this night."

"This night, my Lord!"

"Aye, this night, La Motte; if it is to be, why not soon. Have you no convenient drug at hand?"

"None, my Lord."

"I feared to trust a third person, or I should have been provided," said the Marquis. "As it is, take this poignard; use it as occasion offers, but be resolute." La Motte received the poignard with a trembling hand, and continued to gaze upon it for some time, scarcely knowing what he did. "Put it up," said the Marquis," and "endeavour to recollect yourself." La Motte obeyed, but continued to muse in silence.

He saw himself entangled in the web which his own crimes had woven. Being in the power of the Marquis, he knew he must either consent to the commission of a deed, from the enormity of which, depraved as he was, he shrunk in horror, or sacrifice fortune, freedom, probably life itself, to the refusal. He had been led on by slow gradations from folly to vice, till he now saw before him an abyss of guilt which startled even the conscience that so long had slumbered. The means of retreating were desperate — to proceed was equally so.

When he considered the innocence and the helplessness of Adeline, her orphan state, her former affectionate conduct, and her confidence in his protection, his heart melted with compassion for the distress he had already occasioned her, and shrunk in terror from the deed he was urged to commit. But when, on the other hand, he contemplated the destruction that threatened him from the vengeance of the Marquis, and then considered the advantages that were offered him of favour, freedom, and probably fortune, terror and temptation contributed to overcome the pleadings of humanity, and silence the voice of conscience. In this state of tumultuous uncertainty he continued for some time silent, until the voice of the Marquis roused him to a conviction of the necessity of at least appearing to acquiesce in his designs.

"Do you hesitate?" said the Marquis.— "No, my Lord, my resolution is fixed — I will obey you. But methinks it would be better to avoid bloodshed. Strange secrets have been revealed by" —

“Aye, but how avoid it?” interrupted the Marquis.— “Poison I will not venture to procure. I have given you one sure instrument of death. You also may find it dangerous to inquire for a drug.” La Motte perceived that he could not purchase poison without incurring a discovery much greater than that he wished to avoid. “You are right, my Lord, and I will follow your orders implicitly” The Marquis now proceeded, in broken sentences, to give farther directions concerning this dreadful scheme.

“In her sleep,” said he, “at midnight; the family will then be at rest.” Afterwards they planned a story, which was to account for her disappearance, and by which it was to seem that she had sought an escape in consequence of her aversion to the addresses of the Marquis. The doors of her chamber and of the west tower were to be left open to corroborate this account, and many other circumstances were to be contrived to confirm the suspicion. They farther consulted how the Marquis was to be informed of the event; and it was agreed that he should come as usual to the Abbey on the following day. “To-night, then,” said the Marquis, “I may rely upon your resolution.”

“You may, my Lord.”

“Farewell, then. When we meet again” —

“When we meet again,” said La Motte, “it will be done.” He followed the Marquis to the Abbey, and having seen him mount his horse and wished him a good night, he retired to his chamber, where he shut himself up.

Adeline, mean while, in the solitude of her prison, gave way to the despair which her condition inspired. She tried to arrange her thoughts, and to argue herself into some degree of resignation; but reflection, by representing the past, and reason, by anticipating the future, brought before her mind the full picture of her misfortunes, and she sunk in despondency. Of Theodore, who, by a conduct so noble, had testified his attachment and involved himself in ruin, she thought with a degree of anguish infinitely superior to any she had felt upon any other occasion.

That the very exertions which had deserved all her gratitude, and awakened all her tenderness, should be the cause of his destruction, was a circumstance so much beyond the ordinary bounds of misery, that her fortitude sunk at once before it. The idea of Theodore suffering — Theodore dying — was for ever present to her imagination, and frequently

excluding the sense of her own danger, made her conscious only of his. Sometimes the hope he had given her of being able to vindicate his conduct, or at least to obtain a pardon, would return; but it was like the faint beam of an April morn, transient and cheerless. She knew that the Marquis, stung with jealousy, and exasperated to revenge, would pursue him with unrelenting malice.

Against such an enemy what could Theodore oppose? Conscious rectitude would not avail him to ward off the blow which disappointed passion and powerful pride directed. Her distress was considerably heightened by reflecting that no intelligence of him could reach her at the Abbey, and that she must remain she knew not how long in the most dreadful suspence concerning his fate. From the Abbey she saw no possibility of escaping. She was a prisoner in a chamber inclosed at every avenue: she had no opportunity of conversing with any person who could afford her even a chance of relief; and she saw herself condemned to await in passive silence the impending destiny, infinitely more dreadful to her imagination than death itself.

Thus circumstanced, she yielded to the pressure of her misfortunes, and would sit for hours motionless and given up to thought. “Theodore!” she would frequently exclaim, “you cannot hear my voice, you cannot fly to help me; yourself a prisoner and in chains.” The picture was too horrid. The swelling anguish of her heart would subdue her utterance — tears bathed her cheeks — and she became insensible to every thing but the misery of Theodore.

On this evening her mind had been remarkably tranquil; and as she watched from her window, with a still and melancholy pleasure, the setting sun, the fading splendour of the western horizon, and the gradual approach of twilight, her thoughts bore her back to the time when, in happier circumstances, she had watched the same appearances. She recollected also the evening of her temporary escape from the Abbey, when from this same window she had viewed the declining sun — how anxiously she had awaited the fall of twilight — how much she had endeavoured to anticipate the events of her future life — with what trembling fear she had descended from the tower and ventured into the forest. These reflections produced others that filled her heart with anguish and her eyes with tears.

While she was lost in her melancholy reverie she saw the Marquis mount his horse and depart from the gates. The sight of him revived, in all its force, a sense of the misery he inflicted on her beloved Theodore, and a consciousness of the evils which more immediately threatened herself. She withdrew from the window in an agony of tears, which continuing for a considerable time, her frame was, at length, quite exhausted, and she retired early to rest.

La Motte remained in his chamber till supper obliged him to descend. At table his wild and haggard countenance, which, in spite of all his endeavours, betrayed the disorder of his mind, and his long and frequent fits of abstraction surprised as well as alarmed Madame La Motte. When Peter left the room she tenderly inquired what had disturbed him, and he with a distorted smile tried to be gay, but the effort was beyond his art, and he quickly relapsed into silence; or when Madame La Motte spoke, and he strove to conceal the absence of his thoughts, he answered so entirely from the purpose, that his abstraction became still more apparent. Observing this, Madame La Motte appeared to take no notice of his present temper; and they continued to sit in uninterrupted silence till the hour of rest, when they retired to their chamber.

La Motte lay in a state of disturbed watchfulness for some time, and his frequent starts awoke Madame, who, however, being pacified by some trifling excuse, soon went to sleep again. This agitation continued till near midnight, when, recollecting that the time was now passing in idle reflection which ought to be devoted to action, he stole silently from his bed, wrapped himself in his night gown, and, taking the lamp which burned nightly in his chamber, passed up the spiral staircase. As he went he frequently looked back and often started and listened to the hollow sighings of the blast.

His hand shook so violently, when he attempted to unlock the door of Adeline’s chamber, that he was obliged to set the lamp on the ground, and apply both his hands. The noise he made with the key induced him to suppose he must have awakened her; but when he opened the door, and perceived the stillness that reigned within, he was convinced she was asleep. When he approached the bed he heard her gently breathe, and soon after sigh — and he stopped; but silence returning, he again advanced, and then heard her sing in her sleep. As he listened he distinguished some

notes of a melancholy little air which, in her happier days, she had often sung to him. The low and mournful accent in which she now uttered them expressed too well the tone of her mind.

La Motte now stepped hastily towards the bed, when, breathing a deep sigh, she was again silent. He undrew the curtain, and saw her laying in a profound sleep, her cheek yet wet with tears, resting upon her arm. He stood a moment looking at her; and as he viewed her innocent and lovely countenance, pale in grief, the light of the lamp, which shone strong upon her eyes, awoke her, and, perceiving a man, she uttered a scream. Her recollection returning, she knew him to be La Motte, and it instantly recurring to her that the Marquis was at hand, she raised herself in bed, and implored pity and protection. La Motte stood looking eagerly at her, but without replying.

The wildness of his looks and the gloomy silence he preserved increased her alarm, and with tears of terror she renewed her supplication. “You once saved me from destruction,” cried she; “O save me now! Have pity upon me — I have no protector but you.”

“What is it you fear?” said La Motte in a tone scarcely articulate.— “O save me — save me from the Marquis!”

“Rise then,” said he, “and dress yourself quickly — I shall be back again in a few minutes.” He lighted a candle that stood on the table, and left the chamber. Adeline immediately arose and endeavoured to dress, but her thoughts were so bewildered that she scarcely knew what she did, and her whole frame so violently agitated that it was with the utmost difficulty she preserved herself from fainting. She threw her clothes hastily on, and then sat down to await the return of La Motte. A considerable time elapsed, yet he did not appear, and, having in vain endeavoured to compose her spirits, the pain of suspence at length became so insupportable, that she opened the door of her chamber, and went to the top of the staircase to listen. She thought she heard voices below; but, considering that if the Marquis was there her appearance could only increase her danger, she checked the step she had almost involuntarily taken to descend. Still she listened, and still thought she distinguished voices. Soon after she heard a door shut, and then footsteps, and she hastened back to her chamber.

Near a quarter of an hour elapsed and La Motte did not appear. When again she thought she heard a murmur of voices below, and also passing

steps, and at length her anxiety not suffering her to remain in her room, she moved through the passage that communicated with the spiral staircase; but all was now still. In a few moments, however, a light flashed across the hall, and La Motte appeared at the door of the vaulted room. He looked up, and seeing Adeline in the gallery, beckoned her to descend.

She hesitated and looked towards her chamber; but La Motte now approached the stairs, and, with faultering steps, she went to meet him. “I fear the Marquis may see me,” said she, whispering; “where is he?” La Motte took her hand, and led her on, assuring her she had nothing to fear from the Marquis. The wildness of his looks, however, and the trembling of his hand, seemed to contradict this assurance, and she inquired whither he was leading her. “To the forest,” said La Motte, “that you may escape from the Abbey — a horse waits for you without. I can save you by no other means.” New terror seized her. She could scarcely believe that La Motte, who had hitherto conspired with the Marquis, and had so closely confined her, should now himself undertake her escape, and she at this moment felt a dreadful presentiment, which it was impossible to account for, that he was leading her out to murder her in the forest. Again shrinking back, she supplicated his mercy. He assured her he meant only to protect her, and desired she would not waste time.

There was something in his manner that spoke sincerity, and she suffered him to conduct her to a side door that opened into the forest, where she could just distinguish through the gloom a man on horseback. This brought to her remembrance the night in which she had quitted the tomb, when trusting to the person who appeared she had been carried to the Marquis’s villa. La Motte called, and was answered by Peter, whose voice somewhat reassured Adeline.

He then told her that the Marquis would return to the Abbey on the following morning, and that this could be her only opportunity of escaping his designs; that she might rely upon his (La Motte’s) word, that Peter had orders to carry her wherever she chose; but as he knew the Marquis would be indefatigable in search of her, he advised her by all means to leave the kingdom, which she might do with Peter, who was a native of Savoy, and would convey her to the house of his sister. There she might remain till La Motte himself, who did not now think it would be safe to continue much longer in France, should join her. He intreated her whatever might happen,

never to mention the events which had passed at the Abbey. “To save you, Adeline, I have risked my life; do not increase my danger and your own by any unnecessary discoveries. We may never meet again, but I hope you will be happy; and remember, when you think of me, that I am not quite so bad as I have been tempted to be.”

Having said this, he gave her some money, which he told her would be necessary to defray the expences of her journey. Adeline could no longer doubt his sincerity, and her transports of joy and gratitude would scarcely permit her to thank him. She wished to have bid Madame La Motte farewell, and indeed earnestly requested it; but he again told her she had no time to lose, and, having wrapped her in a large cloak, he lifted her upon the horse. She bade him adieu with tears of gratitude, and Peter set off as fast as the darkness would permit.

When they were got some way, “I am glad with all my heart, Ma’amselle,” said he, “to see you again. Who would have thought, after all, that my master himself would have bid me take you away! — Well, to be sure, strange things come to pass; but I hope we shall have better luck this time.” Adeline, not chusing to reproach him with the treachery of which she feared he had been formerly guilty, thanked him for his good wishes, and said she hoped they should be more fortunate; but Peter, in his usual strain of eloquence, proceeded to undeceive her in this point, and to acquaint her with every circumstance which his memory, and it was naturally a strong one, could furnish.

Peter expressed such an artless interest in her welfare, and such a concern for her disappointment, that she could no longer doubt his faithfulness; and this conviction not only strengthened her confidence in the present undertaking, but made her listen to his conversation with kindness and pleasure. “I should never have staid at the Abbey till this time,” said he, “if I could have got away; but my master frighted me so about the Marquis, and I had not money enough to carry me into my own country, so that I was forced to stay. It’s well we have got some solid louisd’ors now; for I question, Ma’amselle, whether the people on the road would have taken those trinkets you formerly talked of for money.”

“Possibly not,” said Adeline: “I am thankful to Monsieur La Motte that we have more certain means of procuring conveniences. What route shall you take when we leave the forest, Peter?” — Peter mentioned very

correctly a great part of the road to Lyons: “and then,” said he, “we can easily get to Savoy, and that will be nothing. My sister, God bless her! I hope is living; I have not seen her many a year; but if she is not, all the people will be glad to see me, and you will easily get a lodging, Ma’amselle, and every thing you want.”

Adeline resolved to go with him to Savoy. La Motte, who knew the character and designs of the Marquis, had advised her to leave the kingdom, and had told her, what her fears would have suggested, that the Marquis would be indefatigable in search of her. His motive for this advice must be a desire of serving her; why else, when she was already in his power, should he remove her to another place, and even furnish her with money for the expences of a journey?

At Leloncourt, where Peter said he was well known, she would be most likely to meet with protection and comfort, even should his sister be dead; and its distance and solitary situation were circumstances that pleased her. These reflections would have pointed out to her the prudence of proceeding to Savoy, had she been less destitute of resources in France; in her present situation they proved it to be necessary.

She inquired farther concerning the route they were to take, and whether Peter was sufficiently acquainted with the road. “When once I get to Thiers, I know it well enough,” said Peter, “for I have gone it many a time in my younger days, and any body will tell us the way there.” They travelled for several hours in darkness and silence, and it was not till they emerged from the forest that Adeline saw the morning light streak the eastern clouds. The sight cheered and revived her; and as she travelled silently along her mind revolved the events of the past night, and meditated plans for the future. The present kindness of La Motte appeared so very different from his former conduct that it astonished and perplexed her, and she could only account for it by attributing it to one of those sudden impulses of humanity which sometimes operate even upon the most depraved hearts.

But when she recollected his former words, “that he was not master of himself,” she could scarcely believe that mere pity could induce him to break the bonds which had hitherto so strongly held him, and then, considering the altered conduct of the Marquis, she was inclined to think that she owed her liberty to some change in his sentiments towards her;

yet the advice La Motte had given her to quit the kingdom, and the money with which he had supplied her for that purpose, seemed to contradict this opinion, and involved her again in doubt.

Peter now got directions to Thiers, which place they reached without any accident, and there stopped to refresh themselves. As soon as Peter thought the horse sufficiently rested, they again set forward, and from the rich plains of the Lyonnois Adeline, for the first time, caught a view of the distant alps, whose majestic heads, seeming to prop the vault of heaven, filled her mind with sublime emotions.

In a few hours they reached the vale, in which stands the city of Lyons, whose beautiful environs, studded with villas, and rich with cultivation, withdrew Adeline from the melancholy contemplation of her own circumstances, and her more painful anxiety for Theodore.

When they reached that busy city, her first care was to inquire concerning the passage of the Rhone; but she forbore to make these inquiries of the people of the inn, considering that if the Marquis should trace her thither they might enable him to pursue her route. She, therefore, sent Peter to the quays to hire a boat, while she herself took a slight repast, it being her intention to embark immediately. Peter presently returned, having engaged a boat and men to take them up the Rhone to the nearest part of Savoy, from whence they were to proceed by land to the village of Leloncourt.

Having taken some refreshment, she ordered him to conduct her to the vessel. A new and striking scene presented itself to Adeline, who looked with surprise upon the river gay with vessels, and the quay crowded with busy faces, and felt the contrast which the cheerful objects around bore to herself — to her an orphan, desolate, helpless, and flying from persecution and her country. She spoke with the master of the boat, and having sent Peter back to the inn for the horse, (La Motte’s gift to Peter in lieu of some arrears of wages) they embarked.

As they slowly passed up the Rhone, whose steep banks, crowned with mountains, exhibited the most various, wild, and romantic scenery, Adeline sat in pensive reverie. The novelty of the scene through which she floated, now frowning with savage grandeur, and now smiling in fertility, and gay with towns and villages, soothed her mind, and her sorrow gradually softened into a gentle and not unpleasing melancholy. She had

seated herself at the head of the boat, where she watched its sides cleave the swift stream, and listened to the dashing of the waters.

The boat, slowly opposing the current, passed along for some hours, and at length the veil of evening was stretched over the landscape. The weather was fine, and Adeline, regardless of the dews that now fell, remained in the open air, observing the objects darken round her, the gay tints of the horizon fade away, and the stars gradually appear, trembling upon the lucid mirror of the waters. The scene was now sunk in deep shadow, and the silence of the hour was broken only by the measured dashing of the oars, and now and then by the voice of Peter speaking to the boatmen. Adeline sat lost in thought: the forlornness of her circumstances came heightened to her imagination.

She saw herself surrounded by the darkness and stillness of night, in a strange place, far distant from any friends, going she scarcely knew whither, under the guidance of strangers, and pursued, perhaps, by an inveterate enemy. She pictured to herself the rage of the Marquis now that he had discovered her flight, and though she knew it very unlikely he should follow her by water, for which reason she had chosen that manner of travelling, she trembled at the portrait her fancy drew. Her thoughts then wandered to the plan she should adopt after reaching Savoy; and much as her experience had prejudiced her against the manners of a convent, she saw no place more likely to afford her a proper asylum. At length she retired to the little cabin for a few hours repose.

She awoke with the dawn, and her mind being too much disturbed to sleep again, she rose and watched the gradual approach of day. As she mused, she expressed the feelings of the moment in the following

SONNET.

Morn’s beaming eyes at length unclose, And wake the blushes of the rose, That all night long oppress’d with dews, And veil’d in chilling shade its hues, Reclin’d, forlorn, the languid head, And sadly sought its parent bed; Warmth from her ray the trembling flow’r derives, And, sweetly blushing through its tears, revives.

“Morn’s beaming eyes at length unclose,” And melt the tears that bend the rose; But can their charms suppress the sigh, Or chace the tear from Sorrow’s eye? Can all their lustrous light impart One ray of peace to

Sorrow’s heart? Ah! no; their fires her fainting soul oppress — Eve’s pensive shades more soothe her meek distress!

When Adeline left the Abbey, La Motte had remained for some time at the gate, listening to the steps of the horse that carried her, till the sound was lost in distance; he then turned into the hall with a lightness of heart to which he had long been a stranger. The satisfaction of having thus preserved her, as he hoped, from the designs of the Marquis, overcame for a while all sense of the danger in which this step must involve him. But when he returned entirely to his own situation, the terrors of the Marquis’s resentment struck their full force upon his mind, and he considered how he might best escape it.

It was now past midnight — the Marquis was expected early on the following day; and in this interval it at first appeared probable to him that he might quit the forest. There was only one horse; but he considered whether it would be best to set off immediately for Auboine, where a carriage might be procured to convey his family and his moveables from the Abbey, or quietly to await the arrival of the Marquis, and endeavour to impose upon him by a forged story of Adeline’s escape.

The time which must elapse before a carriage could reach the Abbey would leave him scarcely sufficient to escape from the forest; what money he had remaining from the Marquis’s bounty would not carry him far; and when it was expended he must probably be at a loss for subsistence, should he not before then be detected. By remaining at the Abbey it would appear that he was unconscious of deserving the Marquis’s resentment, and though he could not expect to impress a belief upon him that his orders had been executed, he might make it appear that Peter only had been accessary to the escape of Adeline; an account which would seem the more probable from Peter’s having been formerly detected in a similar scheme. He believed also that if the Marquis should threaten to deliver him into the hands of justice, he might save himself by a menace of disclosing the crime he had commissioned him to perpetrate.

Thus arguing, La Motte resolved to remain at the Abbey and await the event of the Marquis’s disappointment.

When the Marquis did arrive, and was informed of Adeline’s flight, the strong workings of his soul, which appeared in his countenance, for a while alarmed and terrified La Motte. He cursed himself and her in terms

of such coarseness and vehemence as La Motte was astonished to hear from a man whose manners were generally amiable, whatever might be the violence and criminality of his passions. To invent and express these terms seemed to give him not only relief, but delight; yet he appeared more shocked at the circumstance of her escape than exasperated at the carelessness of La Motte and recollecting at length that he wasted time, he left the Abbey, and dispatched several of his servants in pursuit of her.

When he was gone, La Motte, believing his story had succeeded, returned to the pleasure of considering that he had done his duty, and to the hope that Adeline was now beyond the reach of pursuit. This calm was of short continuance. In a few hours the Marquis returned, accompanied by the officers of justice. The affrighted La Motte, perceiving him approach, endeavoured to conceal himself but was seized and carried to the Marquis, who drew him aside.

“I am not to be imposed upon,” said he, “by such a superficial story as you have invented; you know your life is in my hands; tell me instantly where you have secreted Adeline, or I will charge you with the crime you have committed against me; but, upon your disclosing the place of her concealment, I will dismiss the officers, and, if you wish it, assist you to leave the kingdom. You have no time to hesitate, and may know that I will not be trifled with.” La Motte attempted to appease the Marquis, and affirmed that Adeline was really fled he knew not whither. “You will remember, my Lord, that your character is also in my power; and that, if you proceed to extremities, you will compel me to reveal in the face of day that you would have made me a murderer.”

“And who will believe you?” said the Marquis. “The crimes that banished you from society will be no testimony of your veracity, and that with which I now charge you will bring with it a sufficient presumption that your accusation is malicious. Officers, do your duty.”

They entered the room and seized La Motte, whom terror now deprived of all power of resistance, could resistance have availed him, and in the perturbation of his mind he informed the Marquis that Adeline had taken the road to Lyons. This discovery, however, was made too late to serve himself; the Marquis seized the advantage it offered, but the charge had been given, and, with the anguish of knowing that he had exposed Adeline to danger, without benefiting himself, La Motte submitted in silence to his

fate. Scarcely allowing him time to collect what little effects might easily be carried with him, the officers conveyed him from the Abbey; but the Marquis, in consideration of the extreme distress of Madame La Motte, directed one of his servants to procure a carriage from Auboine that she might follow her husband.

The Marquis, in the mean time, now acquainted with the route Adeline had taken, sent forward his faithful valet to trace her to her place of concealment, and return immediately with inteligence to the villa.

Abandoned to despair, La Motte and his wife quitted the forest of Fontangville, which had for so many months afforded them an asylum, and embarked once more upon the tumultuous world, where justice would meet La Motte in the form of destruction. They had entered the forest as a refuge, rendered necessary by the former crimes of La Motte, and for some time found in it the security they sought; but other offences, for even in that sequestered spot there happened to be temptation, soon succeeded, and his life, already sufficiently marked by the punishment of vice, now afforded him another instance of this great truth, “That where guilt is, there peace cannot enter.”

CHAPTER 1 6

“Hail awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
“And woo the weary to profound repose!”
Beattie.

Adeline, mean while, and Peter proceeded on their voyage, without any accident, and landed in Savoy, where Peter placed her upon the horse, and himself walked beside her. When he came within sight of his native mountains, his extravagant joy burst forth into frequent exclamations, and he would often ask Adeline if she had ever seen such hills in France. “No, no,” said he, “the hills there are very well for French hills, but they are not to be named on the same day with ours.” Adeline, lost in admiration of the astonishing and tremendous scenery around her, assented very warmly to the truth of Peter’s assertion, which encouraged him to expatiate more largely upon the advantages of his country; its disadvantages he totally forgot; and though he gave away his last sous to the children of the peasantry that run barefooted by the side of the horse, he spoke of nothing but the happiness and content of the inhabitants.

His native village, indeed, was an exception to the general character of the country, and to the usual effects of an arbitrary government; it was flourishing, healthy, and happy; and these advantages it chiefly owed to the activity and attention of the benevolent clergyman whose cure it was.

Adeline, who now began to feel the effects of long anxiety and fatigue, much wished to arrive at the end of her journey, and inquired impatiently of Peter concerning it. Her spirits, thus weakened, the gloomy grandeur of the scenes which had so lately awakened emotions of delightful sublimity, now awed her into terror; she trembled at the sound of the torrents rolling among the clifts and thundering in the vale below, and shrunk from the view of the precipices, which sometimes overhung the road, and at others appeared beneath it. Fatigued as she was, she frequently dismounted to climb on foot the steep slinty road, which she feared to travel on horseback.

The day was closing when they drew near a small village at the foot of the Savoy Alps, and the sun, in all his evening splendour, now sinking behind their summits, threw a farewell gleam athwart the landscape, so

soft and glowing as drew from Adeline, languid as she was, an exclamation of rapture.

The romantic situation of the village next attracted her notice. It stood at the foot of several stupendous mountains, which formed a chain round a lake at some little distance, and the woods that swept from their summits almost embosomed the village. The lake, unruffled by the lightest air, reflected the vermil tints of the horizon with the sublime scenery on its borders, darkening every instant with the falling twilight.

When Peter perceived the village, he burst into a shout of joy. “Thank God,” said he, “we are near home; there is my dear native place. It looks just as it did twenty years ago; and there are the same old trees growing round our cottage yonder, and the huge rock that rises above it. My poor father died there, Ma’amselle. Pray heaven my sister be alive; it is a long while since I saw her.” Adeline listened with a melancholy pleasure to these artless expressions of Peter, who, in retracing the scenes of his former days, seemed to live them over again. As they approached the village, he continued to point out various objects of his remembrance. “And there too is the good pastor’s chateau; look, Ma’amselle, that white house, with the smoke curling, that stands on the edge of the lake yonder. I wonder whether he is alive yet. He was not old when I left the place, and as much beloved as ever man was; but death spares nobody!”

They had by this time reached the village which was extremely neat, though it did not promise much accommodation. Peter had hardly advanced ten steps before he was accosted by some of his old acquaintance, who shook hands, and seemed not to know how to part with him. He inquired for his sister, and was told she was alive and well. As they passed on, so many of his old friends flocked round him, that Adeline became quite weary of the delay. Many whom he had left in the vigour of life were now tottering under the infirmities of age, while their sons and daughters, whom he had known only in the playfulness of infancy, were grown from his remembrance, and in the pride of youth. At length they approached the cottage, and were met by his sister, who, having heard of his arrival, came and welcomed him with unfeigned joy.

On seeing Adeline, she seemed surprised, but assisted her to alight, and conducting her into a small but neat cottage, received her with a warmth of ready kindness which would have graced a better situation. Adeline

desired to speak with her alone, for the room was now crowded with Peter’s friends, and then acquanting her with such particulars of her circumstances as it was necessary to communicate, desired to know if she could be accommodated with lodging in the cottage. “Yes, Ma’amselle,” said the good woman, “such as it is, you are heartily welcome. I am only sorry it is not better. But you seem ill, Ma’amselle; what shall I get you?”

Adeline, who had been long struggling with fatigue and indisposition, now yielded to their pressure. She said she was, indeed, ill; but hoped that rest would restore her, and desired a bed might be immediately prepared. The good woman went out to obey her, and soon returning, shewed her to a little cabin, where she retired to a bed, whose cleanliness was its only recommendation.

But, notwithstanding her fatigue, she could not sleep, and her mind, in spite of all her efforts, returned to the scenes that were passed, or presented gloomy and imperfect visions of the future.

The difference between her own condition and that of other persons, educated as she had been, struck her forcibly, and she wept. “They,” said she, “have friends and relations, all striving to save them not only from what may hurt, but what may displease them; watching not only for their present safety, but for their future advantage, and preventing them even from injuring themselves. But during my whole life I have never know a friend; have been in general surrounded by enemies, and very seldom exempt from some circumstance either of danger or calamity. Yet surely I am not born to be for ever wretched; the time will come when” — She began to think she might one time be happy; but recollecting the desperate situation of Theodore, “No,” said she, “I can never hope even for peace!”

Early the following morning the good woman of the house came to inquire how she had rested, and found she had slept little, and was much worse than on the preceeding night. The uneasiness of her mind contributed to heighten the feverish symptoms that attended her, and in the course of the day her disorder began to assume a serious aspect. She observed its progress with composure, resigning herself to the will of God, and feeling little to regret in life. Her kind hostess did every thing in her power to relieve her, and there was neither physician nor apothecary in the village, so that nature was deprived of none of her advantages. Notwithstanding this, the disorder rapidly increased, and on the third day

from its first attack she became delirious; after which she sunk into a state of stupefaction.

How long she remained in this deplorable condition she knew not; but, on recovering her senses, she found herself in an apartment very different from any she remembered. It was spacious and almost beautiful, the bed and every thing around being in one stile of elegant simplicity. For some minutes she lay in a trance of surprise, endeavouring to recollect her scattered ideas of the past, and almost fearing to move, lest the pleasing vision should vanish from her eyes.

At length she ventured to raise herself, when she presently heard a soft voice speaking near her, and the bed curtain on one side was gently undrawn by a beautiful girl. As she leaned forward over the bed, and with a smile of mingled tenderness and joy inquired of her patient how she did, Adeline gazed in silent admiration upon the most interesting female countenance she had ever seen, in which the expression of sweetness, united with lively sense and refinement, was chastened by simplicity.

Adeline at length recollected herself sufficiently to thank her kind inquirer, and begged to know to whom she was obliged, and where she was? The lovely girl pressed her hand, "'Tis we who are obliged," said she. "Oh! how I rejoice to find that you have recovered your recollection." She said no more, but slew to the door of the apartment, and disappeared. In a few minutes she returned with an elderly lady, who, approaching the bed with an air of tender interest, asked concerning the state of Adeline; to which the latter replied, as well as the agitation of her spirits would permit, and repeated her desire of knowing to whom she was so greatly obliged. "You shall know that hereafter," said the lady; "at present be assured that you are with those who will think their care much overpaid by your recovery; submit, therefore, to every thing that may conduce to it, and consent to be kept as quiet as possible."

Adeline gratefully smiled, and bowed her head in silent assent. The lady now quitted the room for a medicine; having given which to Adeline, the curtain was closed, and she was left to repose. But her thoughts were too busy to suffer her to profit by the opportunity. She contemplated the past, and viewed the present, and, when she compared them, the contrast struck her with astonishment. The whole appeared like one of those sudden

transitions so frequent in dreams, in which we pass from grief and despair, we know not how, to comfort and delight.

Yet she looked forward to the future with a trembling anxiety, that threatened to retard her recovery, and which, when she remembered the words of her generous benefactress, she endeavoured to suppress. Had she better known the disposition of the persons in whose house she now was, her anxiety, as far as it regarded herself, must in a great measure have been done away; for La Luc, its owner, was one of those rare characters to whom misfortune seldom looks in vain, and whose native goodness, confirmed by principle, is uniform and unassuming in its acts. The following little picture of his domestic life, his family and his manners, will more fully illustrate his character. It was drawn from the life, and its exactness will, it is hoped, compensate for its length.

THE FAMILY OF LA LUC.

“But half mankind, like Handel’s fool, destroy, Through rage and ignorance, the strain of joy; Irregularly wild their passions roll Through Nature’s finest instrument, the soul: While men of sense, with Handel’s happier skill, Correct the taste and harmonize the will; Teach their affections, like his notes, to flow, Nor rais’d too high, nor ever sunk too low; Till ev’ry virtue, measur’d and refin’d, As fits the concert of the master mind, Melts in its kindred sounds, and pours along Th’ according music of the moral song.” Cawthorne.

In the village of Leloncourt, celebrated for its picturesque situation at the foot of the Savoy Alps, lived Arnaud La Luc, a clergyman, descended from an ancient family of France, whose decayed fortunes occasioned them to seek a retreat in Switzerland, in an age when the violence of civil commotion seldom spared the conquered. He was minister of the village, and equally loved for the piety and benevolence of the Christian as respected for the dignity and elevation of the philosopher. His was the philosophy of nature, directed by common sense. He despised the jargon of the modern schools and the brilliant absurdities of systems, which have dazzled without enlightening, and guided without convincing, their disciples.

His mind was penetrating; his views extensive; and his systems, like his religion, were simple, rational, and sublime. The people of his parish

looked up to him as to a father; for while his precepts directed their minds, his example touched their hearts.

In early youth La Luc lost a wife, whom he tenderly loved. This event threw a tincture of soft and interesting melancholy over his character, which remained when time had mellowed the remembrance that occasioned it. Philosophy had strengthened, not hardened, his heart; it enabled him to resist the pressure of affliction, rather than to overcome it.

Calamity taught him to feel with peculiar sympathy the distresses of others. His income from the parish was small, and what remained from the divided and reduced estates of his ancestors did not much increase it; but though he could not always relieve the necessities of the indigent, his tender pity and holy conversation seldom failed in administering consolation to the mental sufferer. On these occasions the sweet and exquisite emotions of his heart have often induced him to say, that could the voluptuary be once sensible of these feelings, he would never after forego “the luxury of doing good.”— “Ignorance of true pleasure,” he would say, “more frequently than temptation to that which is false, leads to vice.”

La Luc had one son and a daughter, who were too young, when their mother died, to lament their loss. He loved them with peculiar tenderness, as the children of her whom he never ceased to deplore; and it was for some time his sole amusement to observe the gradual unfolding of their infant minds, and to bend them to virtue. His was the deep and silent sorrow of the heart; his complaints he never obtruded upon others, and very seldom did he even mention his wife. His grief was too sacred for the eye of the vulgar. Often he retired to the deep solitude of the mountains, and amid their solemn and tremendous scenery would brood over the remembrance of times past, and resign himself to the luxury of grief. On his return from these little excursions he was always more placid and contented. A sweet tranquillity, which arose almost to happiness, was diffused over his mind, and his manners were more than usually benevolent. As he gazed on his children, and fondly kissed them, a tear would sometimes steal into his eye, but it was a tear of tender regret, unmingled with the darker qualities of sorrow, and was most precious to his heart.

On the death of his wife he received into his house a maiden sister, a sensible, worthy woman, who was deeply interested in the happiness of her brother. Her affectionate attention and judicious conduct anticipated the effect of time in softening the poignancy of his distress, and her unremitted care of his children, while it proved the goodness of her own heart, attracted her more closely to his.

It was with inexpressible pleasure that he traced in the infant features of Clara the resemblance of her mother. The same gentleness of manner and the same sweetness of disposition soon displayed themselves, and as she grew up her actions frequently reminded him so strongly of his lost wife as to fix him in reveries, which absorbed all his soul.

Engaged in the duties of his parish, the education of his children, and in philosophic research, his years passed in tranquillity. The tender melancholy with which affliction had tinctured his mind was, by long indulgence, become dear to him, and he would not have relinquished it for the brightest dream of airy happiness. When any passing incident disturbed him, he retired for consolation to the idea of her he so faithfully loved, and yielding to a gentle, and what the world would call a romantic, sadness, gradually reassumed his composure. This was the secret luxary to which he withdrew from temporary disappointment — the solitary enjoyment which dissipated the cloud of care, and blunted the sting of vexation — which elevated his mind above this world, and opened to his view the sublimity of another.

The spot he now inhabited, the surrounding scenery, the romantic beauties of the neighbouring walks, were dear to La Luc, for they had once been loved by Clara; they had been the scenes of her tenderness, and of his happiness.

His chateau stood on the borders of a small lake that was almost enviroued by mountains of stupendous height, which, shooting into a variety of grotesque forms, composed a scenery singularly solemn and sublime. Dark woods, intermingled with bold projections of rock, sometimes barren, and sometimes covered with the purple bloom of wild flowers, impended over the lake, and were seen in the clear mirror of its waters. The wild and alpine heights which rose above were either crowned with perpetual snows, or exhibited tremendous crags and masses of solid rock, whose appearance was continually changing as the rays of light were

variously reflected on their surface, and whose summits were often wrapt in impenetrable mists. Some cottages and hamlets, scattered on the margin of the lake, or seated in picturesque points of view on the rocks above, were the only objects that reminded the beholder of humanity.

On the side of the lake, nearly opposite to the chateau, the mountains receded, and a long chain of alps was seen stretching in perspective. Their innumerable tints and shades, some veiled in blue mists, some tinged with rich purple, and others glittering in partial light, gave luxurious and magical colouring to the scene.

The chateau was not large, but it was convenient, and was characterised by an air of elegant simplicity and good order. The entrance was a small hall, which opening by a glass door into the garden, afforded a view of the lake, with the magnificent scenery exhibited on its borders. On the left of the hall was La Luc’s study, where he usually passed his mornings; and adjoining was a small room fitted up with chymical apparatus, astronomical instruments, and other implements of science. On the right was the family parlour, and behind it a room which belonged exclusively to Madame La Luc. Here were deposited various medicines and botanical distillations, together with the apparatus for preparing them. From this room the whole village was liberally supplied with physical comfort; for it was the pride of Madame to believe herself skilful in relieving the disorders of her neighbours.

Behind the chateau rose a tuft of pines, and in front a gentle declivity, covered with verdure and flowers, extended to the lake, whose waters flowed even with the grass, and gave freshness to the acacias that waved over its surface. Flowering shrubs, intermingled with mountain ash, cypress, and ever-green oak, marked the boundary of the garden.

At the return of spring it was Clara’s care to direct the young shoots of the plants, to nurse the budding flowers, and to shelter them with the luxuriant branches of the shrubs from the cold blasts that descended from the mountains. In summer she usually rose with the sun, and visited her favourite flowers while the dew yet hung glittering on their leaves. The freshness of early day, with the glowing colouring which then touched the scenery, gave a pure and exquisite delight to her innocent heart. Born amid scenes of grandeur and sublimity, she had quickly imbibed a taste for their charms, which taste was heightened by the influence of a warm

imagination. To view the sun rising above the alps, tinging their snowy heads with light, and suddenly darting his rays over the whole face of nature — to see the fiery splendour of the clouds reflected in the lake below, and the roseate tints first steal upon the rocks above — were among the earliest pleasures of which Clara was susceptible. From being delighted with the observance of nature, she grew pleased with seeing her finely imitated, and soon displayed a taste for poetry and painting. When she was about sixteen she often selected from her father's library those of the Italian poets most celebrated for picturesque beauty, and would spend the first hours of morning in reading them under the shade of the acacias that bordered the lake. Here too she would often attempt rude sketches of the surrounding scenery, and at length by repeated efforts, assisted by some instruction from her brother, she succeeded so well as to produce twelve drawings in crayon, which were judged worthy of decorating the parlour of the chateau.

Young La Luc played the flute, and she listened to him with exquisite delight, particularly when he stood on the margin of the lake, under her beloved acacias. Her voice was sweet and flexible, though not strong, and she soon learned to modulate it to the instrument. She knew nothing of the intricacies of execution; her airs were simple, and her style equally so, but she soon gave them a touching expression, inspired by the sensibility of her heart, which seldom left those of her hearers unaffected.

It was the happiness of La Luc to see his children happy, and in one of his excursions to Geneva, whither he went to visit some relations of his late wife, he bought Clara a lute. She received it with more gratitude than she could express; and having learned one air, she hastened to her favourite acacias, and played it again and again till she forgot every thing besides. Her little domestic duties, her books, her drawing, even the hour which her father dedicated to her improvement, when she met her brother in the library, and with him partook of knowledge, even this hour passed unheeded by. La Luc suffered it to pass. Madame was displeased that her niece neglected her domestic duties, and wished to reprove her, but La Luc begged she would be silent. "Let experience teach her her error," said he; "precept seldom brings conviction to young minds."

Madame objected that experience was a slow teacher. "It is a sure one," replied La Luc, "and is not unfrequently the quickest of all teachers: when

it cannot lead us into serious evil, it is well to trust to it."

The second day passed with Clara as the first, and the third as the second. She could now play several tunes; she came to her father and repeated what she had learnt.

At supper the cream was not dressed, and there was no fruit on the table. La Luc inquired the reason; Clara recollected it, and blushed. She observed that her brother was absent, but nothing was said. Toward the conclusion of the repast he appeared; his countenance expressed unusual satisfaction, but he seated himself in silence. Clara inquired what had detained him from supper, and learnt that he had been to a sick family in the neighbourhood with the weekly allowance which her father gave them. La Luc had entrusted the care of this family to his daughter, and it was her duty to have carried them their little allowance on the preceding day, but she had forgot every thing but music.

"How did you find the woman?" said La Luc to his son. "Worse, Sir," he replied, "for her medicines had not been regularly given, and the children had had little or no food today."

Clara was shocked. "No food to day!" said she to herself, "and I have been playing all day on my lute, under the acacias by the lake!", Her father did not seem to observe her emotion, but turned to his son. "I left her better," said the latter; "the medicines I carried eased her pain, and I had the pleasure to see her children make a joyful supper."

Clara, perhaps for the first time in her life, envied him his pleasure; her heart was full, and she sat silent. "No food to day!" thought she.

She retired pensively to her chamber. The sweet serenity with which she usually went to rest was vanished, for she could no longer reflect on the past day with satisfaction.

"What a pity," said she, "that what is so pleasing should be the cause of so much pain! This lute is my delight, and my torment!" This reflection occasioned her much internal debate; but before she could come to any resolution upon the point in question, she fell asleep.

She awoke very early the next morning, and impatiently watched the progress of the dawn. The sun at length appearing, she arose, and, determined to make all the atonement in her power for her former neglect, hastened to the cottage.

Here she remained a considerable time, and when she returned to the chateau her countenance had recovered all its usual serenity. She resolved, however, not to touch her lute that day.

Till the hour of breakfast she busied herself in binding up the flowers, and pruning the shoots that were too luxuriant, and she at length found herself, she scarcely knew how, beneath her beloved acacias by the side of the lake. “Ah!” said she, with a sigh, “how sweetly would the song I learned yesterday, sound now over the waters!” But she remembered her determination, and checked the step she was involuntarily taking towards the chateau.

She attended her father in the library at the usual hour, and learned, from his discourse with her brother on what had been read the two preceding days, that she had lost much entertaining knowledge. She requested her father would inform her to what this conversation alluded; but he calmly replied, that she had preferred another amusement at the time when the subject was discussed, and must therefore content herself with ignorance. “You would reap the rewards of study from the amusements of idleness,” said he; “learn to be reasonable — do not expect to unite inconsistencies.”

Clara felt the justness of this rebuke, and remembered her lute. “What mischief has it occasioned!” sighed she. “Yes, I am determined not to touch it at all this day. I will prove that I am able to control my inclinations when I see it is necessary so to do.” Thus resolving, she applied herself to study with more than usual assiduity.

She adhered to her resolution, and towards the close of day went into the garden to amuse herself. The evening was still and uncommonly beautiful. Nothing was heard but the faint shivering of the leaves, which returned but at intervals, making silence more solemn, and the distant murmurs of the torrents that rolled among the cliffs. As she stood by the lake, and watched the sun slowly sinking below the alps, whose summits were tinged with gold and purple; as she saw the last rays of light gleam upon the waters whose surface was not curled by the lightest air, she sighed, “Oh! how enchanting would be the sound of my lute at this moment, on this spot, and when every thing is so still around me!”

The temptation was too powerful for the resolution of Clara: she ran to the chateau, returned with the instrument to her dear acacias, and beneath

their shade continued to play till the surrounding objects faded in darkness from her sight. But the moon arose, and, shedding a trembling lustre on the lake, made the scene more captivating than ever.

It was impossible to quit so delightful a spot; Clara repeated her favourite airs again and again. The beauty of the hour awakened all her genius; she never played with such expression before, and she listened with increasing rapture to the tones as they languished over the waters and died away on the distant air. She was perfectly enchanted “No! nothing was ever so delightful as to play on the lute beneath her acacias, on the margin of the lake, by moonlight!”

When she returned to the chateau, supper was over. La Luc had observed Clara, and would not suffer her to be interrupted.

When the enthusiasm of the hour was passed she recollected that she had broken her resolution, and the reflection gave her pain. “I prided myself on controling my inclinations,” said she, “and I have weakly yielded to their direction. But what evil have I incurred by indulging them this evening? I have neglected no duty, for I had none to perform. Of what then have I to accuse myself? It would have been absurd to have kept my resolution, and denied myself a pleasure when there appeared no reason for this self-denial.”

She paused, not quite satisfied with this reasoning. Suddenly resuming her enquiry, “But how,” said she, “am I certain that I should have resisted my inclinations if there had been a reason for opposing them? If the poor family whom I neglected yesterday had been unsupplied to day, I fear I should again have forgotten them while I played on my lute on the banks of the lake.”

She then recollected all that her father had at different times said on the subject of self-command, and she felt some pain.

“No,” said she, “if I do not consider that to preserve a resolution, which I have once solemnly formed, is a sufficient reason to control my inclinations, I fear no other motive would long restrain me. I seriously determined not to touch my lute this whole day, and I have broken my resolution. Tomorrow perhaps I may be tempted to neglect some duty, for I have discovered that I cannot rely on my own prudence. Since I cannot conquer temptation, I will fly from it.”

On the following morning she brought her lute to La Luc, and begged he would receive it again, and at least keep it till she had taught her inclinations to submit to control.

The heart of La Luc swelled as she spoke. “No, Clara,” said he, “it is unnecessary that I should receive your lute; the sacrifice you would make proves you worthy of my confidence. Take back the instrument; since you have sufficient resolution to resign it when it leads you from duty, I doubt not that you will be able to control its influence now that it is restored to you.”

Clara felt a degree of pleasure and pride at these words, such as she had never before experienced; but she thought, that to deserve the commendation they bestowed, it was necessary to complete the sacrifice she had begun. In the virtuous enthusiasm of the moment the delights of music were forgotten in those of aspiring to well-earned praise, and when she refused the lute thus offered, she was conscious only of exquisite sensations. “Dear Sir,” said she, tears of pleasure swelling in her eyes, “allow me to deserve the praises you bestow, and then I shall indeed be happy.”

La Luc thought she had never resembled her mother so much as at this instant, and, tenderly kissing her, he for some moments, wept in silence. When he was able to speak, “You do already deserve my praises,” said he, “and I restore your lute as a reward for the conduct which excites them.” This scene called back recollections too tender for the heart of La Luc, and giving Clara the instrument, he abruptly quitted the room.

La Luc’s son, a youth of much promise, was designed by his father for the church, and had received from him an excellent education, which, however, it was thought necessary he should finish at an university. That of Geneva was fixed upon by La Luc. His scheme had been to make his son not a scholar only; he was ambitious that he should also be enviable as a man. From early infancy he had accustomed him to hardihood and endurance, and, as he advanced in youth, he encouraged him in manly exercises, and acquainted him with the useful arts as well as with abstract science.

He was high spirited and ardent in his temper, but his heart was generous and affectionate. He looked forward to Geneva, and to the new world it would disclose, with the sanguine expectations of youth; and in

the delight of these expectations was absorbed the regret he would otherwise have felt at a separation from his family.

A brother of the late Madame La Luc, who was by birth an English woman, resided at Geneva with his family. To have been related to his wife was a sufficient claim upon the heart of La Luc, and he had, therefore, always kept up an intercourse with Mr. Audley, though the difference in their characters and manner of thinking would never permit this association to advance into friendship. La Luc now wrote to him, signifying an intention of sending his son to Geneva, and recommending him to his care; to this letter Mr. Audley returned a friendly answer, and a short time after an acquaintance of La Luc's being called to Geneva, he determined that his son should accompany him. The separation was painful to La Luc, and almost insupportable to Clara. Madame was grieved, and took care that he should have a sufficient quantity of medicines put up in his travelling trunk; she was also at some pains to point out their virtues, and the different complaints for which they were requisite; but she was careful to deliver her lecture during the absence of her brother.

La Luc, with his daughter, accompanied his son on horseback to the next town, which was about eight miles from Leloncourt, and there again enforcing all the advice he had formerly given him respecting his conduct and pursuits, and again yielding to the tender weakness of the father, he bade him farewell. Clara wept, and felt more sorrow at this parting than the occasion could justify; but this was almost the first time she had known grief, and she artlessly yielded to its influence.

La Luc and Clara travelled pensively back, and the day was closing when they came within view of the lake, and soon after of the chateau. Never had it appeared gloomy till now; but now Clara wandered forlornly through every deserted apartment where she had been accustomed to see her brother, and recollected a thousand little circumstances which, had he been present, she would have thought immaterial, but on which imagination now stamped a value. The garden, the scenes around, all wore a melancholy aspect, and it was long ere they resumed their natural character and Clara recovered her vivacity.

Near four years had elapsed since this separation, when one evening, as Madame La Luc and her niece were sitting at work together in the parlour,

a good woman in the neighbourhood desired to be admitted. She came to ask for some medicines, and the advice of Madame La Luc. “Here is a sad accident happened at our house, Madame,” said she; “I am sure my heart aches for the poor young creature.” — Madame La Luc desired she would explain herself, and the woman proceeded to say, that her brother Peter, whom she had not seen for so many years, was arrived, and had brought a young lady to her cottage, who she verily believed was dying. She described her disorder, and acquainted Madame with what particulars of her mournful story Peter had related, failing not to exaggerate such as her compassion for the unhappy stranger and her love of the marvellous prompted.

The account appeared a very extraordinary one to Madame; but pity for the forlorn condition of the young sufferer induced her to inquire farther into the affair. “Do let me go to her, Madam,” said Clara, who had been listening with ready compassion to the poor woman narrative: “do suffer me to go — she must want comforts, and I wish much to see how she is.” Madame asked some farther questions concerning her disorder, and then, taking off her spectacles, she rose from her chair and said she would go herself. Clara desired to accompany her. They put on their hats and followed the good woman to the cottage, where, in a very small, close room, on a miserable bed, lay Adeline, pale, emaciated, and unconscious of all around her. Madame turned to the woman, and asked how long she had been in this way, while Clara went up to the bed, and taking the almost lifeless hand that lay on the quilt, looked anxiously in her face. “She observes nothing,” said she, “poor creature! I wish she was at the chateau, she would be better accommodated, and I could nurse her there.” The woman told Madame La Luc, that the young lady had lain in that state for several hours. Madame examined her pulse, and shook her head. “This room is very close,” said she.— “Very close indeed,” cried Clara, eagerly; “surely she would be better at the chateau, if she could be moved.”

“We will see about that,” said her aunt. “In the mean time let me speak to Peter; it is some years since I saw him.” She went to the outer room, and the woman ran out of the cottage to look for him. When she was gone, “This is a miserable habitation for the poor stranger,” said Clara; “she will never be well here: do, Madam, let her be carried to our house; I am sure

my father would wish it. Besides, there is something in her features, even inanimate as they now are, that prejudices me in her favour."

"Shall I never persuade you to give up that romantic notion of judging people by their faces," said her aunt. "What sort of a face she has is of very little consequence — her condition is lamentable, and I am desirous of altering it; but I wish first to ask Peter a few questions concerning her."

"Thank you, my dear aunt," said Clara; "she will be removed then." Madame La Luc was going to reply; but Peter now entered, and, expressing great joy at seeing her again, inquired how Monsieur La Luc and Clara did. Clara immediately welcomed honest Peter to his native place, and he returned her salutation with many expressions of surprise at finding her so much grown. "Though I have so often dandled you in my arms, Ma'amselle, I should never have known you again. Young twigs shoot fast, as they say."

Madame La Luc now inquired into the particulars of Adeline's story, and heard as much as Peter knew of it, being only that his late master found her in a very distressed situation, and that he had himself brought her from the Abbey to save her from a French Marquis. The simplicity of Peter's manner would not suffer her to question his veracity, though some of the circumstances he related excited all her surprise, and awakened all her pity. Tears frequently stood in Clara's eyes during the course of his narrative, and when he concluded, she said, "Dear Madam, I am sure when my father learns the history of this unhappy young woman he will not refuse to be a parent to her, and I will be her sister."

"She deserves it all," said Peter, "for she is very good indeed." He then proceeded in a strain of praise, which was very unusual with him.— "I will go home and consult with my brother about her," said Madame La Luc, rising: "she certainly ought to be removed to a more airy room. The chateau is so near, that I think she may be carried thither without much risk."

"Heaven bless you! Madam," cried Peter, rubbing his hands, "for your goodness to my poor young lady."

La Luc had just returned from his evening walk when they reached the chateau. Madame told him where she had been, and related the history of Adeline and her present condition. "By all means have her removed

hither," said La Luc, whose eyes bore testimony to the tenderness of his heart. "She can be better attended to here than in Susan's cottage."

"I knew you would say so, my dear father," said Clara: "I will go and order the green bed to be prepared for her."

"Be patient, niece," said Madame La Luc: "there is no occasion for such haste: some things are to be considered first; but you are young and romantic." — La Luc smiled.— "The evening is now closed," resumed Madame; "it will, therefore, be dangerous to remove her before morning. Early tomorrow a room shall be got ready, and she shall be brought here; in the mean time I will go and make up a medicine, which I hope may be of service to her." — Clara reluctantly assented to this delay, and Madame La Luc retired to her closet.

On the following morning Adeline, wrapped in blankets, and sheltered as much as possible from the air, was brought to the chateau, where the good La Luc desired she might have every attention paid her, and where Clara watched over her with unceasing anxiety and tenderness. She remained in a state of torpor during the greater part of the day, but towards evening she breathed more freely; and Clara, who still watched by her bed, had at length the pleasure of perceiving that her senses were restored. It was at this moment that she found herself in the situation from which we have digressed to give this account of the venerable La Luc and his family. The reader will find that his virtues and his friendship to Adeline deserved this notice.

CHAPTER 1 7

“Still Fancy, to herself unkind,
Awakes to grief the soften’d mind,
And points the bleeding friend.”
Collins.

Adeline, assisted by a fine constitution, and the kind attentions of her new friends, was in a little more than a week so much recovered as to leave her chamber. She was introduced to La Luc, whom she met with tears of gratitude, and thanked for his goodness in a manner so warm, yet so artless, as interested him still more in her favour. During the progress of her recovery, the sweetness of her behaviour had entirely won the heart of Clara, and greatly interested that of her aunt, whose reports of Adeline, together with the praises bestowed by Clara, had excited both esteem and curiosity in the breast of La Luc; and he now met her with an expression of benignity which spoke peace and comfort to her heart. She had acquainted Madame La Luc with such particulars of her story as Peter, either through ignorance or inattention, had not communicated, suppressing only, through a false delicacy, perhaps, an acknowledgement of her attachment to Theodore. These circumstances were repeated to La Luc, who, ever sensible to the sufferings of others, was particularly interested by the singular misfortunes of Adeline.

Near a fortnight had elapsed since her removal to the chateau, when one morning La Luc desired to speak with her alone. She followed him into his study, and then in a manner the most delicate he told her, that, as he found she was so unfortunate in her father, he desired she would henceforth consider him as her parent, and his house as her home. “You and Clara shall be equally my daughters,” continued he; “I am rich in having such children.” The strong emotions of surprise and gratitude for some time kept Adeline silent. “Do not thank me,” said La Luc; “I know all you would say, and I know also that I am but doing my duty. I thank God that my duty and my pleasures are generally in unison.” Adeline wiped away the tears which his goodness had excited, and was going to speak; but La Luc pressed her hand, and, turning away to conceal his emotion, walked out of the room.

Adeline was now considered as a part of the family, and in the parental kindness of La Luc, the sisterly affection of Clara, and the steady and uniform regard of Madame, she would have been happy as she was thankful, had not unceasing anxiety for the fate of Theodore, of whom in this solitude she was less likely than ever to hear, corroded her heart, and embittered every moment of reflection. Even when sleep obliterated for a while the memory of the past, his image frequently arose to her fancy, accompanied by all the exaggerations of terror. She saw him in chains, and struggling in the grasp of ruffians, or saw him led, amidst the dreadful preparations for execution, into the field: she saw the agony of his look, and heard him repeat her name in frantic accents, till the horrors of the scene overcame her, and she awoke.

A similarity of taste and character attached her to Clara, yet the misery that preyed upon her heart was of a nature too delicate to be spoken of, and she never mentioned Theodore even to her friend. Her illness had yet left her weak and languid, and the perpetual anxiety of her mind contributed to prolong this state. She endeavoured, by strong and almost continual efforts, to abstract her thoughts from their mournful subject, and was often successful. La Luc had an excellent library, and the instruction it offered at once gratified her love of knowledge, and withdrew her mind from painful recollections. His conversation too afforded her another refuge from misery.

But her chief amusement was to wander among the sublime scenery of the adjacent country, sometimes with Clara, though often with no other companion than a book. There were indeed times when the conversation of her friend imposed a painful restraint, and, when given up to reflection, she would ramble alone through scenes, whose solitary grandeur assisted and soothed the melancholy of her heart. Here she would retrace all the conduct of her beloved Theodore, and endeavour to recollect his exact countenance, his air, and manner. Now she would weep at the remembrance, and then, suddenly considering that he had perhaps already suffered an ignominious death for her sake, even in consequence of the very action which had proved his love, a dreadful despair would seize her, and, arresting her tears, would threaten to bear down every barrier that fortitude and reason could oppose.

Fearing longer to trust her own thoughts, she would hurry home, and by a desperate effort would try to lose, in the conversation of La Luc, the remembrance of the past. Her melancholy, when he observed it, La Luc attributed to a sense of the cruel treatment she had received from her father; a circumstance which, by exciting his compassion, endeared her more strongly to his heart; while that love of rational conversation, which in her calmer hours so frequently appeared, opened to him a new source of amusement in the cultivation of a mind eager for knowledge, and, susceptible of all the energies of genius. She found a melancholy pleasure in listening to the soft tones of Clara's lute, and would often soothe her mind by attempting to repeat the airs she heard.

The gentleness of her manners, partaking so much of that pensive character which marked La Luc's, was soothing to his heart, and tinctured his behaviour with a degree of tenderness that imparted comfort to her, and gradually won her entire confidence and affection. She saw with extreme concern the declining state of his health, and united her efforts with those of the family to amuse and revive him.

The pleasing society of which she partook, and the quietness of the country, at length restored her mind to a state of tolerable composure. She was now acquainted with all the wild walks of the neighbouring mountains, and, never tired of viewing their astonishing scenery, she often indulged herself in traversing alone their unfrequented paths, where now and then a peasant from a neighbouring village was all that interrupted the profound solitude. She generally took with her a book, that if she perceived her thoughts inclined to fix on the one object of her grief, she might force them to a subject less dangerous to her peace. She had become a tolerable proficient in English while at the convent where she received her education, and the instruction of La Luc, who was well acquainted with the language, now served to perfect her. He was partial to the English; he admired their character, and the constitution of their laws, and his library contained a collection of their best authors, particularly of their philosophers and poets. Adeline found that no species of writing had power so effectually to withdraw her mind from the contemplation of its own misery as the higher kinds of poetry, and in these her taste soon taught her to distinguish the superiority of the English from that of the French.

The genius of the language, more perhaps than the genius of the people, if indeed the distinction may be allowed, occasioned this.

She frequently took a volume of Shakespear or Milton, and, having gained some wild eminence, would seat herself beneath the pines, whose low murmurs soothed her heart, and conspired with the visions of the poet to lull her to forgetfulness of grief.

One evening, when Clara was engaged at home, Adeline wandered alone to a favourite spot among the rocks that bordered the lake. It was an eminence which commanded an entire view of the lake, and of the stupendous mountains that environed it. A few ragged thorns grew from the precipice beneath, which descended perpendicularly to the water's edge; and above rose a thick wood of larch, pine, and sir, intermingled with some chesnut and mountain ash. The evening was fine, and the air so still, that it scarcely waved the light leaves of the trees around, or rimpled the broad expanse of the waters below. Adeline gazed on the scene with a kind of still rapture, and watched the sun sinking amid a crimson glow, which tinted the bosom of the lake and the snowy heads of the distant alps. The delight which the scenery inspired,

"Soothing each gust of passion into peace,
All but the swellings of the soften'd heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind!"

was now heightened by the tones of a French horn, and, looking on the lake, she perceived at some distance a pleasure boat. As it was a spectacle rather uncommon in this solitude, she concluded the boat contained a party of foreigners come to view the wonderful scenery of the country, or perhaps of Genevois, who chose to amuse themselves on a lake as grand, though much less extensive, than their own; and the latter conjecture was probably just.

As she listened to the mellow and enchanting tones of the horn, which gradually sunk away in distance, the scene appeared more lovely than before, and finding it impossible to forbear attempting to paint in language what was so beautiful in reality, she composed the following.

STANZAS.

How smooth that lake expands its ample breast!
Where smiles in soften’d glow the summer sky:
How vast the rocks that o’er its surface rest!
How wild the scenes its winding shores supply!
Now down the western steep slow sinks the sun,
And paints with yellow gleam the tufted woods;
While here the mountain-shadows, broad and dun,
Sweep o’er the chrystal mirror of the floods.

Mark how his splendour tips with partial light
Those shatter’d battlements! that on the brow
Of yon bold promontory burst to sight
From o’er the woods that darkly spread below.
In the soft blush of light’s reflected power,
The ridgy rock, the woods that crown its steep,
Th’ illumin’d battlement, and darker tower,
On the smooth wave in trembling beauty sleep.

But lo! the sun recalls his fervid ray,
And cold and dim the wat’ry visions fail;
While o’er yon cliff, whose pointed craggs decay,
Mild Evening draws her thin empurpled veil!
How sweet that strain of melancholy horn!
That floats along the slowly-ebbing wave,
And up the far-receding mountains borne,
Returns a dying close from Echo’s cave!
Hail! shadowy forms of still, expressive Eve!
Your pensive graces stealing on my heart,
Bid all the fine-attun’d emotions live,
And Fancy all her loveliest dreams impart.

La Luc observing how much Adeline was charmed with the features of the country, and desirous of amusing her melancholy, which, notwithstanding her efforts, was often too apparent, wished to shew her

other scenes than those to which her walks were circumscribed. He proposed a party on horseback to take a nearer view of the Glaciers; to attempt their ascent was a difficulty and fatigue to which neither La Luc, in his present state of health, nor Adeline, were equal. She had not been accustomed to ride single, and the mountainous road they were to pass made the experiment rather dangerous; but she concealed her fears, and they were not sufficient to make her wish to forego an enjoyment such as was now offered her.

The following day was fixed for this excursion. La Luc and his party arose at an early hour, and having taken a slight breakfast, they set out towards the Glacier of Montanvert, which lay at a few leagues distance. Peter carried a small basket of provisions; and it was their plan to dine on some pleasant spot in the open air.

It is unnecessary to describe the high enthusiasm of Adeline, the more complacent pleasure of La Luc, and the transports of Clara, as the scenes of this romantic country shifted to their eyes. Now frowning in dark and gloomy grandeur, it exhibited only tremendous rocks, and cataracts rolling from the heights into some deep and narrow valley, along which their united waters roared and foamed, and burst away to regions inaccessible to mortal foot: and now the scene arose less fiercely wild;

“The pomp of groves and garniture of fields” were intermingled with the ruder features of nature, and while the snow froze on the summit of the mountain, the vine blushed at its foot.

Engaged in interesting conversation, and by the admiration which the country excited, they travelled on till noon, when they looked round for a pleasant spot where they might rest and take refreshment. At some little distance they perceived the ruins of a fabric which had once been a castle; it stood almost on a point of rock that overhung a deep valley; and its broken turrets rising from among the woods that embosomed it, heightened the picturesque beauty of the object.

The edifice invited curiosity, and the shades repose — La Luc and his party advanced.

“Deep struck with awe, they mark’d the dome o’erthrown, Where once the beauty bloom’d, the warrior shone: They saw the castle’s mould’ring towers decay’d, The loose stone tott’ring o’er the trembling shade.”

They seated themselves on the grass under the shade of some high trees near the ruins. An opening in the woods afforded a view of the distant alps — the deep silence of solitude reigned. For some time they were lost in meditation. Adeline felt a sweet complacency, such as she had long been a stranger to. Looking at La Luc, she perceived a tear stealing down his cheek, while the elevation of his mind was strongly expressed on his countenance. He turned on Clara his eyes, which were now filled with tenderness, and made an effort to recover himself.

“The stillness and total seclusion of this scene,” said Adeline, “those stupendous mountains, the gloomy grandeur of these woods, together with that monument of faded glory on which the hand of time is so emphatically impressed, diffuse a sacred enthusiasm over the mind, and awaken sensations truly sublime.”

La Luc was going to speak; but Peter coming forward, desired to know whether he had not better open the wallet, as he fancied his honour and the young ladies must be main hungry, jogging on so far up hill and down before dinner. They acknowledged the truth of honest Peter’s suspicion, and accepted his hint.

Refreshments were spread on the grass, and having seated themselves under the canopy of waving woods, surrounded by the sweets of wild flowers, they inhaled the pure breeze of the alps, which might be called spirit of air, and partook of a repast which these circumstances rendered delicious.

When they arose to depart, “I am unwilling,” said Clara, “to quit this charming spot. How delightful would it be to pass one’s life beneath these shades with the friends who are dear to one!” — La Luc smiled at the romantic simplicity of the idea; but Adeline sighed deeply to the image of felicity, and of Theodore, which it recalled, and turned away to conceal her tears.

They now mounted their horses, and soon after arrived at the foot of Montanvert. The emotions of Adeline, as she contemplated in various points of view the astonishing objects around her, surpassed all expression; and the feelings of the whole party were too strong to admit of conversation. The profound stillness which reigned in these regions of solitude inspired awe, and heightened the sublimity of the scenery to an exquisite degree.

“It seems,” said Adeline, “as if we were walking over the ruins of the world, and were the only persons who had survived the wreck. I can scarcely persuade myself that we are not left alone on the globe.”

“The view of these objects,” said La Luc, “lift the soul to their Great Author, and we contemplate with a feeling almost too vast for humanity — the sublimity of his nature in the grandeur of his works.” — La Luc raised his eyes, filled with tears, to heaven, and was for some moments lost in silent adoration.

They quitted these scenes with extreme reluctance; but the hour of the day, and the appearance of the clouds, which seemed gathering for a storm, made them hasten their departure. Could she have been sheltered from its fury, Adeline almost wished to have witnessed the tremendous effect of a thunder storm in these regions.

They returned to Leloncourt by a different route, and the shade of the overhanging precipices was deepened by the gloom of the atmosphere. It was evening when they came within view of the lake, which the travellers rejoiced to see, for the storm so long threatened was now fast approaching; the thunder murmured among the alps; and the dark vapours that rolled heavily along their sides heightened their dreadful sublimity. La Luc would have quickened his pace, but the road winding down the steep side of a mountain made caution necessary. The darkening air and the lightnings that now flashed along the horizon terrified Clara, but she withheld the expression of her fear in consideration of her father. A peal of thunder, which seemed to shake the earth to its foundations, and was reverberated in tremendous echoes from the cliffs, burst over their heads. Clara’s horse took fright at the sound, and, setting off, hurried her with amazing velocity down the mountain towards the lake, which washed its foot. The agony of La Luc, who viewed her progress in the horrible expectation of seeing her dashed down the precipice that bordered the road, is not to be described.

Clara kept her seat, but terror had almost deprived her of sense. Her efforts to preserve herself were mechanical, for she scarcely knew what she did. The horse, however, carried her safely almost to the foot of the mountain, but was making towards the lake, when a gentleman who travelled along the road caught the bridle as the animal endeavoured to pass. The sudden stopping of the horse threw Clara to the ground, and,

impatient of restraint, the animal burst from the hand of the stranger, and plunged into the lake. The violence of the fall deprived her of recollection; but while the stranger endeavoured to support her, his servant ran to fetch water.

She soon recovered, and unclosing her eyes, found herself in the arms of a chevalier, who appeared to support her with difficulty. The compassion expressed in his countenance, while he inquired how she did, revived her spirits, and she was endeavouring to thank him for his kindness when La Luc and Adeline came up. The terror impressed on her father's features was perceived by Clara; languid as she was, she tried to raise herself, and said, with a faint smile, which betrayed, instead of disguising, her sufferings, "Dear Sir, I am not hurt." Her pale countenance and the blood that trickled down her cheek contradicted her words. But La Luc, to whom terror had suggested the utmost possible evil, now rejoiced to hear her speak; he recalled some presence of mind, and while Adeline applied her salts, he chafed her temples.

When she revived she told him how much she was obliged to the stranger. La Luc endeavoured to express his gratitude; but the former interrupting him, begged he might be spared the pain of receiving thanks for having followed only an impulse of common humanity.

They were now not far from Leloncourt; but the evening was almost shut in, and the thunder murmured deeply among the hills. La Luc was distressed how to convey Clara home.

In endeavouring to raise her from the ground, the stranger betrayed such evident symptoms of pain, that La Luc inquired concerning it. The sudden jerk which the horse had given the arm of the chevalier, in escaping from his hold, had violently sprained his shoulder, and rendered his arm almost useless. The pain was exquisite, and La Luc, whose fears for his daughter were now subsiding, was shocked at the circumstance, and pressed the stranger to accompany him to the village, where relief might be obtained. He accepted the invitation, and Clara, being at length placed on a horse led by her father, was conducted to the chateau.

When Madame, who had been looking out for La Luc some time, perceived the cavalcade approaching, she was alarmed and her apprehensions were confirmed when she saw the situation of her niece. Clara was carried into the house, and La Luc would have sent for a

surgeon, but there was none within several leagues of the village, neither were there any of the physical profession within the same distance. Clara was assisted to her chamber by Adeline, and Madame La Luc undertook to examine the wounds. The result restored peace to the family; for though she was much bruised, she had escaped material injury; a slight contusion on the forehead had occasioned the bloodshed which at first alarmed La Luc. Madame undertook to restore her niece in a few days with the assistance of a balsam composed by herself, on the virtues of which she descanted with great eloquence, till La Luc interrupted her by reminding her of the condition of her patient.

Madame having bathed Clara's bruises, and given her a cordial of incomparable efficacy, left her, and Adeline watched in the chamber of her friend till she retired to her own for the night.

La Luc, whose spirits had suffered much perturbation, was now tranquillized by the report his sister made of Clara. He introduced the stranger, and having mentioned the accident he had met with, desired that he might have immediate assistance. Madame hastened to her closet, and it is perhaps difficult to determine whether she felt most concern for the sufferings of her guest or pleasure at the opportunity thus offered of displaying her physical skill. However this might be, she quitted the room with great alacrity, and very quickly returned with a phial containing her inestimable balsam, and having given the necessary directions for the application of it, she left the stranger to the care of his servant.

La Luc insisted that the chevalier, M. Verneuil, should not leave the chateau that night, and he very readily submitted to be detained. His manners during the evening were as frank and engaging as the hospitality and gratitude of La Luc were sincere, and they soon entered into interesting conversation. M. Verneuil conversed like a man who had seen much, and thought more, and if he discovered any prejudice in his opinions, it was evidently the prejudice of a mind which, seeing objects through the medium of its own goodness, tinges them with the hue of its predominant quality. La Luc was much pleased, for in his retired situation he had not often an oppornity of receiving the pleasure which results from a communion of intelligent minds. He found that M. Verneuil had travelled. La Luc having asked some questions relative to England, they

fell into discourse concerning the national characters of the French and English.

“If it is the privilege of wisdom,” said M. Verneuil, “to look beyond happiness, I own I had rather be without it. When we observe the English their laws, writings, and conversation, and at the same time mark their countenances, manners, and the frequency of suicide among them, we are apt to believe that wisdom and happiness are incompatible. If, on the other hand, we turn to their neighbours, the French, and see [Note: It must be remembered that this was said in the seventeenth century.] their wretched policy, their sparkling, but sophistical discourse, frivolous occupations, and, withal, their gay animated air, we shall be compelled to acknowledge that happiness and folly too often dwell together.”

“It is the end of wisdom,” said La Luc, “to attain happiness, and I can hardly dignify that conduct or course of thinking which tends to misery with the name of wisdom. By this rule, perhaps, the folly, as we term it, of the French deserves, since its effect is happiness, to be called wisdom. That airy thoughtlessness, which seems alike to contemn reflection and anticipation, produces all the effect of it without reducing its subjects to the mortification of philosophy. But in truth wisdom is an exertion of mind to subdue folly; and as the happiness of the French is less the consequence of mind than of constitution, it deserves not the honours of wisdom.”

Discoursing on the variety of opinions that are daily formed on the same conduct, La Luc observed how much that which is commonly called opinion is the result of passion and temper.

“True,” said M. Verneuil, “there is a tone of thought, as there is a key note in music, that leads all its weaker affections. Thus where the powers of judging may be equal, the disposition to judge is different, and the actions of men are at least but too often arraigned by whim and caprice, by partial vanity and the humour of the moment.”

Here La Luc took occasion to reprobate the conduct of those writers, who, by shewing the dark side only of human nature, and by dwelling on the evils only which are incident to humanity, have sought to degrade man in his own eyes, and to make him discontented with life. “What should we say of a painter,” continued La Luc, “who collected in his piece objects of a black hue only, who presented you with a black man, a black horse, a black dog, and tells you that his is a picture of nature, and that nature is

black?”— “‘Tis true,” you would reply, “the objects you exhibit do exist in nature, but they form a very small part of her works. You say that nature is black, and, to prove it, you have collected on your canvass all the animals of this hue that exist. But you have forgot to paint the green earth, the blue sky, the white man, and objects of all those various hues with which creation abounds, and of which black is a very inconsiderable part.”

The countenance of M. Verneuil lightened with peculiar animation during the discourse of La Luc.— “To think well of his nature,” said he, “is necessary to the dignity and the happiness of man. There is a decent pride which becomes every mind, and is congenial to virtue. That consciousness of innate dignity, which shews him the glory of his nature, will be his best protection from the meanness of vice. Where this consciousness is wanting,” continued M. Verneuil, “there can be no sense of moral honour, and consequently none of the higher principles of action. What can be expected of him who says it is his nature to be mean and selfish? Or who can doubt that he who thinks thus, thinks from the experience of his own heart, from the tendency of his own inclinations? Let it always be remembered, that he who would persuade men to be good, ought to shew them that they are great.”

“You speak,” said La Luc, “with the honest enthusiasm of a virtuous mind; and in obeying the impulse of your heart, you utter the truths of philosophy: and, trust me, a bad heart and a truly philosophic head has never yet been united in the same individual. Vicious inclinations not only corrupt the heart, but the understanding, and thus lead to false reasoning. Virtue only is on the side of truth.”

La Luc and his guest, mutually pleased with each other, entered upon the discussion of subjects so interesting to them both, that it was late before they parted for the night.

CHAPTER 1 8

“‘Twas such a scene as gave a kind relief
To memory, in sweetly pensive grief.”
Virgil’s Tomb.

“Mine be the breezy hill, that skirts the down,
Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
With here and there a violet bestrown,
And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.”
The Minstrel.

Repose had so much restored Clara, that when Adeline, anxious to know how she did, went early in the morning to her chamber, she found her already risen, and ready to attend the family at breakfast. Monsieur Verneuil appeared also, but his looks betrayed a want of rest, and indeed he had suffered during the night a degree of anguish from his arm, which it was an effort of some resolution to endure in silence. It was now swelled and somewhat inflamed, and this might in some degree be attributed to the effect of Madame La Luc’s balsam, whose restorative qualities had for once failed. The whole family sympathised with his sufferings, and Madame, at the request of M. Verneuil, abandoned her balsam, and substituted an emollient fomentation.

From an application of this he, in a short time, found an abatement of the pain, and returned to the breakfast table with greater composure. The happiness which La Luc felt at seeing his daughter in safety was very apparent, but the warmth of his gratitude towards her preserver he found it difficult to express. Clara spoke the genuine emotions of her heart with artless, but modest, energy, and testified sincere concern for the sufferings which she had occasioned M. Verneuil.

The pleasure received from the company of his guest, and the consideration of the essential services he had rendered him, co-operated with the natural hospitality of La Luc, and he pressed M. Verneuil to remain some time at the chateau.— “I can never repay the services you have done me,” said La Luc; yet I seek to increase my obligations to you by requesting you will prolong your visit, and thus allow me an opportunity of cultivating your acquaintance.”

M. Verneuil, who at the time he met La Luc was travelling from Geneva to a distant part of Savoy, merely for the purpose of viewing the country, being now delighted with his host and with every thing around him, willingly accepted the invitation. In this circumstance prudence concurred with inclination, for to have pursued his journey on horseback, in his present situation, would have been dangerous, if not impracticable.

The morning was spent in conversation, in which M. Verneuil displayed a mind enriched with taste, enlightened by science, and enlarged by observation. The situation of the chateau and the features of the surrounding scenery charmed him, and in the evening he found himself able to walk with La Luc and explore the beauties of this romantic region. As they passed through the village, the salutations of the peasants, in whom love and respect were equally blended, and their eager inquiries after Clara, bore testimony to the character of La Luc, while his countenance expressed a serene satisfaction, arising from the consciousness of deserving and possessing their love.— “I live surrounded by my children,” said he, turning to M. Verneuil, who had noticed their eagerness, “for such I consider my parishioners. In discharging the duties of my office, I am repaid not only by my own conscience, but by their gratitude. There is a luxury in observing their simple and honest love, which I would not exchange for any thing the world calls blessings.”

“Yet the world, Sir, would call the pleasures of which you speak romantic,” said M. Verneuil; “for to be sensible of this pure and exquisite delight requires a heart untainted with the vicious pleasures of society — pleasures that deaden its finest feelings and poison the source of its truest enjoyments.” — They pursued their way along the borders of the lake, sometimes under the shade of hanging woods, and sometimes over hillocks of turf, where the scene opened in all its wild magnificence. M. Verneuil often stopped in raptures to observe and point out the singular beauties it exhibited, while La Luc, pleased with the delight his friend expressed, surveyed with more than usual satisfaction the objects which had so often charmed him before. But there was a tender melancholy in the tone of his voice and his countenance, which arose from the recollection of having often traced those scenes, and partook of the pleasure they inspired, with her who had long since bade them an eternal farewell.

They presently quitted the lake, and, winding up a steep ascent between the woods, came, after an hour’s walk, to a green summit, which appeared, among the savage rocks that environed it, like the blossom on the thorn. It was a spot formed for solitary delight, inspiring that soothing tenderness so dear to the feeling mind, and which calls back to memory the images of passed regret, softened by distance and endeared by frequent recollection. Wild shrubs grew from the crevices of the rocks beneath, and the high trees of pine and cedar that waved above, afforded a melancholy and romantic shade. The silence of the scene was interrupted only by the breeze as it rolled over the woods, and by the solitary notes of the birds that inhabited the cliffs.

From this point the eye commanded an entire view of those majestic and sublime alps whose aspect fills the soul with emotions of indescribable awe, and seems to lift it to a nobler nature. The village, and the chateau of La Luc appeared in the bosom of the mountains, a peaceful retreat from the storms that gathered on their tops. All the faculties of M. Verneuil were absorbed in admiration, and he was for some time quite silent; at length, bursting into a rhapsody, he turned, and would have addressed La Luc, when he perceived him at a distance leaning against a rustic urn, over which dropped, in beautiful luxuriance, the weeping willow.

As he approached, La Luc quitted his position, and advanced to meet him, while M. Verneuil inquired upon what occasion the urn had been crected. La Luc, unable to answer, pointed to it, and walked silently away, and M. Verneuil, approaching the urn, read the following inscription:

TO THE MEMORY OF CLARA LA LUC, THIS URN IS ERECTED ON THE SPOT WHICH SHE LOVED, IN TESTIMONY OF THE AFFECTION OF A HUSBAND.

M. Verneuil now comprehended the whole, and, feeling for his friend, was hurt that he had noticed this monument of his grief. He rejoined La Luc, who was standing on the point of the eminence contemplating the landscape below with an air more placid, and touched with the sweetness of piety and resignation. He perceived that M. Verneuil was somewhat disconcerted, and he sought to remove his uneasiness. “You will consider it,” said he, “as a mark of my esteem that I have brought you to this spot. It is never prophaned by the presence of the unfeeling. “They would deride the faithfulness of an attachment which has so long survived its objects,

and which, in their own breasts, would quickly have been lost amidst the dissipation of general society. I have cherished in my heart the remembrance of a woman whose virtues claimed all my love: I have cherished it as a treasure to which I could withdraw from temporary cares and vexations, in the certainty of finding a soothing, though melancholy, comfort."

La Luc paused. M. Verneuil expressed the sympathy he felt, but he knew the sacredness of sorrow, and soon relapsed into silence. "One of the brightest hopes of a future state," resumed La Luc, "is, that we shall meet again those whom we have loved upon earth. And perhaps our happiness may be permitted to consist very much in the society of our friends, purified from the frailties of mortality, with the finer affections more sweetly attuned, and with the faculties of mind infinitely more elevated and enlarged. We shall then be enabled to comprehend subjects which are too vast for human conception; to comprehend, perhaps, the sublimity of that Deity who first called us into being. These views of futurity, my friend, elevate us above the evils of this world, and seem to communicate to us a portion of the nature we contemplate."

"Call them not the illusions of a visionary brain," proceeded La Luc: I trust in their reality. Of this I am certain, that whether they are illusions or not, a faith in them ought to be cherished for the comfort it brings to the heart, and reverenced for the dignity it imparts to the mind. Such feelings make a happy and an important part of our belief in a future existence: they give energy to virtue, and stability to principle."

"This," said M. Verneuil, "is what I have often felt, and what every ingenuous mind must acknowledge."

La Luc and M. Verneuil continued in conversation till the sun had left the scene. The mountains, darkened by twilight, assumed a sublimer aspect, while the tops of some of the highest alps were yet illumined by the sun's rays, and formed a striking contrast to the shadowy obscurity of the world below. As they descended through the woods, and traversed the margin of the lake, the stillness and solemnity of the hour diffused a pensive sweetness over their minds, and sunk them into silence.

They found supper spread, as was usual, in the hall, of which the windows opened upon a garden, where the flowers might be said to yield their fragrance in gratitude to the refreshing dews. The windows were

embowered with eglantine and other sweet shurubs, which hung in wild luxuriance around, and formed a beautiful and simple decoration. Clara and Adeline loved to pass the evenings in this hall, where they had acquired the first rudiments of astronomy, and from which they had a wide view of the heavens. La Luc pointed out to them the planets and the fixed stars, explained their laws, and from thence taking occasion to mingle moral with scientific instruction, would often ascend towards that great first cause, whose nature soars beyond the grasp of human comprehension.

“No study,” he would sometimes say, “so much enlarges the mind, or impresses it with so sublime an idea of the Diety, as that of astronomy. When the imagination launches into the regions of space, and contemplates the innumerable worlds which are scattered through it, we are lost in astonishment and awe. This globe appears as a mass of atoms in the immensity of the universe, and man a mere insect. Yet how wonderful! that man, whose frame is so diminutive in the scale of being, should have powers which spurn the narrow boundaries of time and place, soar beyond the sphere of his existence, penetrate the secret laws of nature, and calculate their progressive effects.”

“O! how expressively does this prove the spirituality of our Being! Let the materialist consider it, and blush that he has ever doubted.”

In this hall the whole family now met at supper, and during the remainder of the evening the conversation turned upon general subjects, in which Clara joined in modest and judicious remark. La Luc had taught her to familiarize her mind to reasoning, and had accustomed her to deliver her sentiments freely: she spoke them with a simplicity extremely engaging, and which convinced her hearers that the love of knowledge, not the vanity of talking, induced her to converse. M. Verneuil evidently endeavoured to draw forth her sentiments, and Clara, interested by the subjects he introduced, a stranger to affectation, and pleased with the opinions he expressed, answered them with frankness and animation. They retired mutually pleased with each other.

M. Verneuil was about six and thirty; his figure manly, his countenance frank and engaging. A quick penetrating eye, whose fire was softened by benevolence, disclosed the chief traits of his character; he was quick to discern, but generous to excuse, the follies of mankind; and while no one

more sensibly felt an injury, none more readily accepted the concession of an enemy.

He was by birth a Frenchman. A fortune lately devolved to him, had enabled him to execute the plan, which his active and inquisitive mind had suggested, of viewing the most remarkable parts of the continent. He was peculiarly susceptible of the beautiful and sublime in nature. To such a taste Switzerland and the adjacent country was, of all others, the most interesting; and he found the scenery it exhibited infinitely surpassing all that his glowing imagination had painted; he saw with the eye of a painter, and felt with the rapture of a poet.

In the habitation of La Luc he met with the hospitality, the frankness, and the simplicity, so characteristic of the country: in his venerable host he saw the strength of philosophy united with the finest tenderness of humanity — a philosophy which taught him to correct his feelings, not to annihilate them; in Clara, the bloom of beauty, with the most perfect simplicity of heart; and in Adeline all the charms of elegance and grace, with a genius deserving of the highest culture. In this family picture the goodness of Madame La Luc was not unperceived or forgotten. The chearfulness and harmony that reigned within the chateau was delightful; but the philanthropy which, flowing from the heart of the pastor, was diffused though the whole village, and united the inhabitants in the sweet and firm bonds of social compact, was divine. The beauty of its situation conspired with these circumstances to make Leloncourt seem almost a Paradise. M. Verneuil sighed that he must so soon quite it. “I ought to seek no farther,” said he, “for here wisdom and happiness dwell together.

The admiration was reciprocal; La Luc and his family found themselves much interested in M. Verneuil, and looked forward to the time of his departure with regret. So warmly they pressed him to prolong his visit, and so powerfully his own inclinations seconded theirs, that he accepted the invitation. La Luc omitted no circumstance which might contribute to the amusement of his guest, who having in a few days recovered the use of his arm, they made several excursions among the mountains. Adeline and Clara, whom the care of Madame had restored to her usual health, were generally of the party.

After spending a week at the chateau, M. Verneuil bade adieu to La Luc and his family; they parted with mutual regret, and the former promised

that when he returned to Geneva, he would take Leloncourt in his way. As he said this, Adeline, who had for some time observed, with much alarm, La Luc's declining health, looked mournfully on his languid countenance, and uttered a secret prayer that he might live to receive the visit of M. Verneuil.

Madame was the only person who did not lament his departure, she saw that the efforts of her brother to entertain his guest were more than his present state of health would admit of, and she rejoiced in the quiet that would now return to him.

But this quiet brought La Luc no respite from illness; the fatigue he had suffered in his late excursions seemed to have encreased his disorder, which in a short time assumed the aspect of a consumption. Yielding to the solicitations of his family, he went to Geneva for advice, and was there recommended to try the air of Nice.

The journey thither, however, was of considerable length, and believing his life to be very precarious, he hesitated whether to go. He was also unwilling to leave the duty of his parish unperformed for so long a period as his health might require; but this was an objection which would not have withheld him from Nice, had his faith in the climate been equal to that of his physicians.

His parishioners felt the life of their pastor to be of the utmost consequence to them. It was a general cause, and they testified at once his worth, and their sense of it, by going in a body to solicit him to leave them. He was much affected by this instance of their attachment. Such a proof of regard, joined with the entreaties of his own family, and a consideration that for their sakes it was a duty to endeavour to prolong his life, was too powerful to be withstood, and be determined to set out for Italy.

It was settled that Clara and Adeline, whose health La Luc thought required change of air and scene, should accompany him, attended by the faithful Peter.

On the morning of his departure, a large body of his parishioners assembled round the door to bid him farewell. It was an affecting scene; they might meet no more. At length, wiping the tears from his eyes, La Luc said, "Let us trust in God, my friends; he has power to heal all

disorders both of body and mind. We shall meet again, if not in this world, I hope in a better. Let our conduct be such as to ensure that better."

The sobs of his people prevented any reply. There was scarcely a dry eye in the village; for there was scarcely an inhabitant of it that was not now assembled in the presence of La Luc. He shook hands with them all, "Farewell, my friends, said he," "we shall meet again." "God grant we may," said they, with one voice of fervent petition.

Having mounted his horse, and Clara and Adeline being ready, they took a last leave of Madame La Luc, and quitted the chateau. The people, unwilling to leave La Luc, the greater part of them accompanied him to some distance from the village. As he moved slowly on he cast a last lingering look at his little home, where he had spent so many peaceful years, and which he now gazed on, perhaps for the last time, and tears rose to his eyes; but he checked them. Every scene of the adjacent country called up, as he passed, some tender remembrance. He looked towards the spot consecrated to the memory of his deceased wife; the dewy vapours of the morning veiled it. La Luc felt the disappointment more deeply, perhaps, than reason could justify; but those who know from experience how much the imagination loves to dwell on any object, however remotely connected with that of our tenderness, will feel with him. This was an object round which the affections of La Luc had settled themselves; it was a memorial to the eye, and the view of it awakened more forcibly in the memory every tender idea that could associate with the primary subject of his regard. In such cases fancy gives to the illusions of strong affection, the stamp of reality, and they are cherished by the heart with romantic fondness.

His people accompanied him for near a mile from the village, and could scarcely then be prevailed on to leave him; at length he once more bade them farewell, and went on his way, followed by their prayers and blessings.

La Luc and his little party travelled slowly on, sunk in pensive silence — a silence too pleasingly sad to be soon relinquished, and which they indulged without fear of interruption. The solitary grandeur of the scenes through which they passed, and the soothing murmur of the pines that waved above, aided this soft luxury of meditation.

They proceeded by easy stages; and after travelling for some days among the romantic mountains and green vallies of Piedmont, they entered the rich country of Nice. The gay and luxuriant views which now opened upon the travellers as they wound among the hills, appeared like scenes of fairy enchantment, or those produced by the lonely visions of the Poets. While the spiral summits of the mountains exhibited the snowy severity of winter, the pine, the cypress, the olive, and the myrtle shaded their sides with the green tints of spring, and groves of orange, lemon, and citron, spread over their feet the full glow of autumn. As they advanced the scenery became still more diversified; and at length, between the receding heights, Adeline caught a glimpse of the distant waters of the Mediterranean, fading into the blue and cloudless horizon. She had never till now seen the ocean; and this transient view of it roused her imagination, and made her watch impatiently for a nearer prospect.

It was towards the close of day when the travellers, winding round an abrupt projection of that range of Alps which crowns the amphitheatre that environs Nice, looked down upon the green hills that stretch to the shores, on the city, and its antient castle, and on the wide waters of the Mediterranean; with the mountains of Corsica in the farthest distance. Such a sweep of sea and land, so varied with the gay, the magnificient, and the awful, would have fixed any eye in admiration: — for Adeline and Clara novelty and enthusiasm added their charms to the prospect. The soft and salubrious air seemed to welcome La Luc to this smiling region, and the serene atmosphere to promise invariable summer. They at length descended upon the little plain where stands the city of Nice, and which was the most extensive piece of level ground they had passed since they entered the county. Here, in the bosom of the mountains, sheltered from the north and the east, where the western gales alone seemed to breathe, all the blooms of spring and the riches of autumn were united. Trees of myrtle bordered the road, which wound among groves of orange, lemon, and bergamot, whose delicious fragrance came to the sense mingled with the breath of roses and carnations that blossomed in their shade. The gently swelling hills that rose from the plain were covered with vines, and crowned with cypresses, olives and date trees; beyond, there appeared the sweep of lofty mountains whence the travellers had descended, and whence rose the little river Paglion, swoln by the snows that melt on their

summits, and which, after meandering through the plain, washes the walls of Nice, where it falls into the Mediterranean. In this blooming region Adeline observed that the countenances of the peasants, meagre and discontented, formed a melancholy contrast to the face of the country, and she lamented again the effects of an arbitrary government, where the bounties of nature, which were designed for all, are monopolized by a few, and the many are suffered to starve tantalized by surrounding plenty.

The city lost much of its enchantment on a nearer approach: its narrow streets and shabby houses but ill answered the expectation which a distant view of its ramparts and its harbour, gay with vessels, seemed to authorise. The appearance of the inn at which La Luc now alighted did not contribute to soften his disappointment; but if he was surprised to find such indifferent accommodation at the inn of a town celebrated as the resort of valetudinarians, he was still more so when he learned the difficulty of procuring furnished lodgings.

After much search he procured apartments in a small but pleasant house, situated a little way out of the town: it had a garden, and a terrace which overlooked the sea, and was distinguished by an air of neatness very unusual in the houses of Nice. He agreed to board with the family, whose table likewise accommodated a gentleman and lady, their lodgers, and thus he became a temporary inhabitant of this charming climate.

On the following morning Adeline rose at an early hour, eager to indulge the new and sublime emotion with which a view of the ocean inspired her, and walked with Clara toward the hills that afforded a more extensive prospect. They pursued their way for some time between high embowering banks, till they arrived at an eminence, whence

“Heaven, earth, ocean, smil’d!”

They sat down on a point of rock, overshadowed by lofty palm-trees, to contemplate at leisure the magnificent scene. The sun was just emerged from the sea, over which his rays shed a flood of light, and darted a thousand brilliant tints on the vapours that ascended the horizon, and floated there in light clouds, leaving the bosom of the waters below clear as chrystal, except where the white surges were seen to beat upon the rocks; and discovering the distant sails of the fishing boats, and the far distant highlands of Corsica, tinted with ætherial blue. Clara, after some time, drew forth her pencil, but threw it aside in despair. Adeline, as they

returned home through a romantic glen, when her senses were no longer absorbed in the contemplation of this grand scenery, and when its images floated on her memory, only, in softened colours, repeated the following lines:

SUNRISE: A SONNET.

Oft let me wander, at the break of day, Thro’ the cool vale o’erhung with waving woods, Drink the rich fragrance of the budding May, And catch the murmur of the distant floods; Or rest on the fresh bank of limpid rill, Where sleeps the vi’let in the dewy shade. Where op’ning lilies balmy sweets distill, And the wild musk-rose weeps along the glade:

Or climb the eastern cliff, whose airy head Hangs rudely o’er the blue and misty main; Watch the fine hues of morn through æther spread, And paint with roseate glow the chrystal plain. Oh! who can speak the rapture of the soul When o’er the waves the sun first steals to sight,’ And all the world of waters, as they roll, And Heaven’s vast vault unveils in living light! So life’s young hour to man enchanting smiles, With sparkling health, and joy, and fancy’s fairy wiles!

La Luc in his walks met with some sensible and agreeable companions, who like himself came to Nice in search of health. Of these he soon formed a small but pleasant society, among whom was a Frenchman, whose mild manners, marked with a deep and interesting melancholy, had particularly attracted La Luc. He very seldom mentioned himself, or any circumstance that might lead to a knowledge of his family, but on other subjects conversed with frankness and much intelligence. La Luc had frequently invited him to his lodgings, but he had always declined the invitation, and this in a manner so gentle as to disarm displeasure, and convince La Luc that his refusal was the consequence of a certain dejection of mind which made him reluctant to meet other strangers.

The description which La Luc had given of this foreigner had excited the curiosity of Clara; and the sympathy which the unfortunate feel for each other called forth the commiseration of Adeline; for that he was unfortunate she could not doubt. On their return from an evening walk La Luc pointed out the chavelier, and quickened his pace to overtake him. Adeline was for a moment impelled to follow, but delicacy checked her steps, she knew how painful the presence of a stranger often is to a wounded mind, and forbore to intrude herself on his notice for the sake of

only satisfying an idle curiosity. She turned therefore, into another path; but the delicacy which now prevented the meeting, accident in a few days defeated, and La Luc introduced the stranger. Adeline received him with a soft smile, but endeavoured to restrain the expression of pity which her features had involuntarily assumed; she wished him not to know that she observed he was unhappy.

After this interview he no longer rejected the invitations of La Luc, but made him frequent visits, and often accompanied Adeline and Clara in their rambles. The mild and sensible conversation of the former seemed to sooth his mind, and in her presence he frequently conversed with a degree of animation which La Luc till then had not observed in him. Adeline too derived from the similarity of their taste, and his intelligent conversation, a degree of satisfaction which contributed, with the compassion his dejection inspired, to win her confidence, and she conversed with an easy frankness rather unusual to her.

His visits soon became more frequent. He walked with La Luc and his family; he attended them on their little excursions to view those magnificent remains of Roman antiquity which enrich the neighbourhood of Nice. When the ladies sat at home and worked, he enlivened the hours by reading to them, and they had the pleasure to observe his spirits somewhat relieved from the heavy melancholy that had oppressed him.

M. Amand was passionately fond of music. Clara had not forgot to bring her beloved lute: he would sometimes strike the chords in the most sweet and mournful symphonies, but never could be prevailed on to play. When Adeline or Clara played, he would sit in deep reverie, and lost to every object around him, except when he fixed his eyes in mournful gaze on Adeline, and a sigh would sometimes escape him.

One evening Adeline having excused herself from accompanying La Luc and Clara in a visit to a neighbouring family, she retired to the terrace of the garden, which overlooked the sea, and as she viewed the tranquil splendour of the setting sun, and his glories reflected on the polished surface of the waves, she touched the strings of the lute in softest harmony, her voice accompanying it with words which she had one day written after having read that rich effusion of Shakespeare’s genius, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

TITANIA TO HER LOVE.

O! fly with me through distant air To isles that gem the western deep! For laughing Summer revels there, And hangs her wreath on ev’ry steep.

As through the green transparent sea Light floating on its waves we go, The nymphs shall gaily welcome me Far in their coral caves below.

For oft upon their margin sands, When Twilight leads the fresh’ning Hours. I come with all my jocund bands To charm them from their sea-green bow’rs.

And well they love our sports to view, And on the Ocean’s breast to lave; And oft, as we the dance renew, They call up music from the wave.

Swift hie we to that splendid clime, Where gay Jamaica spreads her scene, Lifts the blue mountain — wild — sublime! And smooths her vales of vivid green.

Where throned high, in pomp of shade, The Power of Vegetation reigns, Expanding wide, o’er hill and glade, Shrubs of all growth — fruit of all stains:

She steals the sunbeams’ fervid glow To paint her flow’rs of mingling hue; And o’er the grape the purple throw, Breaking from verdant leaves to view.

There, myrtle bow’rs, and citron grove, O’ercanopy our airy dance; And there the sea-breeze loves to rove When trembles Day’s departing glance.

And when the false moon steals away, Or e’er the chacing morn doth rise, Oft, fearless, we our gambols play By the fire-worm’s radiant eyes.

And suck the honey’d reeds that swell In tufted plumes of silver white; Or pierce the cocoa’s milky cell, To sip the nectar of delight!

And when the shaking thunders roll, And lightnings strike athwart the gloom, We shelter in the cedar’s bole, And revel ‘mid the rich perfume! But chief we love beneath the palm, Or verdant plantain’s spreading leaf, To hear, upon the midnight calm, Sweet Philomela pour her grief. To mortal sprite such dulcet sound, Such blissful hours, were never known! O! fly with me my airy round, And I will make them all thine own!

Adeline ceased to sing when she immediately heard repeated in a low voice,

“To mortal sprite such dulcet sound,
Such blissful hours, were never known!”

and turning her eyes whence it came, she saw M. Amand. She blushed and laid down the lute, which he instantly took up, and with a tremulous hand drew forth tones

“That might create a soul under the ribs of Death.”

In a melodious voice, that trembled with sensibility, he sang the following

SONNET.

How sweet is Love’s first gentle sway,
When crown’d with flow’rs he softly smiles!
His blue eyes fraught with tearful wiles,
Where beams of tender transport play:
Hope leads him on his airy way,
And Faith and Fancy still beguiles —
Faith quickly tangled in her toils —
Fancy, whose magic forms so gay
The fair Deceiver’s self deceive —
“How sweet is Love’s first gentle sway!”
Ne’er would that heart he bids to grieve
From Sorrow’s soft enchantments stray —
Ne’er — till the God, exulting in his art,
Relentless frowns, and wings th’ envenom’d dart!

Monsieur Amand paused: he seemed much oppressed, and at length, bursting into tears, laid down the instrument and walked abruptly away to the farther end of the terrace. Adeline, without seeming to observe his agitation, rose and leaned upon the wall, below which a group of fishermen were busily employed in drawing a net. In a few moments he returned, with a composed and softened countenance. “Forgive this abrupt conduct,” said he; “I know not how to apologize for it but by owning its cause. When I tell you, Madam, that my tears flow to the memory of a lady who strongly resembled you, and who is lost to me for ever, you will know how to pity me.” — His voice faultered, and he paused. Adeline was silent. “The lute,” he resumed, was her favourite instrument, and when you

touched it with such melancholy expression, I saw her very image before me. But alas! why do I distress you with a knowledge of of my sorrows! she is gone, and never to return! And you, Adeline — you" — He checked his speech; and Adeline, turning on him a look of mournful regard, observed a wildness in his eyes which alarmed her. "These recollections are too painful," said she, in a gentle voice; let us return to the house; M. La Luc is probably come home."— "O no!" replied M. Amand; "No — this breeze refreshes me. How often at this hour have I talked with her, as I now talk with you! — Such were the soft tones of her voice — such the ineffable expression of her countenance." — Adeline interrupted him. "Let me beg of you to consider your health — this dewy air cannot be good for invalids." He stood with his hands clasped, and seemed not to hear her. She took up the lute to go, and passed her fingers lightly over the chords. The sounds recalled his scattered senses: he raised his eyes, and fixed them in long unsettled gaze upon hers. "Must I leave you here?" said she, smiling, and standing in an attitude to depart— "I entreat you to play again the air I heard just now," said M. Amand, in a hurried voice.— "Certainly;" and she immediately began to play. He leaned against a palm tree in an attitude of deep attention, and as the sounds languished on the air, his features gradually lost their wild expression, and he melted into tears. He continued to weep silently till the song concluded, and it was some time before he recovered voice enough to say, "Adeline, I cannot thank you for this goodness. My mind has recovered its bias, you have soothed a broken heart. Increase the kindness you have shewn me by promising never to mention what you have witnessed this evening, and I will endeavour never again to wound your sensibility "by a similiar offence." — Adeline gave the required promise; and M. Amand, pressing her hand, with a melancholy smile, hurried from the garden, and she saw him no more that night.

La Luc had been near a fortnight at Nice, and his health, instead of amending, seemed rather to decline, yet he wished to make a longer experiment of the climate. The air, which failed to restore her venerable friend, revived Adeline, and the variety and novelty of the surrounding scenes amused her mind, though, since they could not obliterate the memory of past, or suppress the pang of present affection, they were ineffectual to dissipate the sick languor of melancholy. Company, by

compelling her to withdraw her attention from the subject of her sorrow, afforded her a transient relief, but the violence of the exertion generally nerally left her more depressed. It was in the stillness of solitude, in the tranquil observance of beautiful nature, that her mind recovered its tone, and indulging the pensive inclination now become habitual to it, was soothed and fortified. Of all the grand objects which nature had exhibited, the ocean inspired her with the most sublime admiration She loved to wander alone on its shores, and, when she could escape so long from the duties or the forms of society, she would sit for hours on the beach watching the rolling waves, and listening to their dying murmur, till her softened fancy recalled long lost scenes, and restored the image of Theodore, when tears of despondency too often followed those of pity and regret. But these visions of memory, painful as they were, no longer excited that phrenzy of grief they formerly awakened in Savoy; the sharpness of misery was passed, though its heavy influence was not perhaps less powerful. To these solitary indulgences generally succeeded calmness, and what Adeline endeavoured to believe was resignation.

She usually rose early, and walked down to the shore to enjoy, in the cool and silent hours of the morning, the cheering beauty of nature, and inhale the pure sea-breeze. Every object then smiled in fresh and lively colours. The blue sea, the brilliant sky, the distant fishing boats, with their white sails, and the voices of the fishermen borne at intervals on the air, were circumstances which reanimated her spirits, and in one of her rambles, yielding to that taste for poetry which had seldom forsaken her, she repeated the following lines:

MORNING, ON THE SEA SHORE.

What print of fairy feet is here
On Neptune’s smooth and yellow sands?
What midnight revel’s airy dance,
Beneath the moonbeams’ trembling glance,
Has blest these shores? — What sprightly bands
Have chac’d the waves uncheck’d by fear?
Whoe’er they were they fled from morn,

For now all silent and forlorn
These tide-forsaken sands appear —
Return, sweet sprites! the scene to cheer!

In vain the call! — Till moonlight’s hour
Again diffuse its softer pow’r,
Titania, nor her fairy loves,
Emerge from India’s spicy groves.
Then, when the shad’wy hour returns,
When silence reigns o’er air and earth,
And ev’ry star in æther burns,
They come to celebrate their mirth;
In frolic ringlet trip the ground,
Bid Music’s voice on Silence win,
Till magic echoes answer round —
Thus do their festive rites begin.

O fairy forms! so coy to mortal ken,
Your mystic steps to poets only shewn,
O! lead me to the brook, or hallow’d glen,
Retiring far, with winding woods o’ergrown!
Where’er ye best delight to rule;
If in some forest’s lone retreat,
Thither conduct my willing feet
To the light brink of fountain cool,
Where, sleeping in the midnight dew,
Lie Spring’s young buds of ev’ry hue,
Yielding their sweet breath to the air;
To fold their silken leaves from harm,
And their chill heads in moonshine warm,
To bright Titania’s tender care.

There, to the night-bird’s plaintive chaunt
Your carols sweet ye love to raise,
With oaten reed and past’ral lays;
And guard with forceful spell her haunt,
Who, when your antic sports are done,
Oft lulls ye in the lily’s cell,
Sweet flow’r! that suits your slumbers well,
And shields ye from the rising sun.
When not to India’s steeps ye fly
After twilight and the moon,
In honey’d buds ye love to lie,
While reigns supreme Light’s fervid noon;
Nor quit the cell where peace pervades
Till night leads on the dews and shades.

E’en now your scenes enchanted meet my sight!
I see the earth unclose, the palace rise,
The high dome swell, and long arcades of light
Glitter among the deep embow’ring woods,
And glance reflected from the trembling floods!
While to soft lutes the portals wide unfold,
And fairy forms, of fine ætherial dyes,
Advance with frolic step and laughing eyes,
Their hair with pearl, their garments deck’d with gold;
Pearls that in Neptune’s briny waves they sought,
And gold from India’s deepest caverns brought.
Thus your light visions to my eyes unveil,
Ye sportive pleasures, sweet illusions, hail!
But ah! at morn’s first blush again ye fade!
So from youth’s ardent gaze life’s landscape gay,
And forms in Fancy’s summer hues array’d,
Dissolve at once in air at Truth’s resplendent day!

During several days succeeding that on which M. Amand had disclosed the cause of his melancholy, he did not visit La Luc. At length Adeline met

him in one of her solitary rambles on the shore. He was pale and dejected, and seemed much agitated when he observed her; she therefore endeavoured to avoid him, but he advanced with quickened steps and accosted her. He said it was his intention to leave Nice in a few days. “I have found no benefit from the climate,” added M. Amand; Alas! what climate can relieve the sickness of the heart! I go to lose in the varieties of new scenes the remembrance of past happiness; yet the effort is vain; I am every where equally restless and unhappy.” Adeline tried to encourage him to hope much from time and change of place. “Time will blunt the sharpest edge of sorrow,” said she; “I know it from experience.” Yet while she spoke, the tears in her eyes contradicted the assertion of her lips. “You have been unhappy, Adeline! — Yes — I knew it from the first. The smile of pity which you gave me, assured me that you knew what it was to suffer.” The desponding air with which he spoke renewed her apprehension of a scene similar to the one she had lately witnessed, and she changed the subject, but he soon returned to it. “You bid me hope much from time! — My wife! — My dear wife!” — his tongue faultered— “It is now many months since I lost her — yet the moment of her death seems but as yesterday.” Adeline faintly smiled. “You can scarcely judge of the effect of time yet, you have much to hope for.” He shook his head. “But I am again intruding my misfortunes on your notice; forgive this perpetual egotism. There is a comfort in the pity of the good such as nothing else can impart; this must plead my excuse; may you, Adeline, never want it. Ah! those tears— “ Adeline hastily dried them. M. Amand forbore to press the subject, and immediately began to converse on indifferent topics. They returned towards the chateau, but La Luc being from home, M. Amand took leave at the door. Adeline retired to her chamber, oppressed by her own sorrows and those of her amiable friend.

Near three weeks had now elapsed at Nice, during which the disorder of La Luc seemed rather to encrease than to abate, when his physician very honestly confessed the little hope he entertained from the climate, and advised him to try the effect of a sea voyage, adding, that if the experiment failed, even the air of Montpellier appeared to him more likely to afford relief than that of Nice. La Luc received this disinterested advice with a mixture of gratitude and disappointment. The circumstances which had made him reluctant to quit Savoy, rendered him yet more so to protract his

absence, and encrease his expences; but the ties of affection that bound him to his family, and the love of life, which so seldom leaves us, again prevailed over inferior considerations, and he determined to coast the Mediterranean as far as Languedoc, where, if the voyage did not answer his expectations, he would land and proceed to Montpellier.

When M. Amand learned that La Luc designed to quit Nice in a few days, he determined not to leave it before him. During this interval he had not sufficient resolution to deny himself the frequent conversation of Adeline, though her presence, by reminding him of his lost wife, gave him more pain than comfort. He was the second son of a French gentleman of family, and had been married about a year to a lady to whom he had long been attached when she died in her lying-in. The infant soon followed its mother, and left the disconsolate father abandoned to grief, which had preyed so heavily on his health, that his physician thought it necessary to send him to Nice. From the air of Nice, however, he had derived no benefit, and he now determined to travel farther into Italy, though he no longer felt any interest in those charming scenes which in happier days, and with her whom he never ceased to lament, would have afforded him the highest degree of mental luxury — now he sought only to escape from himself, or rather from the image of her who had once constituted his truest happiness.

La Luc having laid his plan, hired a small vessel, and in a few days embarked, with a sick hope bidding adieu to the shores of Italy and the towering alps, and seeking on a new element the health which had hitherto mocked his pursuit.

M. Amand took a melancholy leave of his new friends, whom he attended to the sea side. When he assisted Adeline on board, his heart was too full to suffer him to say farewell; but he stood long on the beach pursuing with his eyes her course over the waters, and waving his hand, till tears dimmed his sight. The breeze wafted the vessel gently from the coast, and Adeline saw herself surrounded by the undulating waves of the ocean. The shore appeared to recede, its mountains to lessen, the gay colours of its landscape to melt into each other, and in a short time the figure of M. Amand was seen no more: the town of Nice, with its castle and harbour, next faded away in distance, and the purple tint of the mountains was at length all that remained on the verge of the horizon. She

sighed as she gazed, and her eyes filled with tears. “So vanished my prospect of happiness,” said she; “and my future view is like the waste of waters that surround me.” Her heart was full, and she retired from observation to a remote part of the deck, where she indulged her tears as she watched the vessel cut its way through the liquid glass. The water was so transparent that she saw the sunbeams playing at a considerable depth, and fish of various colours glance athwart the current. Innumerable marine plants spread their vigorous leaves on the rocks below, and the richness of their verdure formed a beautiful contrast to the glowing scarlet of the coral that branched beside them.

The distant coast, at length, entirely disappeared. Adeline gazed with an emotion the most sub’ime, on the boundless expanse of waters that spread on all sides: she seemed as if launched into a new world; the grandeur and immensity of the view astonished and overpowered her: for a moment she doubted the truth of the compass, and believed it to be almost impossible for the vessel to find its way over the pathless waters to any shore. And when she considered that a plank alone separated her from death, a sensation of unmixed terror superceded that of sublimity, and she hastily turned her eyes from the prospect, and her thoughts from the subject.

CHAPTER 1 9

“Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas! how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there who ne’er the mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He need not woo the Muse — he is her scorn.”
Beattie.

Towards evening the captain, to avoid the danger of encountering a Barbary corsair, steered for the French coast, and Adeline distinguished in the gleam of the setting sun the shores of Provence, feathered with wood and green with pasturage. La Luc, languid and ill, had retired to the cabin, whither Clara attended him. The pilot at the helm, guiding the tall vessel through the sounding waters, and one solitary sailor, leaning with crossed arms against the mast, and now and then singing parts of a mournful ditty, were all of the crew, except Adeline, that remained upon deck — and Adeline silently watched the declining sun, which threw a saffron glow upon the waves, and on the sails, gently swelling in the breeze that was now dying away. The sun, at length, sunk below the ocean, and twilight stole over the scene, leaving the shadowy shores yet visible, and touching with a solemn tint the waters that stretched wide around. She sketched the picture, but it was with a faint pencil.

NIGHT.

O’er the dim breast of Ocean’s wave
Night spreads afar her gloomy wings,
And pensive thought, and silence brings,
Save when the distant waters lave;
Or when the mariner’s lone voice
Swells faintly in the passing gale,
Or when the screaming sea-gulls poise
O’er the tall mast and swelling sail,

Bounding the gray gleam of the deep,
Where fancy’d forms arouse the mind,
Dark sweep the shores, on whose rude steep
Sighs the sad spirit of the wind.
Sweet is its voice upon the air
At Ev’ning’s melancholy close,
When the smooth wave in silence flows!
Sweet, sweet the peace its stealing accents bear!
Blest be thy shades, O Night! and blest the song
Thy low winds breathe the distant shores along!

As the shadows thickened the scene sunk into deeper repose. Even the sailor’s song had ceased; no sound was heard but that of the waters dashing beneath the vessel, and their fainter murmur on the pebbly coast. Adeline’s mind was in unison with the tranquillity of the hour: lulled by the waves, she resigned herself to a still melancholy, and sat lost in reverie. The present moment brought to her recollection her voyage up the Rhone, when seeking refuge from the terrors of the Marquis de Montalt, she so anxiously endeavoured to anticipate her future destiny. She then, as now, had watched the fall of evening and the fading prospect, and she remembered what a desolate feeling had accompanied the impression which those objects made. She had then no friends — no asylum — no certainty of escaping the pursuit of her enemy. Now she had found affectionate friends — a secure retreat — and was delivered from the terrors she then suffered — but still she was unhappy. The remembrance of Theodore — of Theodore who had loved her so truly, who had encountered and suffered so much for her sake, and of whose fate she was now as ignorant as when she traversed the Rhone, was an incessant pang to her heart. She seemed to be more remote than ever from the possibility of hearing of him. Sometimes a faint hope crossed her that he had escaped the malice of his persecutor; but when she considered the inveteracy and power of the latter, and the heinous light in which the law regards an assault upon a superior officer, even this poor hope vanished, and left her to tears and anguish, such as this reverie, which began with a sensation of only gentle melancholy, now led to. She continued to muse till the moon arose from the bosom of the ocean, and shed her trembling lustre upon the

waves, diffusing peace, and making silence more solemn; beaming a soft light on the white fails, and throwing upon the waters the tall shadow of the vessel, which now seemed to glide along unopposed by any current. Her tears had somewhat relieved the anguish of her mind, and she again reposed in placid melancholy, when a strain of such tender and entrancing sweetness stole on the silence of the hour, that it seemed more like celestial than mortal music — so soft, so soothing, it sunk upon her ear, that it recalled her from misery to hope and love. She wept again — but these were tears which she would not have exchanged for mirth and joy. She looked round, but perceived neither ship or boat; and as the undulating sounds swelled on the distant air, she thought they came from the shore. Sometimes the breeze wasted them away, and again returned them in tones of the most languishing softness. The links of the air thus broken, it was music rather than melody that she caught, till, the pilot gradually steering nearer the coast, she distinguished the notes of a song familiar to her ear. She endeavoured to recollect where she had heard it, but in vain; yet her heart beat almost unconsciously with a something resembling hope. Still she listened, till the breeze again stole the sounds. With regret she now perceived that the vessel was moving from them, and at length they trembled faintly on the waves, sunk away at distance, and were heard no more. She remained upon the deck a considerable time, unwilling to relinquish the expectation of hearing them again, and their sweetness still vibrating on her fancy, and at length retired to the cabin oppressed by a degree of disappointment which the occasion did not appear to justify.

La Luc grew better during the voyage, his spirits revived, and when the vessel entered that part of the Mediterranean called the Gulf of Lyons, he was sufficiently animated to enjoy from the deck the noble prospect which the sweeping shores of Provence, terminating in the far distant ones of Languedoc, exhibited. Adeline and Clara, who anxiously watched his looks, rejoiced in their amendment; and the fond wishes of the latter already anticipated his perfect recovery. The expectations of Adeline had been too often checked by disappointment to permit her now to indulge an equal degree of hope with that of her friend, yet she confided much in the effect of this voyage.

La Luc amused himself at intervals with discoursing, and pointing out the situations of considerable ports on the coast, and the mouths of the

rivers that, after wandering through Provence, disembogue themselves into the Mediterranean. The Rhone, however, was the only one of much consequence which he passed. On this object, though it was so distant that fancy, perhaps, rather than the sense, beheld it, Clara gazed with peculiar pleasure, for it came from the banks of Savoy; and the wave which she thought she perceived, had washed the feet of her dear native mountains. The time passed with mingled pleasure and improvement as La Luc described to his attentive pupils the manners and commerce of the different inhabitants of the coast, and the natural history of the country; or as he traced in imagination the remote wanderings of rivers to their source and delineated the characteristic beauties of their scenery.

After a pleasant voyage of a few days, the shores of Provence receded, and that of Languedoc, which had long bounded the distance, became the grand object of the scene, and the sailors drew near their port. They landed in the afternoon at a small town situated at the foot of a woody eminence, on the right overlooking the sea, and on the left the rich plains of Languedoc, gay with the purple vine. La Luc determined to defer his journey till the following day, and was directed to a small inn at the extremity of the town, where the accommodation, such as it was, he endeavoured to be contented with.

In the evening the beauty of the hour, and the desire of exploring new scenes, invited Adeline to walk. La Luc was fatigued, and did not go out, and Clara remained with him. Adeline took her way to the woods that rose from the margin of the sea, and climbed the wild eminence on which they hung. Often as she went she turned her eyes to catch between the dark foliage the blue waters of the bay, the white sail that flitted by, and the trembling gleam of the setting sun. When she reached the summit, and looked down over the dark tops of the woods on the wide and various prospect, she was seized with a kind of still rapture impossible to be expressed, and stood unconscious of the flight of time, till the sun had left the scene, and twilight threw its solemn shade upon the mountains. The sea alone reflected the fading splendor of the West; its tranquil surface was partially disturbed by the low wind that crept in tremulous lines along the waters whence rising to the woods, it shivered their light leaves, and died away. Adeline, resigning herself to the luxury of sweet and tender emotions, repeated the following lines:

SUNSET.

Soft o’er the mountain’s purple brow
Meek Twilight draws her shadows gray;
From tufted woods, and vallies low,
Light’s magic colours steal away.
Yet still, amid the spreading gloom,
Resplendent glow the western waves
That roll o’er Neptune’s coral caves,
A zone of light on Ev’ning’s dome.
On this lone summit let me rest,
And view the forms to Fancy dear,
Till on the Ocean’s darken’d breast
The stars of Ev’ning tremble clear;
Or the moon’s pale orb appear,
Throwing her line of radiance wide,
Far o’er the lightly-curling tide,
That seems the yellow sands to chide.
No sounds o’er silence now prevail,
Save of the dying wave below,
Or sailor’s song borne on the gale,
Or oar at distance striking slow.
So sweet! so tranquil! may my ev’ning ray
Set to this world — and rise in future day!

Adeline quitted the heights, and followed a narrow path that wound to the beach below: her mind was now particularly sensible to fine impressions, and the sweet notes of the nightingale amid the stillness of the woods again awakened her enthusiasm.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Child of the melancholy song!
O yet that tender strain prolong!

Her lengthen’d shade, when Ev’ning flings,
From mountain-cliffs and forest’s green,
And failing slow on silent wings
Along the glimm’ring West is seen;
I love o’er pathless hills to stray,
Or trace the winding vale remote,
And pause, sweet Bird! to hear thy lay
While moonbeams on the thin clouds float,
Till o’er the mountain’s dewy head
Pale Midnight steals to wake the dead.

Far through the Heav’ns’ ætherial blue,
Wasted on Spring’s light airs you come,
With blooms, and flow’rs, and genial dew,
From climes where Summer joys to roam,
O! welcome to your long-lost home!

“Child of the melancholy song!”
Who lov’st the lonely woodland-glade
To mourn, unseen, the boughs among,
When Twilight spreads her pensive shade,
Again thy dulcet voice I hail!
O! pour again the liquid note
That dies upon the ev’ning gale!
For Fancy loves the kindred tone;
Her griefs the plaintive accents own.
She loves to hear thy music float
At solemn Midnight’s stillest hour,
And think on friends for ever lost,
On joys by disappointment crost,
And weep anew Love’s charmful pow’r!

Then Memory wakes the magic smile,
Th’ impassion’d voice, the melting eye,
That won’t the trusting heart beguile,
And wakes again the hopeless sigh!
Her skill the glowing tints revive
Of scenes that Time had bade decay;
She bids the soften’d Passions live —
The Passions urge again their sway.
Yet o’er the long-regretted scene
Thy song the grace of sorrow throws;
A melancholy charm serene,
More rare than all that mirth bestows.
Then hail, sweet Bird! and hail thy Pensive tear!
To Taste, to Fancy, and to Virtue, dear!

The spreading dusk at length reminded Adeline of her distance from the inn, and that she had her way to find through a wild and lonely wood: she bade adieu to the syren that had so long detained her, and pursued the path with quick steps. Having followed it for some time, she became bewildered among the thickets, and the increasing darkness did not allow her to judge of the direction she was in. Her apprehensions heightened her difficulties: she thought she distinguished the voices of men at some little distance, and she increased her speed till the found herself on the sea sands over which the woods impended. Her breath was now exhausted — she paused a moment to recover herself, and fearfully listened but instead of the voices of men, she heard faintly swelling in the breeze the notes of mournful music. — Her heart, ever sensible to the impressions of melody, melted with the tones, and her fears were for a moment lulled in sweet enchantment. Surprise was soon mingled with delight when, as the sounds advanced, she distinguished the tone of that instrument, and the melody of that well known air, she had heard a few preceding evenings from the shores of Provence. But she had no time for conjecture — footsteps approached, and she renewed her speed. She was now emerged from the darkness of the woods, and the moon, which shone bright, exhibited along the level sands the town and port in the distance. The steps that had

followed now came up with her, and she perceived two men, but they passed in conversation without noticing her, and as they passed she was certain she recollected the voice of him who was then speaking. Its tones were so familiar to her ear, that she was surprised at the imperfect memory which did not suffer her to be assured by whom they were uttered. Another step now followed, and a rude voice called to her to stop. As she hastily turned her eyes she saw imperfectly by the moonlight a man in a sailor's habit pursuing, while he renewed the call. Impelled by terror, she fled along the sands, but her steps were short and trembling — those of her pursuer's strong and quick.

She had just strength sufficient to reach the men who had before passed her, and to implore their protection, when her pursuer came up with them, but suddenly turned into the woods on the lest, and disappeared.

She had no breath to answer the inquiries of the strangers who supported her, till a sudden exclamation, and the sound of her own name, drew her eyes attentively upon the person who uttered them, and in the rays which shone strong upon his features, she distinguished M. Verneuil! — Mutual satisfaction and explanation ensued, and when he learned that La Luc and his daughter were at the inn, he felt an increased pleasure in conducting her thither. He said that he had accidentally met with on old friend in Savoy, whom he now introduced by the name of Mauron, and who had prevailed on him to change his route and accompany him to the shores of the Mediterranean. They had embarked from the coast of Provence only a few preceding days, and had that evening landed in Languedoc on the estate of M. Mauron. Adeline had now no doubt that it was the flute of M. Verneuil, and which had so often delighted her at Leloncourt, that she had heard on the sea.

When they reached the inn they found La Luc under great anxiety for Adeline, in search of whom he had sent several people. Anxiety yielded to surprize and pleasure, when he perceived her with M. Verneuil, whose eyes beamed with unusual animation on seeing Clara. After mutual congratulations, M. Verneuil observed, and lamented, the very indifferent accommodation which the inn afforded his friends, and M. Mauron immediately invited them to his chateau with a warmth of hospitality that overcame every scruple which delicacy or pride could oppose. The woods that Adeline had traversed formed a part of his domain, which extended

almost to the inn; but he insisted that his carriage should take his guests to the chateau, and departed to give orders for their reception. The presence of M. Verneuil, and the kindness of his friend, gave to La Luc an unusual flow of spirits; he conversed with a degree of vigour and liveliness to which he had long been unaccustomed, and the smile of satisfaction that Clara gave to Adeline expressed how much she thought he was already benefited by the voyage. Adeline answered her look with a smile of less confidence, for she attributed his present animation to a more temporary cause.

About half an hour after the departure of M. Mauron, a boy who served as waiter brought a message from a chevalier then at the inn, requesting permission to speak with Adeline. The man who had pursued her along the sands instantly occurred to her, and she scarcely doubted that the stranger was some person belonging to the Marquis de Montalt, perhaps the Marquis himself, though that he should have discovered her accidentally, in so obscure a place, and so immediately upon her arrival, seemed very improbable. With trembling lips, and a countenance pale as death, she inquired the name of the chevalier. The boy was not acquainted with it. La Luc asked what sort of a person he was; but the boy, who understood little of the art of describing, gave such a confused account of him, that Adeline could only learn he was not large, but of the middle stature. This circumstance, however, convincing her it was not the Marquis de Montalt who desired to see her, she asked whether it would be agreeable to La Luc to have the stranger admitted. La Luc said, “By all means;” and the waiter withdrew. Adeline sat in trembling expectation till the door opened, and Louis de la Motte entered the room. He advanced with an embarrassed and melancholy air, though his countenance had been enlightened with a momentary pleasure when he first beheld Adeline — Adeline, who was still the idol of his heart. After the first salutations were over, all apprehensions of the Marquis being now dissipated, she inquired when Louis had seen Monsieur and Madame La Motte.

“I ought rather to ask you that question,” said Louis, in some confusion, for I believe you have seen them since I have; and the pleasure of meeting you thus is equalled by my surprise. I have not heard from my father for some time, owing probably to my regiment “being removed to new quarters.”

He looked as if he wished to be informed with whom Adeline now was; but as this was a subject upon which it was impossible she could speak in the presence of La Luc, she led the conversation to general topics, after having said that Monsieur and Madame La Motte were well when she left them. Louis spoke little, and often looked anxiously at Adeline, while his mind seemed labouring under strong oppression. She observed this, and recollecting the declaration he had made her on the morning of his departure from the Abbey, she attributed his present embarrassment to the effect of a passion yet unsubdued, and did not appear to notice it. After he had sat near a quarter of an hour, under a struggle of feelings which he could neither conquer or conceal, he rose to leave the room, and as he passed Adeline, said, in a low voice, “Do permit me to speak with you alone for five minutes.” She hesitated in some confusion, and then saying there were none but friends present, begged he would be seated.— “Excuse me,” said he, in the same low accent; “What I would say nearly concerns you, and you only. Do favour me with a few moments attention.” He said this with a look that surprized her; and having ordered candles in another room, she went thither.

Louis sat for some moments silent, and seemingly in great perturbation of mind. At length he said, “I know not whether to rejoice or to lament at this unexpected meeting, though, if you are in safe hands, I ought certainly to rejoice, however hard the task that now falls to my lot. I am not ignorant of the dangers and persecutions you have suffered, and cannot forbear expressing my anxiety to know how you are now circumstanced. Are you indeed with friends?”— “I am,” said Adeline; “M. la Motte has informed you”— “No,” replied Louis, with a deep sigh, “not my father.” — He paused.— “But I do indeed rejoice,” resumed he, “O! how sincerely rejoice! that you are in safety. Could you know, lovely Adeline, what I have suffered!” — He checked himself.— “I understood you had something of importance to say, Sir,” said Adeline; “you must excuse me if I remind you that I have not many moments to spare.”

“It is indeed of importance,” replied Louis; “yet I know not how to mention it — how to soften — This task is too severe. Alas! my poor friend!”

“Who is it you speak of, Sir!”, said Adeline, with quickness. Louis rose from his chair, and walked about the room. “I would prepare you for what

I have to say, he resumed, “but upon my soul I am not equal to it.”

“I entreat you to keep me no longer in suspence,” said Adeline, who had a wild idea that it was Theodore he would speak of. Louis still hesitated. “Is it — O is it? — I conjure you tell me the worst at once,” said she, in a voice of agony. “I can bear it — indeed I can.”

“My unhappy friend!” exclaimed Louis, “O Theodore!”— “Theodore!” faintly articulated Adeline, “he lives then!”— “He does,” said Louis, “but” — He stopped.— “But what?” cried Adeline, trembling violently; “If he is living you cannot tell me worse than my fears suggest; I entreat you, therefore, not to hesitate.” — Louis resumed his seat, and, endeavouring to assume a collected air, said, “He is living, Madam, but he is a prisoner, and — for why should I deceive you? I fear he has little to hope in this “world.”

“I have long feared so, Sir,” said Adeline, in a voice of forced composure; “you have something more terrible than this to relate, and I again intreat you will explain yourself.”

“He has every thing to apprehend from the Marquis de Montalt,” said Louis. “Alas! why do I say to apprehend? His judgment is already fixed

— he is condemned to die.”

At this confirmation of her fears a deathlike paleness diffused itself over the countenance of Adeline; she sat motionless, and attempted to sigh, but seemed almost suffocated. Terrified at her situation, and expecting to see her faint, Louis would have supported her, but with her hand she waved him from her, and was unable to speak. He now called for assistance, and La Luc and Clara, with M. Verneuil, informed of Adeline’s indisposition, were quickly by her side.

At the sound of their voices she looked up, and seemed to recollect herself, when uttering a heavy sigh she burst into tears. La Luc rejoiced to see her weep, encouraged her tears, which, after some time, relieved her, and when she was able to speak, she desired to go back to La Luc’s parlour. Louis attended her thither; when she was better he would have withdrawn, but La Luc begged he would stay.

“You are perhaps a relation of this young lady, Sir,” said he, “and may have brought news of her father.”— “Not so, Sir,” replied Louis, hesitating.— “This gentleman,” said Adeline, who had now recollected her dissipated thoughts, “is the son of the M. La Motte, whom you may have

heard me mention.” — Louis seemed shocked to be declared the son of a man that had once acted so unworthily towards Adeline, who, instantly perceiving the pain her words occasioned, endeavoured to soften their effect by saying that La Motte had saved her from imminent danger, and had afforded her an asylum for many months. Adeline sat in a state of dreadful solitude to know the particulars of Theodore’s situation, yet could not acquire courage to renew the subject in the presence of La Luc; she ventured, however, to ask Louis if his own regiment was quartered in the town.

He replied that his regiment lay at Vaceau, a French town on the frontiers of Spain; that he had just crossed a part of the Gulph of Lyons, and was on his way to Savoy, whither he should set out early in the morning.

“We are lately come from thence,” said Adeline; “may I ask to what part of Savoy you are going?”— “To Leloncourt,” he replied.— “To Leloncourt!” said Adeline, in some surprize.— “I am a stranger to the country,” resumed Louis; “but I go to serve my friend. You seem to know Leloncourt.”— “I do indeed,” said Adeline.— “You probably know then that M. La Luc lives there, and will guess the motive of my journey.”

“O heavens! is it possible?” exclaimed Adeline— “is it possible that Theodore Peyrou is a relation of M. La Luc!”

“Theodore! what of my son?” asked La Luc, in surprize and apprehension.— “Your son!” said Adeline, in a trembling voice, “your son!” — The astonishment and anguish depictured on her countenance increased the apprehensions of this unfortunate father, and he renewed his question. But Adeline was totally unable to answer him; and the distress of Louis, on thus unexpectedly discovering the father of his unhappy friend, and knowing that it was his task to disclose the fate of his son, deprived him for some time of all power of utterance, and La Luc and Clara, whose fears were every instant heightened by this dreadful silence, continued to repeat their questions.

At length a sense of the approaching sufferings of the good La Luc overcoming every other feeling, Adeline recovered strength of mind sufficient to try to soften the intelligence Louis had to communicate, and to conduct Clara to another room. Here she collected resolution to tell her, and with much tender consideration, the circumstances of her brother’s

situation, concealing only her knowledge of his sentence being already pronounced. This relation necessarily included the mention of their attachment, and in the friend of her heart Clara discovered the innocent cause of her brother's destruction. Adeline also learned the occasion of that circumstance which had contributed to keep her ignorant of Theodore's relationship to La Luc; she was told the former had taken the name of Peyrou, with an estate which had been left him about a year before by a relation of his mother's upon that condition. Theodore had been designed for the church, but his disposition inclined him to a more active life than the clerical habit would admit of, and on his accession to this estate he had entered into the service of the French king.

In the few and interrupted interviews which had been allowed them at Caux, Theodore had mentioned his family to Adeline only in general terms, and thus, when they were so suddenly separated, had, without designing it, left her in ignorance of his father's name and place of residence.

The sacredness and delicacy of Adeline's grief, which had never permitted her to mention the subject of it even to Clara, had since contributed to deceive her.

The distress of Clara, on learning the situation of her brother, could endure no restraint; Adeline, who had commanded her feelings so as to impart this intelligence with tolerable composure, only by a strong effort of mind, was now almost overwhelmed by her own and Clara's accumulated suffering. While they wept forth the anguish of their hearts, a scene, if possible, more affecting passed between La Luc and Louis, who perceived it was necessary to inform him, though cautiously and by degrees, of the full extent of his calamity. He therefore told La Luc, that though Theodore had been first tried for the offence of having quitted his post, he was now condemned on a charge of assault made upon his general officer, the Marquis de Montalt, who had brought witnesses to prove that his life had been endangered by the circumstance; and who having pursued the prosecution with the most bitter rancour, had at length obtained the sentence which the law could not withhold, but which every other officer in the regiment deplored.

Louis added, that the sentence was to be executed in less than a fortnight, and that Theodore being very unhappy at receiving no answers

to the letters he had sent his father, wishing to see him once more, and knowing that there was now no time to be lost, had requested him to go to Leloncourt and acquaint his father with his situation.

La Luc received the account of his son's condition with a distress that admitted neither of tears or complaint. He asked where Theodore was, and desiring to be conducted to him, he thanked Louis for all his kindness, and ordered post horses immediately.

A carriage was soon ready, and this unhappy father, after taking a mournful leave of M. Verneuil, and sending a compliment to M. Mauron, attended by his family, set out for the prison of his son. The journey was a silent one; each individual of the party endeavoured, in consideration of each other, to suppress the expression of grief, but was unable to do more. La Luc appeared calm and complacent; he seemed frequently to be engaged in prayer; but a struggle for resignation and composure was sometimes visible upon his countenance, notwithstanding the efforts of his mind.

CHAPTER 2 0

“And venom’d with disgrace the dart of Death.”
Seward.

We now return to the Marquis de Montalt, who having seen La Motte safely lodged in the prison of D — y, and learning the trial would not come on immediately, had returned to his villa on the borders of the forest, where he expected to hear news of Adeline. It had been his intention to follow his servants to Lyons; but he now determined to wait a few days for letters, and he had little doubt that Adeline, since her flight had been so quickly purfued, would be overtaken, and probably before she could reach that city. In this expectation he had been miserably disappointed; for his servants informed him, that though they traced her thither, they had neither been able to follow her route beyond, nor to discover her at Lyons. This escape she probably owed to having embarked on the Rhone, for it does not appear that the Marquis’s people thought of seeking her on the course of that river.

His presence was soon after required at Vaceau, where the court martial was then sitting; thither, therefore, he went, with passions still more exasperated by his late disappointment, and procured the condemnation of Theodore. The sentence was universally lamented, for Theodore was much beloved in his regiment; and the occasion of the Marquis’s personal resentment towards him being known, every heart was interested in his cause.

Louis de la Motte happening at this time to be stationed in the same town, heard an imperfect account of his story, and being convinced that the prisoner was the young chevalier whom he had formerly seen with the Marquis at the Abbey, he was induced partly from compassion, and partly with a hope of hearing of his parents, to visit him. The compassionate sympathy which Louis expressed, and the zeal with which he tendered his services, affected Theodore, and excited in him a warm return of friendship. Louis made him frequent visits, did every thing that kindness could suggest to alleviate his sufferings, and a mutual esteem and confidence ensued.

Theodore at length communicated the chief subject of his concern to Louis, who discovered, with inexpressible grief, that it was Adeline whom the Marquis had thus cruelly persecuted, and Adeline for whose sake the generous Theodore was about to suffer. He soon perceived also that Theodore was his favoured rival; but he generously suppressed the jealous pang this discovery occasioned, and determined that no prejudice of passion should withdraw him from the duties of humanity and friendship. He eagerly inquired where Adeline then resided. “She is yet, I fear, in the power of the Marquis,” said Theodore, sighing deeply. “O God! — these chains!” — and he threw an agonizing glance upon them. Louis sat silent and thoughtful; at length starting from his reverie, he said he would go to the Marquis, and immediately quitted the prison. The Marquis was, however, already set off for Paris, where he had been summoned to appear at the approaching trial of La Motte; and Louis, yet ignorant of the late transactions at the Abbey, returned to the prison, where he endeavoured to forget that Theodore was the favoured rival of his love, and to remember him only as the defender of Adeline. So earnestly he pressed his offers of service, that Theodore, whom the silence of his father equally surprized and afflicted, and who was very anxious to see him once again, accepted his proposal of going himself to Savoy. “My letters I strongly suspect to have been intercepted by the Marquis,” said Theodore; “if so, my poor father will have the whole weight of this calamity to sustain at once, unless I avail myself of your kindness, and I shall neither see him nor hear from him before I die. Louis! there are moments when my fortitude shrinks from the conflict, and my senses threaten to desert me.”

No time was to be lost; the warrant for his execution had already received the king’s signature, and Louis immediately set forward for Savoy. The letters of Theodore had indeed been intercepted by order of the Marquis, who, in the hope of discovering the asylum of Adeline, had opened and afterwards deroyed them.

But to return to La Luc, who now drew near Vaceau, and who his family observed to be greatly changed in his looks since he had heard the late calamitous intelligence; he uttered no complaint; but it was too obvious that his disorder had made a rapid progress. Louis, who, during the journey, proved the goodness of his disposition by the delicate attentions he paid this unhappy party, concealed his observation of the decline of La

Luc, and, to support Adeline's spirits, endeavoured to convince her that her apprehensions on this subject were groundless. Her spirits did indeed require support, for she was now within a few miles of the town that contained Theodore; and while her increasing perturbation almost overcome her, she yet tried to appear composed. When the carriage entered the town, she cast a timid and anxious glance from the window in search of the prison; but having passed through several streets without perceiving any building which corresponded with her idea of that she looked for, the coach stopped at the inn. The frequent changes in La Luc's countenance betrayed the violent agitation of his mind, and when he attempted to alight, feeble and exhausted, he was compelled to accept the support of Louis, to whom he faintly said, as he passed to the parlour, "I am indeed sick at heart, but I trust the pain will not be long." Louis pressed his hand without speaking, and hastened back for Adeline and Clara, who were already in the passage. La Luc wiped the tears from his eyes, (they were the first he had shed) as they entered the room. "I would go immediately to my poor boy," said he to Louis; "yours, Sir, is a mournful office — be so good as to conduct me to him." He rose to go, but, feeble and overcome with grief, again sat down. Adeline and Clara united in entreating that he would compose himself, and take some refreshment, and Louis urging the necessity of preparing Theodore for the interview, prevailed with him to delay it till his son should be informed of his arrival, and immediately quitted the inn for the prison of his friend. When he was gone, La Luc, as a duty he owed those he loved, tried to take some support, but the convulsions of his throat would not suffer him to swallow the wine he held to his parched lips, and he was now so much disordered, that he desired to retire to his chamber, where alone, and in prayer, he passed the dreadful interval of Louis's absence.

Clara on the bosom of Adeline, who set in calm but deep distress, yielded to the violence of her grief. "I shall lose my dear father too," said she; "I see it; I shall lose my father and my brother together." Adeline wept with her friend for some time in silence; and then attempted to persuade her that La Luc was not so ill as she apprehended.

"Do not mislead me with hope," "she replied, he will not survive the shock of this calamity — I saw it from the first." Adeline knowing that La Luc's distress would be heightened by the observance of his daughter's,

and that indulgence would only encrease its poignancy, endeavoured to rouse her to an exertion of fortitude by urging the necessity of commanding her emotion in the presence of her father. “This is possible,” added she, “however painful may be the effort. You must know, my dear, that my grief is not inferior to your own, yet I have hitherto been enabled to support my sufferings in silence, for M. La Luc I do, indeed, love and reverence as a parent.”

Louis meanwhile reached the prison of Theodore, who received him with an air of mingled surprize and impatience. “What brings you back so soon,” said he, “have you heard news of my father?” Louis now gradually unfolded the circumstances of their meeting, and La Luc’s arrival at Vaceau. A various emotion agitated the countenance of Theodore on receiving this intelligence. “My poor father!” said he, “he has then followed his son to this ignominious place! Little did I think when last we parted he would meet me in a prison, under condemnation!” This reflection roused an impetuosity of grief which deprived him for some time of speech. “But where is he?” said Theodore, recovering himself; “now he is come, I shrink from the interview I have so much wished for. The sight of his distress will be dreadful to me. Louis! when I am gone — comfort my poor father.” His voice was again interrupted by sobs; and Louis, who had been fearful of acquainting him at the same time of the arrival of La Luc, and the discovery of Adeline, now judged it proper to administer the cordial of this latter intelligence.

The glooms of a prison, and of calamity, vanished for a transient moment; those who had seen Theodore would have believed this to be the instant which gave him life and liberty. When his first emotions subsided, “I will not repine,” said he; “since I know that Adeline is preserved, and that I shall once more see my father, I will endeavour to die with resignation.” He enquired if La Luc was there in the prison; and was told he was at the inn with Clara and Adeline. “Adeline! Is Adeline there too! — This is beyond my hopes. Yet why do I rejoice? I must never see her more: this is no place for Adeline.” Again he relapsed into an agony of distress — and again repeated a thousand questions concerning Adeline, till he was reminded by Louis that his father was impatient to see him — when, shocked that he had so long detained his friend, he entreated him to

conduct La Luc to the prison, and endeavoured to recollect fortitude for the approaching interview.

When Louis returned to the inn La Luc was still in his chamber, and Clara quitting the room to call him, Adeline seized with trembling impatience the opportunity to enquire more particularly concerning Theodore, than the chose to do in the presence of his unhappy sister. Lewis represented him to be much more tranquil than he really was: Adeline was somewhat soothed by the account; and her tears, hitherto restrained, flowed silently and fast, till La Luc appeared. His countenance had recovered its serenity, but was impressed with a deep and steady sorrow, which excited in the beholder a mingled emotion of pity and reverence. “How is my son? sir,” said he as he entered the room. “We will go to him immediately.”

Clara renewed the entreaties that had been already rejected, to accompany her father, who persisted in a refusal. “Tomorrow you shall see him, added he;” “but our first meeting must be alone. Stay with your friend, my dear; she has need of consolation.” When La Luc was gone, Adeline, unable longer to struggle against the force of grief, retired to her chamber and her bed.

La Luc walked silently towards the prison, resting on the arm of Lewis. It was now night: a dim lamp that hung above shewed them the gates, and Louis rung a bell; La Luc, almost overcome with agitation, leaned against the postern till the porter appeared. He enquired for Theodore, and followed the man; but when he reached the second court yard he seemed ready to faint, and again stopped. Louis desired the porter would fetch some water; but La Luc, recovering his voice, said he should soon be better, and would not suffer him to go. In a few minutes he was able to follow Louis, who led him through several dark passages, and up a flight of steps to a door, which being unbarred, disclosed to him the prison of his son. He was seated at a small table, on which stood a lamp that threw a feeble light across the place sufficient only to shew its desolation and wretchedness. When he perceived La Luc he sprung from his chair, and in the next moment was in his arms. “My father!” said he in a tremulous voice. “My son!” exclaimed La Luc; and they were for some time silent, and locked in each other’s embrace. At length Theodore led him to the only chair the room afforded, and seating himself with Louis at the foot of

the bed, had leisure to observe the ravages which illness and calamity had made on the features of his parent. La Luc made several efforts to speak, but unable to articulate, laid his hand upon his breast and sighed deeply. Fearful of the consequence of so affecting a scene on his shattered frame, Lewis endeavoured to call off his attention from the immediate object of his distress, and interrupted the silence; but La Luc shuddering, and complaining he was very cold, sunk back in his chair. His condition roused Theodore from the stupor of despair; and while he flew to support his father, Louis ran out for other assistance.— “I shall soon be better, Theodore,” said La Luc, unclosing his eye, “the faintness is already going off. I have not been well of late; and this sad meeting!” Unable any longer to command himself, Theodore wrung his hand, and the distress which had long struggled for utterance burst in convulsive sobs from his breast. La Luc gradually revived, and exerted himself to calm the transports of his son; but the fortitude of the latter had now entirely forsaken him, and he could only utter exclamation and complaint. “Ah! little did I think we should ever meet under circumstances so dreadful as the present! But I have not deserved them, my father! the motives of my conduct have still been just.”

“That is my supreme consolation,” said La Luc, “and ought to support you in this hour of trial. The Almighty God, who is the judge of hearts, will reward you hereafter. Trust in him, my son; I look to him with no feeble hope, but with a firm reliance on his justice!” La Luc’s voice faultered; he raised his eyes to heaven with an expression of meek devotion, while the tears of humanity fell slowly on his cheek.

Still more affected by his last words, Theodore turned from him, and paced the room with quick steps: the entrance of Louis was a very seasonable relief to La Luc, who, taking a cordial he had brought, was soon sufficiently restored to discourse on the subject most interesting to him. Theodore tried to attain a command of his feelings, and succeeded. He conversed with tolerable composure for above an hour, during which La Luc endeavoured to elevate, by religious hope, the mind of his son, and to enable him to meet with fortitude the aweful hour that approached. But the appearance of resignation which Theodore attained always vanished when he reflected that he was going to leave his father a prey to grief, and his beloved Adeline for ever. When La Luc was about to depart he again

mentioned her. “Afflicting as an interview must be in our present circumstances,” said he, I cannot bear the thought of quitting the world without seeing her once again; yet I know not how to ask her to encounter, for my sake, the misery of a parting scene. Tell her that my thoughts never, for a moment, leave her; that” — La Luc interrupted, and assured him, that since he so much wished it, he should see her, though a meeting could serve only to heighten the mutual anguish of a final separation.

“I know it — I know it too well,” said Theodore; “yet I cannot resolve to see her no more, and thus spare her the pain this interview must inflict. O my father! when I think of those whom I must soon leave for ever, my heart breaks. But I will indeed try to profit by your precept and example, and shew that your paternal care has not been in vain. My good Louis, go with my father — he has need of support. How much I owe this generous friend,” added Theodore, “you well know, Sir.”— “I do, in truth,” replied La Luc, “and can never repay his kindness to you. He has contributed to support us all; but you require comfort more than myself — he shall remain with you — I will go alone.”

This Theodore would not suffer; and La Luc no longer opposing him, they affectionately embraced, and separated for the night.

When they reached the inn La Luc consulted with Louis on the possibility of addressing a petition to the sovereign time enough to save Theodore. His distance from Paris, and the short interval before the period fixed for the execution of the sentence, made this design difficult; but believing it was practicable, La Luc, incapable as he appeared of performing so long a journey, determined to attempt it. Louis, thinking that the undertaking would prove fatal to the father, without benefiting the son, endeavoured, though faintly, to dissuade him from it — but his resolution was fixed.— “If I sacrifice the small remains of my life in the service of my child,” said he, “I shall lose little: if I save him, I shall gain every thing. There is no time to be lost — I will set off immediately.”

He would have ordered post horses, but Louis, and Clara, who was now come from the bedside of her friend, urged the necessity of his taking a few hours repose: he was at length compelled to acknowledge himself unequal to the immediate exertion which parental anxiety prompted, and consented to seek rest.

When he had retired to his chamber, Clara lamented the condition of her father.— “He will not bear the journey,” said she; “he is greatly changed within these few days.” — Louis was so entirely of her opinion, that he could not disguise it, even to flatter her with a hope. She added, what did not contribute to raise his spirits, that Adeline was so much indisposed by her grief for the situation of Theodore, and the sufferings of La Luc, that she dreaded the consequence.

It has been seen that the passion of young La Motte had suffered no abatement from time or absence; on the contrary, the persecution and the dangers which had pursued Adeline awakened all his tenderness, and drew her nearer to his heart. When he had discovered that Theodore loved her, and was beloved again, he experienced all the anguish of jealousy and disappointment; for though she had forbade him to hope, he found it too painful an effort to obey her, and had secretly cherished the flame which he ought to have stisled. His heart was, however, too noble to suffer his zeal for Theodore to abate because he was his favoured rival, and his mind too strong not to conceal the anguish this certainty occasioned. The attachment which Theodore had testified towards Adeline even endeared him to Louis, when he had recovered from the first shock of disappointment, and that conquest over jealousy which originated in principle, and was pursued with difficulty, became afterwards his pride and his glory. When, however, he again saw Adeline — saw her in the mild dignity of sorrow more interesting than ever — saw her, though sinking beneath its pressure, yet tender and solicitous to soften the afflictions of those around her — it was with the utmost difficulty he preserved his resolution, and forbore to express the sentiments she inspired. When he farther considered that her acute sufferings arose from the strength of her affection, he more than ever wished himself the object of a heart capable of so tender a regard, and Theodore in prison and in chains was a momentary object of envy.

In the morning, when La Luc arose from short and disturbed slumbers, he found Louis, Clara, and Adeline, whom indisposition could not prevent from paying him this testimony of respect and affection, assembled in the parlour of the inn to see him depart. After a slight breakfast, during which his feelings permitted him to say little, he bade his friends a sad farewell, and stepped into the carriage, followed by their tears and prayers. —

Adeline immediately retired to her chamber which she was too ill to quit that day. In the evening Clara left her friend, and, conducted by Louis, went to visit her brother, whose emotions, on hearing of his father’s departure, were various and strong.

CHAPTER 2 1

"'Tis only when with inbred horror smote
At some base act, or done, or to be done,
That the recoiling soul, with conscious dread,
Shrinks back into itself."
Mason.

We return now to Pierre De la Motte, who, after remaining some weeks in the prison of D — y, was removed to take his trial in the courts of Paris, whither the Marquis de Montalt followed to prosecute the charge. Madame De la Motte accompanied her husband to the prison of the Chatelet. His mind sunk under the weight of his misfortunes; nor could all the efforts of his wife rouse him from the t\orpidity of despair which a consideration of his circumstances occasioned. Should he be even acquitted of the charge brought against him by the Marquis, (which was very unlikely) he was now in the scene of his former crimes, and the moment that should liberate him from the walls of his prison would probably deliver him again into the hands of offended justice.

The prosecution of the Marquis was too well founded, and its object of a nature too serious, not to justify the terror of La Motte. Soon after the latter had settled at the Abbey of St. Clair, the small stock of money which the emergency of his circumstances had left him being nearly exhausted, his mind became corroded with the most cruel anxiety concerning the means of his future subsistence. As he was one evening riding alone in a remote part of the forest, musing on his distressed circumstances, and meditating plans to relieve the exigencies which he saw approaching, he perceived among the trees at some distance a chevalier on horseback, who was riding deliberately along, and seemed wholly unattended. A thought darted across the mind of La Motte that he might be spared the evils which threatened him by robbing this stranger. His former practices had passed the boundary of honesty — fraud was in some degree familiar to him — and the thought was not dismissed. He hesitated — every moment of hesitation increased the power of temptation — the opportunity was such as might never occur again. He looked round, and as far as the trees opened saw no person but the chevalier, who seemed by his air to be a man

of distinction. Summoning all his courage, La Motte rode forward and attacked him. The Marquis de Montalt, for it was him, was unarmed, but knowing that his attendants were not far off, he refused to yield. While they were struggling for victory, La Motte saw several horsemen enter the extremity of the avenue, and, rendered desperate by opposition and delay, he drew from his pocket a pistol, (which an apprehension of banditti made him usually carry when he rode to a distance from the Abbey) and fired at the Marquis, who staggered and fell senseless to the ground. La Motte had time to tear from his coat a brilliant star, some diamond rings from his fingers, and to rifle his pockets, before his attendants came up. Instead of pursuing the robber, they all, in their first confusion, flew to assist their lord, and La Motte escaped.

He stopped before he reached the Abbey at a little ruin, the tomb formerly mentioned, to examine his booty. It consisted of a purse containing seventy louis d’ors; of a diamond star, three rings of great value, and a miniature set with brilliants of the Marquis himself, which he had intended as a present for his favourite mistress. To La Motte, who but a few hours before had seen himself nearly destitute, the view of this treasure excited an almost ungovernable transport; but it was soon checked when he remembered the means he had employed to obtain it, and that he had paid for the wealth he contemplated the price of blood. Naturally violent in his passions, this reflection sunk him from the summit of exultation to the abyss of despondency. He considered himself a murderer, and startled as one awakened from a dream, would have given half the world, had it been his, to have been as poor, and, comparatively, as guiltless as a few preceding hours had seen him. On examining the portrait he discovered the resemblance, and believing that his hand had deprived the original of life, he gazed upon the picture with unutterable anguish. To the horrors of remorse succeeded the perplexities of fear. Apprehensive of he knew not what, he lingered at the tomb, where he at length deposited his treasure, believing that if his offence should awaken justice, the Abbey might be searched, and these jewels betray him. From Madame La Motte it was easy to conceal his increase of wealth; for as he had never made her acquainted with the exact state of his finances, she had not suspected the extreme poverty which menaced him, and as they continued to live as usual, she believed that their expences were drawn from the usual supply.

But it was not so easy to disguise the workings of remorse and horror: his manner became gloomy and reserved, and his frequent visits to the tomb, where he went partly to examine his treasure, but chiefly to indulge in the dreadful pleasure of contemplating the picture of the Marquis, excited curiosity. In the solitude of the forest, where no variety of objects occurred to renovate his ideas, the horrible one of having committed murder was ever present to him. — When the Marquis arrived at the Abbey, the astonishment and terror of La Motte, for at first he scarce knew whether he beheld the shadow or the substance of a human form, were quickly succeeded by apprehension of the punishment due to the crime he had really committed. When his distress had prevailed on the Marquis to retire, he informed him that he was by birth a chevalier: he then touched upon such parts of his misfortunes as he thought would excite pity, expressed such abhorrence of his guilt, and voluntarily uttered such a solemn promise of returning the jewels he had yet in his possession, for he had ventured to dispose only of a small part, that the Marquis at length listened to him with some degree of compassion. This favourable sentiment, seconded by a selfish motive, induced the Marquis to compromise with La Motte. Of quick and inflammable passions, he had observed the beauty of Adeline with an eye of no common regard, and he resolved to spare the life of La Motte upon no other condition than the sacrifice of this unfortunate girl. La Motte had neither resolution or virtue sufficient to reject the terms — the jewels were restored, and he consented to betray the innocent Adeline. But as he was too well acquainted with her heart to believe that she would easily be won to the practice of vice, and as he still felt a degree of pity and tenderness for her, he endeavoured to prevail on the Marquis to forbear precipitate measures, and to attempt gradually to undermine her principles by seducing her affections. He approved and adopted this plan: the failure of his first scheme induced him to employ the strategems he afterwards pursued, and thus to multiply the misfortunes of Adeline.

Such were the circumstances which had brought La Motte to his present deplorable situation. The day of trial was now come, and he was led from prison into the court, where the Marquis appeared as his accuser. When the charge was delivered, La Motte, as is usual, pleaded not guilty, and the Advocate Nemours, who had undertaken to plead for him, afterwards

endeavoured to make it appear that the accusation, on the part of the Marquis de Montalt, was false and malicious. To this purpose he mentioned the circumstance of the latter having attempted to persuade his client to the murder of Adeline: he farther urged that the Marquis had lived in habits of intimacy with La Motte for several months immediately preceding his arrest, and that it was not till he had disappointed the designs of his accuser, by conveying beyond his reach the unhappy object of his vengeance, that the Marquis had thought proper to charge La Motte with the crime for which he stood indicted. Nemours urged the improbability of one man's keeping up a friendly intercourse with another from whom he had suffered the double injury of assault and robbery; yet it was certain that the Marquis had observed a frequent intercourse with La Motte for some months following the time specified for the commission of the crime. If the Marquis intended to prosecute, why was it not immediately after his discovery of La Motte? and if not then, what had influenced him to prosecute at so distant a period?

To this nothing was replied on the part of the Marquis; for as his conduct on this point had been subservient to his designs on Adeline, he could not justify it but by exposing schemes which would betray the darkness of his character, and invalidate his cause. He, therefore, contented himself with producing several of his servants as witnesses of the assault and robbery, who swore without scruple to the person of La Motte, though not one of them had seen him otherwise than through the gloom of evening and riding off at full speed. On a cross examination most of them contradicted each other; their evidence was of course rejected; but as the Marquis had yet two other witnessess to produce, whose arrival at Paris had been hourly expected, the event of the trial was postponed, and the court adjourned.

La Motte was reconducted to his prison under the same pressure of despondency with which he had quitted it. As he walked through one of the avenues he passed a man who stood by to let him proceed, and who regarded him with a fixed and earnest eye. La Motte thought he had seen him before; but the imperfect view he caught of his features through the duskiness of the place made him uncertain as to this, and his mind was' in too perturbed a state to suffer him to feel an interest on the subject. When he was gone the stranger inquired of the keeper of the prison who La

Motte was; on being told, and receiving answers to some farther questions he put, he desired he might be admitted to speak with him. The request, as the man was only a debtor, was granted; but as the doors were now shut for the night, the interview was deferred till the morrow.

La Motte found Madame in his room, where she had been waiting for some hours to hear the event of the trial. They now wished more earnestly then ever to see their son; but they were, as he had suspected, ignorant of his change of quarters, owing to the letters which he had, as usual, addressed to them under an assumed name, remaining at the post-house of Auboin. This circumstance occasioned Madame La Motte to address her letters to the place of her son's late residence, and he had thus continued ignorant of his father's misfortunes and removal. Madame La Motte, surprized at receiving no answers to her letters, sent off another, containing an account of the trial as far as it had proceeded, and a request that her son would obtain leave of absence, and set out for Paris instantly. As she was still ignorant of the failure of her letters, and had it been otherwise, would not have known whither to have sent them, she directed this as usual.

Mean while his approaching fate was never absent for a moment from the mind of La Motte, which, feeble by nature, and still more enervated by habits of indulgence, refused to support him at this dreadful period.

While these scenes were passing at Paris, La Luc arrived there without any accident after performing a journey, during which he had been supported almost entirely by the spirit of his resolution. He hastened to throw himself at the feet of the sovereign, and such was the excess of his feeling on presenting the petition which was to decide the fate of his son, that he could only look silently up, and then fainted. The king received the paper, and giving orders for the unhappy father to be taken care of, passed on. He was carried back to his hotel, where he awaited the event of this his final effort.

Adeline, mean while, continued at Vaceau in a state of anxiety too powerful for her long-agitated frame, and the illness in consequence of this, confined her almost wholly to her chamber. Sometimes she ventured to flatter herself with a hope that the journy of La Luc would be successful: but these short and illusive intervals of comfort served only to heighten, by contrast, the despondency that succeeded, and in the alternate

extremes of feeling the experienced a state more torturing than that produced either by the sharp sting of unexpected calamity, or the sullen pain of settled despair.

When she was well enough she came down to the parlour to converse with Louis, who brought her frequent accounts of Theodore, and who passed every moment he could snatch from the duty of his profession in endeavours to support and console his afflicted friends. Adeline and Theodore, both looked to him for the little comfort allotted them, for he brought them intelligence of each other, and whenever he appeared a transient melancholy kind of pleasure played round their hearts. He could not conceal from Theodore Adeline's indisposition, since it was necessary to account for her not indulging the earnest wish he repeatedly expressed to see her again. To Adeline he spoke chiefly of the fortitude and resignation of his friend, not however forgetting to mention the tender affection he constantly expressed for her. Accustomed to derive her sole consolation from the presence of Louis, and to observe his unwearied friendship towards him whom she so truly loved, she found her esteem for him ripen into gratitude, and her regard daily increase.

The fortitude with which he had said Theodore supported his calamities was somewhat exaggerated. He could not sufficiently forget those ties which bound him to life to meet his fate with firmness; but though the paroxysms of grief were acute and frequent, he sought, and often attained in the presence of his friends, a manly composure. From the event of his father's journey he hoped little, yet that little was sufficient to keep his mind in the torture of suspence till the issue should appear.

On the day preceding that fixed for the execution of the sentence La Luc reached Vaceau. Adeline was at her chamber window when the carriage drew up to the inn; she saw him alight, and with feeble steps, supported by Peter, enter the house. From the languor of his air she drew no favourable omen, and, almost sinking under the violence of her emotion, she went to meet him. Clara was already with her father when Adeline entered the room. She approached him, but, dreading to receive from his lips a confirmation of the misfortune his countenance seemed to indicate, she looked expressively at him and sat down, unable to speak the question she would have asked. He held out his hand to her in silence, sunk back in his chair, and seemed to be fainting under oppression of heart. His manner

confirmed all her fears; at this dreadful conviction her senses failed her, and she sat motionless and stupified.

La Luc and Clara were too much occupied by their own distress to observe her situation; after some time she breathed a heavy sigh, and burst into tears. Relieved by weeping, her spirits gradually returned, and she at length said to La Luc, “It is unnecessary, Sir, to ask the success of your journey; yet, when you can bear to mention the subject, I wish” —

La Luc waved his hand— “Alas!” said he, “I have nothing to tell but what you already guess too well. My poor Theodore!” — His voice was convulsed with sorrow, and some moments of unutterable anguish followed.

Adeline was the first who recovered sufficient recollection to notice the extreme languor of La Luc, and attend to his support. She ordered him refreshments, and entreated he would retire to his bed and suffer her to send for a phycian; adding, that the fatigue he had suffered made repose absolutely necessary. Would that I could find it, my dear “child,” said he; “it is not in this world that I must look for it, but in a better, and that better, I trust, I shall soon attain. But where is our good friend, Louis La Motte? He must lead me to my son.” — Grief again interrupted his utterance, and the entrance of Louis was a very seasonable relief to them all. Their tears explained the question he would have asked; La Luc immediately inquired for his son, and thanking Louis for all his kindness to him, desired to be conducted to the prison. Louis endeavoured to persuade him to defer his visit till the morning, and Adeline and Clara joined their entreaties with his, but La Luc determined to go that night.— “His time is short,” said he; “a few hours and I shall see him no more, at least in this world; let me not neglect these precious moments. Adeline! I had promised my poor boy that he should see you once more; you are not now equal to the meeting. I will try to reconcile him to the disappointment; but if I fail, and you are better in the morning, I know you will exert yourself to sustain the interview.” — Adeline looked impatient, and attempted to speak. La Luc rose to depart, but could only reach the door of the room, where, faint and feeble, he sat down in a chair. “I must submit to necessity,” said he; “I find I am not able to go farther to-night. Go to him, La Motte, and tell him I am somewhat disordered by my journey, but that I will be with him early in the morning. Do not flatter

him with a hope; prepare him for the worst." — There was a pause of silence; La Luc at length recovering himself, desired Clara would order his bed to be got ready, and she willingly obeyed. When he withdrew, Adeline told Louis, what was indeed unnecessary, the event of La Luc's journey. "I own," continued she, "that I had sometimes suffered myself to hope, and I now feel this calamity with double force. I fear too that M. La Luc will sink under its pressure; he is much altered for the worse since he set out for Paris. Tell me your opinion sincerely."

The change was so obvious, that Louis could not deny it, but he endeavoured to sooth her apprehension by ascribing this alteration, in a great measure, to the temporary fatigue of travelling. Adeline declared her resolution of accompanying La Luc to take leave of Theodore in the morning. "I know not how I shall support the interview," said she; "but to see him once more is a duty I owe both to him and myself. The remembrance of having neglected to give him this last proof of affection would pursue me with incessant remorse."

After some farther conversation on this subject Louis withdrew to the prison, ruminating on the best means of imparting to his friend the fatal intelligence he had to communicate. Theodore received it with more composure than he had expected; but he asked, with impatience, why he did not see his father and Adeline, and on being informed that indisposition withheld them, his imagination seized on the worst possibility, and suggested that his father was dead. It was a considerable time before Louis could convince him of the contrary, and that Adeline was not dangerously ill; when, however, he was assured that he should see them in the morning, he became more tranquil. He desired his friend would not leave him that night. "These are the last hours we can pass together," added he; "I cannot sleep! Stay with me and lighten their heavy moments. I have need of comfort, Louis. Young as I am, and held by such strong attachments, I cannot quit the world with resignation. I know not how to credit those stories we hear of philosophic fortitude; wisdom cannot teach us cheerfully to resign a good, and life in my circumstances is surely such."

The night was passed in embarrassed conversation; sometimes interrupted by long fits of silence, and sometimes by the paroxysms of

despair; and the morning of that day which was to lead Theodore to death at length dawned through the grates of his prison.

La Luc mean while passed a sleepless and dreadful night. He prayed for fortitude and resignation both for himself and Theodore; but the pangs of nature were powerful in his heart, and not to be subdued. The idea of his lamented wife, and of what she would have suffered had she lived to witness the ignominious death which awaited her son, frequently occurred to him.

It seemed as if a destiny had hung over the life of Theodore, for it is probable that the king might have granted the petition of the unhappy father, had it not happened that the Marquis de Montalt was present at court when the paper was presented. The appearance and singular distress of the petitioner had interested the monarch, and, instead of putting by the paper, he opened it. As he threw his eyes over it, observing that the criminal was of the Marquis de Montalt's regiment: he turned to him and inquired the nature of the offence for which the culprit was about to suffer. The answer was such as might have been expected from the Marquis, and the king was convinced that Theodore was not a proper object of mercy.

But to return to La Luc, who was called, according to his order, at a very early hour. Having passed some time in prayer, he went down to the parlour, where Louis, punctual to the moment, already waited to conduct him to the prison. He appeared calm and collected, but his countenace was impressed with a fixed despair that sensibly affected his young friend. While they waited for Adeline he spoke little, and seemed struggling to attain the fortitude necessary to support him through the approaching scene. Adeline not appearing, he at length sent to hasten her, and was told she had been ill, but was recovering. She had indeed passed a night of such agitation, that her frame had sunk under it, and she was now endeavouring to recover strength and composure sufficient to sustain her in this dreadful hour. Every moment that brought her nearer to it had increased her emotion, and the apprehension of being prevented seeing Theodore had alone enabled her to struggle against the united pressure of illness and grief.

She now, with Clara, joined La Luc, who advanced as they entered the room, and took a hand of each in silence. After some moments he proposed to go, and they stepped into a carriage which conveyed them to

the gates of the prison. The crowd had already began to assemble there, and a confused murmur arose as the carriage moved forward; it was a grievous sight to the friends of Theodore. Louis supported Adeline when she alighted, she was scarcely able to walk, and with trembling steps she followed La Luc, whom the keeper led towards that part of the prison where his son was confined. It was now eight o'clock, the sentence was not to be executed till twelve, but a guard of soldiers was already placed in the court, and as this unhappy party passed along the narrow avenues they were met by several officers who had been to take a last farewell of Theodore. As they ascended the stairs that led to his apartment, La Luc's ear caught the clink of chains, and heard him walking above with a quick irregular step. The unhappy father, overcome by the moment which now pressed upon him, stopped, and was obliged to support himself by the bannister. Louis fearing the consequence of his grief might be fatal, shattered as his frame already was, would have gone for assistance, but he made a sign to him to stay. "I am better;" said La Luc, "O God! support me through this hour!" and in a few minutes he was able to proceed.

As the warder unlocked the door, the harsh grating of the key shocked Adeline but in the next moment she was in the presence of Theodore, who sprung to meet her, and caught her in his arms before she sunk to the ground. As her head reclined on his shoulder, he again viewed that countenance so dear to him, which had so often lighted rapture in his heart, and which though pale and inanimate as it now was, awakened him to momentary delight. When at length she unclosed her eyes, she fixed them in long and mournful gaze upon Theodore, who pressing her to his heart could answer her only with a smile of mingled tenderness and despair; the tears he endeavoured to restrain trembled in his eyes, and he forgot for a time every thing but Adeline. La Luc, who had seated himself at the foot of the bed, seemed unconscious of what passed around him, and entirely absorbed in his own grief; but Clara, as she clapsed the hand of her brother, and hung weeping on his arm, expressed aloud all the anguish of her heart, and at length recalled the attention of Adeline, who in a voice scarcely audible entreated she would spare her father. Her words roused Theodore, and supporting Adeline to a chair, he turned to La Luc. "My dear child!" said La Luc, grasping his hand and bursting into tears, "My dear child!" They wept together. After a long interval of silence, he said,

“I thought I could have supported this hour, but I am old and feeble. God knows my efforts for resignation, my faith in his goodness!”

Theodore by a strong and sudden exertion assumed a composed and firm countenance, and endeavoured by every gentle argument to sooth and comfort his weeping friends. La Luc at length seemed to conquer his sufferings; drying his eyes, he said, “My son, I ought to have set you a better example, and practised the precepts of fortitude I have so often given you. But it is over; I know, and will perform, my duty.” Adeline breathed a heavy sigh, and continued to weep. “Be comforted, my love, we part but for a time,” said Theodore as he kissed the tears from her cheek; and uniting her hand with that of his father’s, he earnestly recommended her to his protection. “Receive her,” added he, as the most precious legacy I can bequeath; consider her as your child. She will console you when I am gone, she will more than supply the loss of your son.”

La Luc assured him that he did now, and should continue to, regard Adeline as his daughter. During those afflicting hours he endeavoured to dissipate the terrors of approaching death by inspiring his son with religious confidence. His conversation was pious, rational and consolatory: he spoke not from the cold dictates of the head, but from the feelings of a heart which had long loved and practised the pure precepts of christianity, and which now drew from them a comfort such as nothing earthly could bestow.

“You are young, my son,” said he, and are yet innocent of any great crime; you may therefore look on death without terror, for to the guilty only is his approach dreadful. I feel that I shall not long survive you, and I trust in a merciful God that we shall meet in a state where sorrow never comes; where the Son of Righteousness shall come with healing in his wing!” As he spoke he looked up; the tears still trembled in his eyes, which beamed with meek yet fervent devotion, and his countenance glowed with the dignity of a superior being.

“Let us not neglect the awful moments,” said La Luc, rising, “let our united prayers ascend to Him who alone can comfort and support us!” They all knelt down, and he prayed with that simple and sublime eloquence which true piety inspires. When he rose he embraced his children separately, and when he came to Theodore he paused, gazed upon him with an earnest, mournful expression, and was for some time unable

to speak. Theodore could not bear this; he drew his hand before his eyes, and vainly endeavoured to stifle the deep sobs which convulsed his frame. At length recovering his voice, he entreated his father would leave him. “This misery is too much for us all,” said he, “let us not prolong it. The time is now drawing on — leave me to compose myself. The sharpness of death consists in parting with those who are dear to us; when that is passed, death is disarmed.”

“I will not leave you, my son,” replied La Luc, “My poor girls shall go, but for me, I will be with you in your last moments.” Theodore felt that this would be too much for them both, and urged every argument which reason could suggest to prevail with his father to relinquish his design. But he remained firm in his determination. “I will not suffer a selfish consideration of the pain I may endure,” said La Luc, to tempt me to desert my child when he will most require my support. It is my duty to attend you, and nothing shall withhold me.”

Theodore seized on the words of La Luc— “As you would that I should be supported in my last hour,” said he, I entreat that you will not be witness of it. Your presence, my dear father, would subdue all my fortitude — would destroy what little composure I may otherwise be able to attain. Add not to my sufferings the view of your distress, but leave me to forget, if possible, the dear parent I must quit for ever.” His tears flowed anew. La Luc continued to gaze on him in silent agony; at length he said, “Well, be it so. If indeed my presence would distress you, I will not go.” His voice was broken and interrupted. After a pause of some moments he again embraced Theodore— “We must part,” said he, “we must part, but it is only for a time — we shall soon be re-united in a higher world! — O God! thou seest my heart — thou seest all its feelings in this bitter hour!” — Grief again overcame him. He pressed Theodore in his arms; and at length, seeming to summon all his fortitude, he again said, “We must part — Oh! my son, farewell for ever in this world! — The mercy of Almighty God support and bless you!”

He turned away to leave the prison, but, quite worn out with grief, sunk into a chair near the door he would have opened. Theodore gazed, with a distracted countenance, alternately on his father, on Clara, and on Adeline, whom he pressed to his throbbing heart, and their tears flowed together. “And do I then,” cried he, “for the last time look upon that countenance!

— Shall I never — never more behold it? — O! exquisite misery! Yet once again — once more," continued he, pressing her cheek, but it was insensible and cold as marble.

Louis, who had left the room soon after La Luc arrived, that his presence might not interrupt their farewell grief, now returned. Adeline raised her head, and perceiving who entered, it again sunk on the bosom of Theodore.

Louis appeared much agitated. La Luc arose. "We must go," said he: "Adeline, my love, exert yourself — Clara — my children, let us depart. — Yet one last — last embrace, and then!" — Louis advanced and took his hand; "My dear Sir, I have something to say; yet I fear to tell it."— "What do you mean?" said La Luc, with quickness: "No new misfortune can have power to afflict me at this moment. Do not fear to speak."— "I rejoice that I cannot put you to the proof," replied Louis; "I have seen you sustain the most trying affliction with fortitude. Can you support the transports of hope?" — La Luc gazed eagerly on Louis— "Speak!" said he, in a faint voice. Adeline raised her head, and, trembling between hope and fear, looked at Louis as if she would have searched his soul. He smiled cheerfully upon her. "Is it — O! is it possible!" she exclaimed, suddenly reanimated— "He lives! He lives!" — She said no more, but ran to La Luc, who sunk fainting in his chair, while Theodore and Clara with one voice called on Louis to relieve them from the tortures of suspence.

He proceeded to inform them that he had obtained from the commanding officer a respite for Theodore till the king's farther pleasure could be known, and this in consequence of a letter received that morning from his mother, Madame De la Motte, in which she mentioned some very extraordinary circumstances that had appeared in the course of a trial lately conducted at Paris, and which so materially affected the character of the Marquis de Montalt as to render it possible a pardon might be obtained for Theodore.

These words darted with the rapidity of lightning upon the hearts of his hearers. La Luc revived, and that prison so lately the scene of despair now echoed only to the voices of gratitude and gladness. La Luc, raising his clasped hands to Heaven, said, "Great God! support me in this moment as thou hast already supported me! — If my son lives, I die in peace."

He embraced Theodore, and remembering the anguish of his last embrace, tears of thankfulness and joy flowed to the contrast. So powerful indeed was the effect of this temporary reprieve, and of the hope it introduced, that if an absolute pardon had been obtained, it could scarcely for the moment have diffused a more lively joy. But when the first emotions were subsided, the uncertainty of Theodore's fate once more appeared. Adeline forbore to express this, but Clara without scruple lamented the possibility that her brother might yet be taken from them, and all their joy be turned to sorrow. A look from Adeline checked her. Joy was, however, so much the predominant feeling of the present moment, that the shade which reflection threw upon their hopes passed away like the cloud that is dispelled by the strength of the sunbeam; and Louis alone was pensive and abstracted.

When they were sufficiently composed, he informed them that the contents of Madame De la Motte's letter obliged him to set out for Paris immediately; and that the intelligence he had to communicate intimately concerned Adeline, who would undoubtedly judge it necessary to go thither also as soon as her health would permit. He then read to his impatient auditors such passages in the letter as were necessary to explain his meaning; but as Madame De la Motte had omitted to mention some circumstances of importance to be understood, the following is a relation of the occurrences that had lately happened at Paris.

It may be remembered, that on the first day of his trial, La Motte, in passing from the courts to his prison, saw a person whose features, though imperfectly seen through the dusk, he thought he recollected; and that this same person, after inquiring the name of La Motte, desired to be admitted to him. On the following day the warder complied with his request, and the surprise of La Motte may be imagined when, in the stronger light of his apartment, he distinguished the countenance of the man from whose hands he had formerly received Adeline.

On observing Madame De la Motte in the room, he said, he had something of consequence to impart, and desired to be left alone with the prisoner. When she was gone, he told De la Motte that he understood he was confined at the suit of the Marquis de Montalt. La Motte assented.— "I know him for a villain," said the stranger boldly.— "Your case is desperate. Do you wish for life?"

“Need the question be asked!”

“Your trial, I understand, proceeds tomorrow. I am now under confinement in this place for debt; but if you can obtain leave for me to go with you into the courts, and a condition from the judge that what I reveal shall not criminate myself, I will make discoveries that shall confound that same Marquis; I will prove him a villain; and it shall then be judged how far his word ought to be taken against you.”

La Motte, whose interest was now strongly excited, desired he would explain himself; and the man proceeded to relate a long history of the misfortunes and consequent poverty which had tempted him to become subservient to the schemes of the Marquis, till he suddenly checked himself, and said, “When I obtain from the court the promise I require, I will explain myself fully; till then I cannot say more on the subject.”

La Motte could not forbear expressing a doubt of his sincerity, and a curiosity concerning the motive that had induced him to become the Marquis’s accuser. — As to my motive, it is a very natural one,” replied the man: it is no easy matter to receive ill usage without resenting it, particularly from a villain whom you have served.” — La Motte, for his own sake, endeavoured to check the vehemence with which this was uttered. “I care not who hears me,” continued the stranger, but at the same time he lowered his voice; I repeat it — the Marquis has used me ill — I have kept his secret long enough. He does not think it worth while to secure my silence, or he would relieve my necessities. I am in prison for debt, and have applied to him for relief: since he does not chuse to give it, let him take the consequence. I warrant he shall soon repent that he has provoked me, and ‘tis fit he should.”

The doubts of La Motte were now dissipated; the prospect of life again opened upon him, and he assured Du Bosse, (which was the stranger’s name) with much warmth, that he would commission his Advocate to do all in his power to obtain leave for his appearance on the trial, and to procure the necessary condition. After some farther conversation they parted.

CHAPTER 2 2

“Drag forth the legal monster into light,
“Wrench from his hand Oppression’s iron rod,
“And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.”

Leave was at length granted for the appearance of Du Bosse, with a promise that his words should not criminate him, and he accompanied La Motte into court.

The confusion of the Marquis de Montalt on perceiving this man was observed by many persons present, and particularly by La Motte, who drew from this circumstance a favourable presage for himself.

When Du Bosse was called upon, he informed the court, that on the night of the twenty-first of April, in the preceding year, one Jean d’Aunoy, a man he had known many years, came to his lodging. After they had discoursed for some time on their circumstances, d’Aunoy said he knew a way by which du Bosse might change all his poverty to riches, but that he would not say more till he was certain he would be willing to follow it. The distressed state in which du Bosse then was made him anxious to learn the means which would bring him relief; he eagerly inquired what his friend meant, and after some time d’Aunoy explained himself. He said he was employed by a nobleman, (whom he afterwards told du Bosse was the Marquis de Montalt) to carry off a young girl from a convent, and that she was to be taken to a house at a few leagues distant from Paris. “I knew the house he described “well,” said du Bosse, “for I had been there many times with d’Aunoy, who lived there to avoid his creditors, “though he often passed his nights at Paris.” He would not tell me more of the scheme, but said he should want assistants, and if I and my brother, who is since dead, would join him, his employer would grudge no money, and we should be well rewarded. I desired him again to tell me more of the plan, but he was obstinate, and after I had told him I would consider of what he said, and speak to my brother, he went away.

“When he called the next night for his answer, my brother and I agreed to engage, and accordingly we went home with him. He then told us that

the young lady he was to bring thither was a natural daughter of the Marquis de Montalt, and of a nun belonging to a convent of Ursalines; that his wife had received the child immediately on its birth, and had been allowed a handsome annuity to bring it up as her own, which she had done till her death. The child was then placed in a convent and designed for the veil; but when she was of an age to receive the vows, she had steadily persisted in refusing them. This circumstance had so much exasperated the Marquis, that in his rage he ordered, that if she persisted in her obstinacy she should be removed from the convent, and got rid of any way, since if she lived in the world her birth might be discovered, and in consequence of this, her mother, for whom he had yet a regard, would be condemned to expatiate her crime by a terrible death."

Du Bosse was interrupted in his narrative by the council of the Marquis, who contended that the circumstances alledged tending to criminate his client, the proceeding was both irrelevant and illegal. He was answered that it was not irrelevant, and therefore not illegal, for that the circumstances which threw light upon the character of the Marquis, affected his evidence against La Motte. Du Bosse was suffered to proceed.

"D'Aunoy then said that the Marquis had ordered him to dispatch her, but that as he had been used to see her from her infancy, he could not find in his heart to do it, and wrote to tell him so. The Marquis then commanded him to find those who would, and this was the business for which he wanted us. My brother and I were not so wicked as this came to, and so we told d'Aunoy, and I could not help asking why the Marquis resolved to murder his own child rather than expose her mother to the risque of suffering death. He said the Marquis had never seen his child, and that therefore it could not be supposed he felt much kindness towards it, and still less that he could love it better than he loved its mother."

Du Bosse proceded to relate how much he and his brother had endeavoured to soften the heart of d'Aunoy towards the Marquis's daughter, and that they prevailed with him to write again and plead for her. D'Aunoy went to Paris to await the answer, leaving them and the young girl at the house on the heath, where the former had consented to remain, seemingly for the purpose of executing the orders they might receive, but really with a design to save the unhappy victim from the sacrifice.

It is probable that Du Bosse, in this instance, gave a false account of his motive, since if he was really guilty of an intention so atrocious as that of murder, he would naturally endeavour to conceal it. However this might be, he affirmed that on the night of the twenty-sixth of April, he received an order from d'Aunoy for the destruction of the girl whom he had afterwards delivered into the hands of La Motte.

La Motte listened to this relation in astonishment; when he knew that Adeline was the daughter of the Marquis, and remembered the crime to which he had once devoted her, his frame thrilled with horror. He now took up the story, and added an account of what had passed at the Abbey between the Marquis and himself concerning a design of the former upon the life of Adeline; and urged, as a proof of the present prosecution originating in malice, that it had commenced immediately after he had effected her escape from the Marquis. He concluded, however, with saying, that as the Marquis had immediately sent his people in pursuit of her, it was possible she might yet have fallen a victim to his vengeance.

Here the Marquis's council again interfered, and their objections were again overruled by the court. The uncommon degree of emotion which his countenance betrayed during the narrations of Du Bosse, and De la Motte, was generally observed. The court suspended the sentence of the latter, ordered that the Marquis should be put under immediate arrest, and that Adeline the (name given by her foster mother), and Jean d'Aunoy should be sought for.

The Marquis was accordingly seized at the suit of the crown, and put under confinement till Adeline should appear, or proof could be obtained that she died by his order, and till d'Aunoy should confirm or destroy the evidence of De la Motte.

Madame, who at length obtained intelligence of her son's residence from the town where he was formerly stationed, had acquainted him with his father's situation, and the proceedings of the trial; and as she believed that Adeline, if she had been so fortunate as to escape the Marquis's pursuit, was still in Savoy, she desired Louis would obtain leave of absence, and bring her to Paris, where her immediate presence was requisite to substantiate the evidence, and probably to save the life of La Motte.

On the receipt of her letter, which happened on the morning appointed for the execution of Theodore, Louis went immediately to the commanding officer to petition for a respite till the king’s further pleasure should be known. He founded his plea on the arrest of the Marquis, and shewed the letter he had just received. The commanding officer readily granted a reprieve, and Louis, who, on the arrival of this letter, had forborne to communicate its contents to Theodore, left it should torture him with false hope, now hastened to him with this comfortable news.

CHAPTER 2 3

“Low on his fun’ral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.”
Gray.

On learning the purpose of Madame de la Motte’s letter, Adeline saw the necessity of her immediate departure for Paris. The life of La Motte, who had more than saved her’s, the life, perhaps, of her beloved Theodore, depended on the testimony she should give. And she who had so lately been sinking under the influence of illness and despair, who could scarcely raise her languid head, or speak but in the faintest accents, now reanimated with hope, and invigorated by a sense of the importance of the business before her, prepared to perform a rapid journey of some hundred miles.

Theodore tenderly intreated that she would so far consider her health as to delay this journey for a few days; but with a smile of enchanting tenderness she assured him, that she was now too happy to be ill, and that the same cause which would confirm her happiness would confirm her health. So strong was the effect of hope upon her mind now, that it succeeded to the misery of despair, that it overcame the shock she suffered on believing herself a daughter of the Marquis, and every other painful reflection. She did not even foresee the obstacle that circumstance might produce to her union with Theodore, should he at last be permitted to live.

It was settled that she should set off for Paris in a few hours with Louis, and attended by Peter. These hours were passed by La Luc and his family in the prison.

When the time of her departure arrived the spirits of Adeline again forsook her, and the illusions of joy disappeared. She no longer beheld Theodore as one respited from death, but took leave of him with a mournful presentiment that she should see him no more. So strongly was this presage impressed upon her mind, that it was long before she could summons resolution to bid him farewel; and when she had done so, and even left the apartment, she returned to take of him a last look. As she was once more quitting the room, her melancholy imagination represented Theodore at the place of execution, pale and convulsed in death; she again

turned her lingering eyes upon him; but fancy affected her sense, for she thought as she now gazed that his countenance changed, and assumed a ghastly hue. All her resolution vanished, and such was the anguish of her heart, that she resolved to defer her journey till the morrow, though she must by this means lose the protection of Louis, whose impatience to meet his father would not suffer the delay. The triumph of passion, however, was transient; soothed by the indulgence she promised herself, her grief subsided, reason resumed its influence; she again saw the necessity of her immediate departure, and recollected sufficient resolution to submit. La Luc would have accompanied her for the purpose of again soliciting the King in behalf of his son, had not the extreme weakness and lassitude to which he was reduced made travelling impracticable.

At length, Adeline, with a heavy heart, quitted Theodore, notwithstanding his entreaties, that she would not undertake the journey in her present weak state, and was accompanied by Clara and La Luc to the inn. The former parted from her friend with many tears, and much anxiety for her welfare, but under a hope of soon meeting again. Should a pardon be granted to Theodore La Luc designed to fetch Adeline from Paris; but should this be refused, she was to return with Peter. He bade her adieu with a father’s kindness, which she repaid with a filial affection, and in her last words conjured him to attend to the recovery of his health: the languid smile he assumed seemed to express that her solicitude was vain, and that he thought his health past recovery.

Thus Adeline quitted the friends so justly dear to her, and so lately found, for Paris, where she was a stranger, almost without protection, and compelled to meet a father, who had pursued her with the utmost cruelty, in a public court of justice. The carriage in leaving Vaceau passed by the prison; she threw an eager look towards it as she passed; its heavy black walls, and narrow-grated windows, seemed to frown upon her hopes — but Theodore was there, and leaning from the window, she continued to gaze upon it till an abrupt turning in the street concealed it from her view. She then sunk back in the carriage, and yielding to the melancholy of her heart, wept in silence. Louis was not disposed to interrupt it; his thoughts were anxiously employed on his father’s situation, and the travellers proceeded many miles without exchanging a word.

At Paris, whither we shall now return, the search after Jean d'Aunoy was prosecuted without success. The house on the heath, described by du Bosse, was found uninhabited, and to the places of his usual resort in the city, where the officers of the police awaited him, he no longer came. It even appeared doubtful whether he was living, for he had absented himself from the houses of his customary rendezvous some time before the trial of La Motte; it was therefore certain that his absence was not occasioned by any thing which had passed in the courts.

In the solitude of his confinement the Marquis de Montalt had leisure to reflect on the past, and to repent of his crimes; but reflection and repentance formed as yet no part of his disposition. He turned with impatience from recollections which produced only pain, and looked forward to the future with an endeavour to avert the disgrace and punishment which he saw impending. The elegance of his manners had so effectually veiled the depravity of his heart, that he was a favourite with his Sovereign; and on this circumstance he rested his hope of security. He, however, severely repented that he had indulged the hasty spirit of revenge which had urged him to the prosecution of La Motte, and had thus unexpectedly involved him in a situation dangerous — if not fatal — since if Adeline could not be found he would be concluded guilty of her death. But the appearance of d'Aunoy was the circumstance he most dreaded; and to oppose the possibility of this, he employed secret emissaries to discover his retreat, and to bribe him to his interest. These were, however, as unsuccessful in their research as the officers of police, and the Marquis at length began to hope the man was really dead.

La Motte mean while awaited with trembling impatience the arrival of his son, when he should be relieved, in some degree, from his uncertainty concerning Adeline. On his appearance he rested his only hope of life, since the evidence against him would lose much of its validity from the confirmation she would give of the bad character of his prosecutor; and if the Parliament even condemned La Motte, the clemency of the King might yet operate in his favour.

Adeline arrived at Paris after a journey of several days, during which she was chiefly supported by the delicate attentions of Louis, whom she pitied and esteemed, though she could not love. She was immediately visited at the hotel by Madame La Motte: the meeting was affecting on

both sides. A sense of her past conduct excited in the latter an embarrassment which the delicacy and goodness of Adeline would willingly have spared her; but the pardon solicited was given with so much sincerity, that Madame gradually became composed and reassured. This forgiveness, however, could not have been thus easily granted, had Adeline believed her former conduct was voluntary; a conviction of the restraint and terror under which Madame had acted, alone induced her to excuse the past. In this first meeting they forbore dwelling on particular subjects; Madame La Motte proposed that Adeline should remove from the hotel to her lodgings near the Chatelet, and Adeline, for whom a residence at a public hotel was very improper, gladly accepted the offer.

Madame there gave her a circumstantial account of La Motte's situation, and concluded with saying, that as the sentence of her husband had been suspended till some certainty could be obtained concerning the late criminal designs of the Marquis, and as Adeline could confirm the chief part of La Motte's testimony, it was probable that now she was arrived the Court would proceed immediately. She now learnt the full extent of her obligation to La Motte; for she was till now ignorant that when he sent her from the forest he saved her from death. Her horror of the Marquis, whom she could not bear to consider as her father, and her gratitude to her deliverer, redoubled, and she became impatient to give the testimony so necessary to the hopes of her preserver. Madame then said, she believed it was not too late to gain admittance that night to the Chatelet; and as she knew how anxiously her husband wished to see Adeline, she entreated her consent to go thither. Adeline, though much harassed and fatigued, complied. When Louis returned from M. Nemour's, his father's advocate, whom he had hastened to inform of her arrival, they all set out for the Chatelet. The view of the prison into which they were now admitted so forcibly recalled to Adeline's mind the situation of Theodore, that she with difficulty supported herself to the apartment of La Motte. When he saw her a gleam of joy passed over his countenance; but again relapsing into despondency, he looked mournfully at her, and then at Louis, and groaned deeply. Adeline, in whom all remembrance of his former cruelty was lost in his subsequent kindness, expressed her thankfulness for the life he had preserved, and her anxiety to serve him, in warm and repeated terms. But her gratitude evidently distressed him;

instead of reconciling him to himself, it seemed to awaken a remembrance of the guilty designs he had once assisted, and to strike the pangs of conscience deeper in his heart. Endeavouring to conceal his emotions, he entered on the subject of his present danger, and informed Adeline what testimony would be required of her on the trial. After above an hour's conversation with La Motte, she returned to the lodgings of Madame, where, languid and ill, she withdrew to her chamber, and tried to obliviate her anxieties in sleep.

The Parliament which conducted the trial re-assembled in a few days after the arrival of Adeline, and the two remaining witnesses of the Marquis, on whom he now rested his cause against, La Motte, appeared. She was led trembling into the Court, where almost the first object that met her eyes was the Marquis de Montalt, whom she now beheld with an emotion entirely new to her, and which was strongly tinctured with horror. When du Bosse saw her he immediately swore to her identity; his testimony was confirmed by her manner; for on perceiving him she grew pale, and a universal tremor seized her. Jean d'Aunoy could no where be sound, and La Motte was thus deprived of an evidence which essentially affected his interest. Adeline, when called upon, gave her little narrative with clearness and precision; and Peter, who had conveyed her from the Abbey, supported the testimony she offered. The evidence produced was sufficient to criminate the Marquis of the intention of murder, in the minds of most people present; but it was not sufficient to affect the testimony of his two last witnesses, who positively swore to the commission of the robbery, and to the person of La Motte, on whom sentence of death was accordingly pronounced. On receiving this sentence the unhappy criminal fainted, and the compassion of the assembly, whose feelings had been unusually interested in the decision, was expressed in a general groan.

Their attention was quickly called to a new object — it was Jean d'Aunoy who now entered the Court. But his evidence, if it could ever, indeed, have been the means of saving La Motte, came too late. He was reconducted to prison; but Adeline, who, extremely shocked by his sentence, was much indisposed, received orders to remain in the Court during the examination of d'Aunoy. This man had been at length found in the prison of a provincial town, where some of his creditors had thrown

him, and from which even the money which the Marquis had remitted to him for the purpose of satisfying the craving importunities of du Bosse, had been insufficient to release him. Meanwhile the revenge of the latter had been roused against the Marquis by an imaginary neglect, and the money which was designed to relieve his necessities was spent by d'Aunoy in riotous luxury.

He was confronted with Adeline and with du Bosse, and ordered to confess all he knew concerning this mysterious affair, or to undergo the torture. D'Aunoy, who was ignorant how far the suspicions concerning the Marquis extended, and who was conscious that his own words might condemn him, remained for some time obstinately silent; but when the question was administered his resolution gave way, and he confessed a crime of which he had not even been suspected.

It appeared, that in the year 1642 d'Aunoy, together with one Jacques Martigny, and Francis Ballicre, had waylaid, and seized, Henry Marquis de Montalt, half brother to Phillipe; and after having robbed him, and bound his servant to a tree, according to the orders they had received, they conveyed him to the Abbey of St. Clair, in the distant forest of Fontangville. Here he was confined for some time till farther directions were received from Phillipe de Montalt, the present Marquis, who was then on his estates in a northern province of France. These orders were for death, and the unfortunate Henry was assassinated in his chamber in the third week of his confinement at the Abbey.

On hearing this Adeline grew faint; she remembered the MS. she had found, together with the extraordinary circumstances that had attended the discovery; every nerve thrilled with horror, and raising her eyes she saw the countenance of the Marquis overspread with the livid paleness of guilt. She endeavoured, however, to arrest her fleeting spirits while the man proceeded in his confession.

When the murder was perpetrated d'Aunoy had returned to his employer, who gave him the reward agreed upon, and in a few months after delivered into his hands the infant daughter of the late Marquis, whom he conveyed to a distant part of the kingdom, where, assuming the name of St. Pierre, he brought her up as his won child, receiving from the present Marquis a considerable annuity for his secresy.

Adeline, no longer able to struggle with the tumult of emotions that now rushed upon her heart, uttered a deep sigh and fainted away. She was carried from the Court, and, when the confusion occasioned by this circumstance subsided, Jean d'Aunoy went on. He related, that on the death of his wife, Adeline was placed in a convent, from whence she was afterwards removed to another, where the Marquis had destined her to receive the vows. That her determined rejection of them had occasioned him to resolve upon her death, and that she had accordingly been removed to the house on the heath. D'Aunoy added, that by the Marquis's order he had misled du Bosse with a false story of her birth. Having after some time discovered that his comrades had deceived him concerning her death, d'Aunoy separated from them in enmity; but they unanimously determined to conceal her escape from the Marquis that they might enjoy the recompence of their supposed crime. Some months subsequent to this period, however, d'Aunoy received a letter from the Marquis, charging him with the truth, and promising him a large reward if he would confess where he had placed Adeline. In consequence of this letter he acknowledged that she had been given into the hands of a stranger; but who he was, or where he lived, was not known.

Upon these depositions Phillipe 'de Montalt was committed to take his trial for the murder of Henry; his brother; d'Aunoy was thrown into a dungeon of the Chatelet, and du Bosse was bound to appear as evidence.

The feelings of the Marquis, who, in a prosecution stimulated by revenge, had thus unexpectedly exposed his crimes to the public eye, and betrayed himself to justice, can only be imagined. The passions which had tempted him to the commission of a crime so horrid as that of murder — and what, if possible, heightened its atrocity, the murder of one connected with him by the ties of blood, and by habits of even infantine association — the passions which had stimulated him to so monstrous a deed were ambition, and the love of pleasure. The first was more immediately gratified by the title of his brother; the latter by the riches which would enable him to indulge his voluptuous inclinations.

The late Marquis de Montalt, the father of Adeline, received from his ancestors a patrimony very inadequate to support the splendour of his rank; but he had married the heiress of an illustrious family, whose fortune amply supplied the deficiency of his own. He had the misfortune to lose

her, for she was amiable and beautiful, soon after the birth of a daughter, and it was then that the present Marquis formed the diabolical design of destroying his brother. The contrast of their characters prevented that cordial regard between them which their near relationship seemed to demand. Henry was benevolent, mild, and contemplative. In his heart reigned the love of virtue; in his manners the strictness of justness was tempered, not weakened, by mercy; his mind was enlarged by science, and adorned by elegant literature. The character of Philipe has been already delineated in his actions; its nicer shades were blended with some shining tints; but these served only to render more striking by contrast the general darkness of the portrait.

He had married a lady, who, by the death of her brother, inherited considerable estates, of which the Abbey of St. Clair, and the villa on the borders of the forest of Fontangville, were the chief. His passion for magnificence and dissipation, however, soon involved him in difficulties, and pointed out to him the conveniency of possessing his brother’s wealth. His brother and his infant daughter only stood between him and his wishes; how he removed the father has been already related; why he did not employ the same means to secure the child, seems somewhat surprizing, unless we admit that a destiny hung over him on this occasion, and that she was suffered to live as an instrument to punish the murderer of her parent. When a retrospect is taken of the vicissitudes and dangers to which she had been exposed from her earliest infancy, it appears as if her preservation was the effect of something more than human policy, and affords a striking instance that Justice, however long delayed, will overtake the guilty.

While the late unhappy Marquis was suffering at the Abbey, his brother, who, to avoid suspicion, remained in the north of France, delayed the execution of his horrid purpose from a timidity natural to a mind not yet inured to enormous guilt. Before he dared to deliver his final orders he waited to know whether the story he contrived to propagate of his brother’s death would veil his crime from suspicion. It succeeded but too well; for the servant, whose life had been spared that he might relate the tale, naturally enough concluded that his Lord had been murdered by Banditti; and the peasant, who a few hours after found the servant wounded, bleeding, and bound to a tree, and knew also that this spot was

infested by robbers, as naturally believed him, and spread the report accordingly.

From this period the Marquis, to whom the Abbey of St. Clair belonged in right of his wife, visited it only twice, and that at distant times, till after an interval of several years he accidentally found La Motte its inhabitant. He resided at Paris, and on his estate in the north, except that once a year he usually passed a month at his delightful villa on the borders of the forest. In the busy scenes of the Court, and in the dissipations of pleasure, he tried to lose the remembrance of his guilt; but there were times when the voice of conscience would be heard, though it was soon again lost in the tumult of the world.

It is probable, that on the night of his abrupt departure from the Abbey, the solitary silence and gloom of the hour, in a place which had been the scene of his former crime, called up the remembrance of his brother with a force too powerful for fancy, and awakened horrors which compelled him to quit the polluted spot. If it was so, it is however certain that the spectres of conscience vanished with the darkness; for on the following day he returned to the Abbey, though it may be observed, he never attempted to pass another night there. But though terror was roused for a transient moment, neither pity or repentance succeeded, since when the discovery of Adeline's birth excited apprehension for his own life, he did not hesitate to repeat the crime, and would again have stained his soul with human blood. This discovery was effected by means of a seal, bearing the arms of her mother's family, which was impressed on the note his servant had found, and had delivered to him at Caux. It may be remembered, that having read this note, he was throwing it from him in the fury of jealousy; but that after examining it again, it was carefully deposited in his pocket-book. The violent agitation which a suspicion of this terrible truth occasioned deprived him for a while of all power to act. When he was well enough to write he dispatched a letter to d'Aunoy. the purport of which has been already mentioned. From d'Aunoy he received the confirmation of his fears. Knowing that his life must pay the forfeiture of his crime, should Adeline ever obtain a knowledge of her birth, and not daring again to confide in the secrecy of a man who had once deceived him, he resolved, after some deliberation, on her death. He immediately set out for the

Abbey, and gave those directions concerning her which terror for his own safety, still more than a desire of retaining her estates, suggested.

As the history of the seal which revealed the birth of Adeline is rather remarkable, it may not be amiss to mention, that it was stolen from the Marquis, together with a gold watch, by Jean d'Aunoy: the watch was soon disposed of, but the seal had been kept as a pretty trinket by his wife, and at her death went with Adeline among her cloths to the convent. Adeline had carefully preserved it, because it had once belonged to the woman whom she believed to have been her mother.

CHAPTER 2 4

“While anxious doubt distracts the tortur’d heart.”

We now return to the course of the narrative, and to Adeline, who was carried from the court to the lodging of Madame De la Motte. Madame was, however, at the Chatalet with her husband, suffering all the distress which the sentence pronounced against him might be supposed to inflict. The feeble frame of Adeline, so long harassed by grief and fatigue, almost sunk under the agitation which the discovery of her birth excited. Her feelings on this occasion were too complex to be analysed. From an orphan, subsisting on the bounty of others, without family, with few friends, and pursued by a cruel and powerful enemy, she saw herself suddenly transformed to the daughter of an illustrious house, and the heiress of immense wealth. But she learned also that her father had been murdered — murdered in the prime of his days — murdered by means of his brother, against whom she must now appear, and in punishing the destroyer of her parent doom her uncle to death.

When she remembered the manuscript so singularly found, and considered that when she wept to the sufferings it described, her tears had flowed for those of her father, her emotion cannot easily be imagined. The circumstances attending the discovery of these papers no longer appeared to be a work of chance, but of a Power whose designs are great and just. “O my father!” she would exclaim, “your last wish is fulfilled — the pitying heart you wished might trace your sufferings shall avenge them.”

On the return of Madame La Motte Adeline endeavoured, as usual, to suppress her own emotions, that she might sooth the affliction of her friend. She related what had passed in the courts after the departure of La Motte, and thus excited, even in the sorrowful heart of Madame, a momentary gleam of satisfaction. Adeline determined to recover, if possible, the manuscript. On inquiry she learned that La Motte, in the confusion of his departure, had left it among other things at the Abbey. This circumstance much distressed her, the more so because she believed its appearance might be of importance on the approaching trial: she

determined, however, if she should recover her rights, to have the manuscript sought for.

In the evening Louis joined this mournful party: he came immediately from his father, whom he left more tranquil than he had been since the fatal sentence was pronounced. After a silent and melancholy supper they separated for the night, and Adeline, in the solitude of her chamber, had leisure to meditate on the discoveries of this eventful day. The sufferings of her dead father, such as she had read them recorded by his own hand, pressed most forcibly to her thoughts. The narrative had formerly so much affected her heart, and interested her imagination, that her memory now faithfully reflected each particular circumstance there disclosed. But when she considered that she had been in the very chamber where her parent had suffered, where even his life had been sacrificed, and that she had probably seen the very dagger, seen it stained with rust, the rust of blood! by which he had fallen, the anguish and horror of her mind defied all control.

On the following day Adeline received orders to prepare for the prosecution of the Marquis de Montalt, which was to commence as soon as the requisite witnesses could be collected. Among these were the Abbess of the Convent, who had received her from the hands of d'Aunoy; Madame La Motte, who was present when Du Bosse compelled her husband to receive Adeline; and Peter, who had not only been witness to this circumstance, but who had conveyed her from the Abbey that she might escape the designs of the Marquis. La Motte, and Theodore La Luc, were incapacitated by the sentence of the law from appearing on the trial.

When La Motte was informed of the discovery of Adeline's birth, and that her father had been murdered at the Abbey of St. Clair, he instantly remembered, and mentioned to his wife, the skeleton he found in the stone room leading to the subterranean cells. Neither of them doubted, from the situation in which it lay, hid in a chest in an obscure room strongly guarded, that La Motte had seen the remains of the late Marquis. Madame, however, determined not to shock Adeline with the mention of this circumstance till it should be necessary to declare it on the trial.

As the time of this trial drew near the distress and agitation of Adeline increased. Though justice demanded the life of the murderer, and though the tenderness and pity which the idea of her father called forth urged her to avenge his death, she could not, without horror, consider herself as the

instrument of dispensing that justice which would deprive a fellow being of existence; and there were times when she wished the secret of her birth had never been revealed. If this sensibility was, in her peculiar circumstances, a weakness, it was at least an amiable one, and as such deserves to be reverenced.

The accounts she received from Vaceau of the health of M. La Luc did not contribute to tranquillize her mind. The symptoms described by Clara seemed to say that he was in the last stage of a consumption, and the grief of Theodore and herself on this occasion was expressed in her letters with the lively eloquence so natural to her. Adeline loved and revered La Luc for his own worth, and for the parental tenderness he had shewed her, but he was still dearer to her as the father of Theodore, and her concern for his declining state was not inferior to that of his children. It was increased by the reflection that she had probably been the means of shortening his life, for she too well knew that the distress occasioned him by the situation in which it had been her misfortune to involve Theodore, had shattered his frame to its present infirmity. The same cause also withheld him from seeking in the climate of Montpellier the relief he had formerly been taught to expect there. When she looked round on the condition of her friends, her heart was almost overwhelmed with the prospect; it seemed as if she was destined to involve all those most dear to her in calamity. With respect to La Motte, whatever were his vices, and whatever the designs in which he had formerly engaged against her, she forgot them all in the service he had finally rendered her, and considered it to be as much her duty, as she felt it to be her inclination, to intercede in his behalf. This, however, in her present situation, she could not do with any hope of success; but if the suit, upon which depended the establishment of her rank, her fortune, and consequently her influence, should be decided in her favour, she determined to throw herself at the king’s feet, and, when she pleaded the cause of Theodore, ask the life of La Motte.

A few days preceding that of the trial Adeline was informed a stranger desired to speak with her, and on going to the room where he was she found M. Vernueil. Her countenance expressed both surprize and satisfaction at this unexpected meeting, and she inquired, though with little expectation of an affirmative, if he had heard of M. La Luc. “I have seen him,” said M. Vernueil; “I am just come from Vaceau. But I am sorry

I cannot give you a better account of his health. He is greatly altered since I saw him before."

Adeline could scarcely refrain from tears at the recollection these words revived of the calamities which had occasiond this lamented change. M. Verneuil delivered her a packet from Clara; as he presented it he said, "Beside this introduction to your notice, I have a claim of a different kind, which I am proud to assert, and which will perhaps justify the permission I ask of speaking upon your affairs." — Adeline bowed, and M. Verneuil, with a countenance expressive of the most tender solicitude, added that he had heard of the late proceeding of the parliament of Paris, and of the discoveries that so intimately concerned her. "I know not," continued he, "whether I ought to congratulate or condole with you on this trying occasion. That I sincerely sympathize in all that concerns you I hope you will believe, and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of telling you that I am related, though distantly, to the late Marchioness, your mother, for that she was your mother I cannot doubt."

Adeline rose hastily and advanced towards M. Verneuil; surprize and satisfaction reanimated her features. "Do I indeed see a relation?" said she in a sweet and tremulous voice, "and one whom I can welcome as a friend?" Tears trembled in her eyes; and she received M. Verneuil's embrace in silence. It was some time before her emotion would permit her to speak.

To Adeline, who from her earliest infancy had been abandoned to strangers, a forlorn and helpless orphan; who had never till lately known a relation, and who then found one in the person of an inveterate enemy, to her this discovery was as delightful as unexpected. But after struggling for some time with the various emotions that pressed upon her heart, she begged M. Verneuil permission to withdraw till she could recover composure. He would have taken leave, but she entreated him not to go.

The interest which M. Verneuil took in the concerns of La Luc, which was strengthened by his increasing regard for Clara, had drawn him to Vaceau, where he was informed of the family and peculiar circumstances of Adeline. On receiving this intelligence he immediately set out for Paris to offer his protection and assistance to his newly-discovered relation, and to aid, if possible, the cause of Theodore.

Adeline in a short time returned, and could then bear to converse on the subject of her family. M. Verneuil offered her his support and assistance, if they should be found necessary. “But I trust,” added he, “to the justness of your cause, and hope it will not require any adventitious aid. To those who remember the late Marchioness, your features bring sufficient evidence of your birth. As a proof that my judgement in this instance is not biassed by prejudice, the resemblance struck me when I was in Savoy, though I knew the Marchioness only by her portrait; and I believe I mentioned to M. La Luc that you often reminded me of a deceased relation. You may form some judgement of this yourself,” added M. Verneuil, taking a miniature from his pocket. “This was your amiable mother.”

Adeline’s countenance changed; she received the picture eagerly, gazed on it for a long time in silence, and her eyes filled with tears. It was not the resemblance she studied, but the countenance — the mild and beautiful countenance of her parent, whose blue eyes, full of tender sweetness, seemed bent upon her’s; while a soft smile played on her lips; Adeline pressed the picture to her’s, and again gazed in silent reverie. At length, with a deep sigh, she said, “This surely was my mother. Had she but lived, O my poor father! you had been spared.” This reflection quite overcame her, and she burst into tears. M. Verneuil did not interrupt her grief but took her hand and sat by her without speaking till she became more composed. Again kissing the picture, she held it out to him with a hesitating look. “No,” said he, “it is already with its true owner.” She thanked him with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and after some conversation on the subject of the approaching trial, on which occasion she requested M. Verneuil would support her by his presence, he withdrew, having begged leave to repeat his visit on the following day.

Adeline now opened her packet, and saw once more the wellknow characters of Theodore; for a moment she felt as if in his presence, and the conscious blush overspread her cheek; with a trembling hand she broke the seal, and read the tenderest assurances and solicitudes of his love; she often paused that she might prolong the sweet emotions which these assurances awakened, but while tears of tenderness stood trembling on her eyelids, the bitter recollection of his situation would return, and they fell in anguish on her bosom.

He congratulated her, and with peculiar delicacy, on the prospects of life which were opening to her; said every thing that might tend to animate and support her, but avoid dwelling on his own circumstances, except by expressing his sense of the zeal and kindness of his commanding officer, and adding, that he did not despair of finally obtaining a pardon.

This hope, though but faintly expressed, and written evidently for the purpose of consoling Adeline, did not entirely fail of the desired effect. She yielded to its enchanting influence, and forgot for a while the many subjects of care and anxiety which surrounded her. Theodore said little of his father’s health; what he did say was by no means so discouraging as the accounts of Clara, who, less anxious to conceal a truth that must give pain to Adeline, expressed, without reserve, all her apprehension and concern.

CHAPTER 2 5

— “Heaven is just!
And, when the measure of his crimes is full,
Will bare its red right arm, and launch its
lightnings.”
Mason.

The day of the trial so anxiously awaited, and on which the fate of so many persons depended, at length arrived. Adeline, accompanied by M. Verneuil and Madame la Motte, appeared as the prosecutor of the Marquis de Montalt; and d’Aunoy, du Bosse, Louis de la Motte, and several other persons, as witness in her cause. The judges were some of the most distinguished in France; and the advocates on both sides men of eminent abilities. On a trial of such importance the court, as may be imagined, was crowded with persons of distinction, and the spectacle it presented was strikingly solemn, yet magnificient.

When she appeared before the tribunal, Adeline’s emotion surpassed all the arts of disguise, but adding to the natural dignity of her air an expression of soft timidity, and to her downcast eyes a sweet confusion, it rendered her an object still more interesting; and she attracted the universal pity and admiration of the assembly. When she ventured to raise her eyes, she perceived that the Marquis was not yet in the court, and while she awaited his appearance in trembling expectation, a confused murmuring rose in a distant part of the hall. Her spirits now almost forsook her; the certainty of seeing immediately, and consciously, the murderer of her father chilled her with horror, and she was with difficulty preserved from fainting. A low sound now run through the court, and an air of confusion appeared, which was soon communicated to the tribunal itself. Several of the members arose, some left the hall, the whole place exhibited a scene of disorder, and a report at length reached Adeline that the Marquis de Montalt was dying. A considerable time elapsed in uncertainty; but the confusion continued; the Marquis did not appear; and at Adeline’s request M. Verneuil went in quest of more positive information.

He followed a crowd which was hurrying towards the Chatalet, and with some difficulty gained admittance into the prison; but the porter at the gate, whom he had bribed for a passport, could give him no certain information on the subject of his enquiry, and not being at liberty to quit his post, furnished M. Verneuil with only a vague direction to the Marquis's apartment. The courts were silent and deserted, but as he advanced a distant hum of voices led him on, still perceiving several persons running towards a staircase which appeared beyond the archway of a long passage, he followed thither, and learned that the Marquis was certainly dying. The staircase was filled with people; he endeavoured to press through the crowd, and after much struggle and difficulty he reached the door of an anti room which communicated with the apartment where the Marquis lay, and whence several persons now issued. Here he learned that the object of his enquiry was already dead. M. Verneuil, however, pressed through the anti-room to the chamber where lay the Marquis on a bed surrounded by officers of the law, and two notaries, who appeared to have been taking down depositions. His countenance was suffused with a black, and deadly hue, and impressed with the horrors of death; M. Verneuil turned away, shocked by the spectacle, and on enquiry heard that the Marquis had died by poison.

It appeared that convinced he had nothing to hope from his trial, he had taken this method of avoiding an ignominious death. In the last hours of life, while tortured with the remembrance of his crime, he resolved to make all the atonement that remained for him, and having swallowed the potion, he immediately sent for a confessor to take a full confession of his guilt, and two notaries, and thus established Adeline beyond dispute in the rights of her birth; and also bequeathed her a considerable legacy.

In consequence of these depositions she was soon after formally acknowledged as the daughter and heiress of Henry Marquis de Montalt, and the rich estates of her father were restored to her. She immediately threw herself at the feet of the king in behalf of Theodore and of La Motte. The character of the former, the cause in which he had risked his life, and the occasion of the late Marquis's enmity towards him, were circumstances so notorious, and so forcible, that it is more than probable the monarch would have granted his pardon to a pleader less irresistible than was Adeline de Montalt. Theodore La Luc not only received an ample

pardon, but in consideration of his gallant conduct towards Adeline, he was soon after raised to a post of considerable rank in the army.

For La Motte, who had been condemned for the robbery on full evidence, and who had been also charged with the crime which had formerly compelled him to quit Paris, a pardon could not be obtained; but at the earnest supplication of Adeline, and in consideration of the service he had finally rendered her, his sentence was softened from death to banishment. This indulgence, however, would have availed him little, had not the noble generosity of Adeline silenced other prosecutions that were preparing against him, and bestowed on him a sum more than sufficient to support his family in a foreign country. This kindness operated so powerfully upon his heart, which had been betrayed through weakness rather than natural depravity, and awakened so keen a remorse for the injuries he had once meditated against a benefactress so noble, that his former habits became odious to him, and his character gradually recovered the hue which it would probably always have worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris.

The passion which Louis had so long owned for Adeline was raised almost to adoration by her late conduct; but he now relinquished even the faint hope which he had hitherto almost unconsciously cherished, and, since the life which was granted to Theodore rendered this sacrifice necessary, he could not repine. He resolved, however, to seek in absence the tranquillity he had lost, and to place his future happiness on that of two persons so deservedly dear to him.

On the eve of his departure La Motte and his family took a very affecting leave of Adeline; he left Paris for England, where it was his design to settle; and Louis, who was eager to fly from her enchantments, set out on the same day for his regiment.

Adeline remained some time at Paris to settle her affairs, where she was introduced by M. V — to the few and distant relations that remained of her family. Among these were the Count and Countess D — , and the Mon. Amand, who had so much engaged her pity and esteem at Nice. The lady, whose death he lamented, was of the family of de Montalt; and the resemblance which he had traced between her features and those of Adeline, her cousin, was something more than the effect of fancy. The death of his elder brother had abruptly recalled him from Italy; but

Adeline had the satisfaction to observe, that the heavy melancholy which formerly oppressed him, had yielded to a sort of placid resignation, and that his countenance was often enlivened by a transient gleam of cheerfulness.

The Count and Countess D — , who were much interested by her goodness and beauty, invited her to make their hotel her residence while she remained at Paris.

Her first care was to have the remains of her parent removed from the Abbey of St. Clair, and deposited in the vault of his ancestors. D'Aunoy was tried, condemned, and hanged, for the murder. At the place of execution he had described the spot where the remains of the Marquis were concealed, which was in the stone room already mentioned, belonging to the Abbey. M. V — accompanied the officers appointed for the search, and attended the ashes of the Marquis to St. Maur, an estate in one of the northern provinces. There they were deposited with the solemn funeral pomp becoming his rank: Adeline attended as chief mourner; and this last duty paid to the memory of her parent, she became more tranquil and resigned. The MS. that recorded his sufferings had been found at the Abbey, and delivered to her by M. V — , and she preserved it with the pious enthusiasm so sacred a relique deserved.

On her return to Paris, Theodore La Luc, who was come from Montpelier, awaited her arrival. The happiness of this meeting was clouded by the account he brought of his father, whose extreme danger had alone withheld him from hastening the moment he obtained his liberty to thank Adeline for the life she had preserved. She now received him as the friend to whom she was indebted for her preservation, and as the lover who deserved, and possessed, her tenderest affection. The remembrance of the circumstances under which they had last met, and of their mutual anguish, rendered more exquisite the happiness of the present moments, when no longer oppressed by the horrid prospect of ignominious death and final separation, they looked forward only to the smiling days that awaited them when hand in hand they should tread the flowery scenes of life. The contrast which memory drew of the past with the present, frequently drew tears of tenderness and gratitude to their eyes, and the sweet smile which seemed struggling to dispel from the countenance of Adeline those gems of sorrow, penetrated the heart of Theodore, and brought to his recollection

a little song which in other circumstances he had formerly sung to her. He took up a lute that lay on the table, and touching the dulcet chords, accompanied it with the following words:

SONG.

The rose that weeps with morning dew,
And glitters in the sunny ray,
In tears and smiles resembles you,
When Love breaks Sorrow’s cloud away.
The dews that bend the blushing flow’r,
Enrich the scent — renew the glow;
So Love’s sweet tears exalt his pow’r,
So bliss more brightly shines by woe!

Her affection for Theodore had induced Adeline to reject several suitors which her goodness, beauty, and wealth, had already attracted, and whom, though infinitely his superiors in point of fortune, were many of them inferior to him in family, and all of them in merit.

The various and tumultuous emotions which the late events had called forth in the bosom of Adeline were now subsided; but the memory of her father still tinctured her mind with a melancholy that time only could subdue; and she refused to listen to the supplications of Theodore till the period she had prescribed for her mourning should be expired. The necessity of rejoining his regiment obliged him to leave Paris within the fortnight after his arrival; but he carried with him assurance of receiving her hand soon after she should lay aside her sable habit, and departed therefore with tolerable composure.

M. La Luc’s very precarious state was a source of incessant disquietude to Adeline, and she determined to accompany M. V — , who was now the declared lover of Clara, to Montpelier, whither La Luc had immediately gone on the liberation of his son. For this journey she was preparing when she received from her friend a flattering account of his amendment; and as some farther settlement of her affairs required her presence at Paris, she deferred her design, and M. V — departed alone.

When Theodore’s affairs assumed a more favourable aspect, M. Verneuil had written to La Luc, and communicated to him the secret of his heart respecting Clara. La Luc, who admired and esteemed M. V — , and who was not ignorant of his family connections, was pleased with the proposed alliance; Clara thought she had never seen any person whom she was so much inclined to love; and M. V — received an answer favourable to his wishes, and which encouraged him to undertake the present journey to Montpelier.

The restoration of his happiness and the climate of Montpelier did all for the health of La Luc that his most anxious friends could wish, and he was at length so far recovered as to visit Adeline at her estate of St. Maur. Clara and M. V — accompanied him, and a cessation of hostilities between France and Spain soon after permitted Theodore to join this happy party. When La Luc, thus restored to those most dear to him, looked back on the miseries he had escaped, and forward to the blessings that awaited him, his heart dilated with emotions of exquisite joy and gratitude; and his venerable countenance, softened by an expression of complacent delight, exhibited a perfect picture of happy age.

CHAPTER 2 6

“Last came Joy’s ecstatic trial:
They would have thought who heard the strain,
They saw in Tempe’s vale her native maids
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unweary’d minstrel dancing,
While as his flying fingers kiss’d the strings,
Love fram’d with Mirth a gay fantastic round.”

Ode to the Passions.

Adeline, in the society of friends so beloved, lost the impression of that melancholy which the fate of her parent had occasioned; she recovered all her natural vivacity; and when she threw off the mourning habit which filial piety had required her to assume, she gave her hand to Theodore. The nuptials, which were celebrated at St. Maur, were graced by the presence of the Count and Countess D — , and La Luc had the supreme felicity of confirming on the same day the flattering destinies of both his children. When the ceremony was over he blessed and embraced them all with tears of fatherly affection. “I thank thee, O God! that I have been permitted to see this hour;” said he, “whenever it shall please thee to call me hence, I shall depart in peace.”

“Long, very long, may you be spared to bless your children,” replied Adeline. Clara kissed her father’s hand and wept: “Long, very long,” she repeated in a voice scarcely audible. La Luc smiled cheerfully, and turned the conversation to a subject less affecting.

But the time now drew nigh when La Luc thought it necessary to return to the duties of his parish, from which he had so long been absent. Madame La Luc too, who had attended him during the period of his danger at Montpelier, and hence returned to Savoy, complained much of the solitude of her life; and this was with her brother an additional motive for his speedy departure. Theodore and Adeline, who could not support the thought of a separation, endeavoured to persuade him to give up his chateau, and to reside with them in France; but he was held by many ties to Leloncourt. For many years he had constituted the comfort and happiness of his parishioners; they revered and loved him as a father — he regarded them with an affection little short of parental. The attachment

they discovered towards him on his departure was not forgotten either; it had made a deep impression on his mind, and he could not bear the thought of forsaking them now that Heaven had showered on him its abundance. “It is sweet to live for them,” said he, “and I will also die amongst them.” A sentiment also of a more tender nature, — (and let not the stoic prophane it with the name of weakness, or the man of the world scorn it as unnatural) — a sentiment still more tender attracted him to Leloncourt, — the remains of his wife reposed there.

Since La Luc would not reside in France, Theodore and Adeline, to whom the splendid gaieties that courted them at Paris were very inferior temptations to the sweet domestic pleasures and refined society which Leloncourt would afford, determined to accompany La Luc and Mon. and Madame Verneuil abroad. Adeline arranged her affairs so as to render her residence in France unnecessary; and having bade an affectionate adieu to the Count and Countess D — , and to M. Amand, who had recovered a tolerable degree of cheerfulness, she departed with her friends for Savoy.

They travelled leisurely, and frequently turned out of their way to view whatever was worthy of observation. After a long and pleasant journey they came once more within view of the Swiss mountains, the sight of which revived a thousand interesting recollections in the mind of Adeline. She remembered the circumstances and the sensations under which she had first seen them — when an orphan, flying from persecution to seek shelter among strangers, and lost to the only person on earth whom she loved — she remembered this, and the contrast of the present moment struck with all its force upon her heart.

The countenance of Clara brightened into smiles of the most animated delight as she drew near the beloved scenes of her infant pleasures; and Theodore, often looking from the windows, caught with patriotic enthusiasm the magnificent and changing scenery which the receding mountains successively disclosed.

It was evening when they approached within a few miles of Leloncourt, and the road winding round the foot of a stupendous cragg, presented them a full view of the lake, and of the peaceful dwelling of La Luc. An exclamation of joy from the whole party announced the discovery, and the glance of pleasure was reflected from every eye. The sun’s last light gleamed upon the waters that reposed in “chrystal purity” below, melowed

every feature of the landscape, and touched with purple splendour the clouds that rolled along the mountain tops.

La Luc welcomed his family to his happy home, and sent up a silent thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to return to it. Adeline continued to gaze upon each wellknown object, and again reflecting on the vicissitudes of grief and joy, and the surprising change of fortune which she had experienced since last she saw them, her heart dilated with gratitude and complacent delight. She looked at Theodore, whom in these very scenes she had lamented as lost to her for ever; who, when found again, was about to be torn from her by an ignominious death, but who now sat by her side her secure and happy husband, the pride of his family and herself; and while the sensibility of her heart flowed in tears from her eyes, a smile of ineffable tenderness told him all she felt. He gently pressed her hand, and answered her with a look of love.

Peter, who now rode up to the carriage with a face full of joy and of importance, interrupted a course of sentiment which was become almost too interesting. “Ah! my dear master!” cried he, “welcome home again. Here is the village, God bless it! It is worth a million such places as Paris. Thank St. Jacques, we are all come safe back again!”

This effusion of honest Peter’s joy was received and answered with the kindness it deserved. As they drew near the lake music sounded over the water, and they presently saw a large party of the villagers assembled on a green spot that sloped to the very margin of the waves, and dancing in all their holiday finery. It was the evening of a festival. The elder peasants sat under the shade of the trees that crowned this little eminence, eating milk and fruits, and watching their sons and daughters frisk it away to the sprightly notes of the tabor and pipe, which was joined by the softer tones of a mandolin.

The scene was highly interesting, and what added to its picturesque beauty was a groupe of cattle that stood, some on the brink, some half in the water, and others reposing on the green bank, while several peasant girls, dressed in the neat simplicity of their country, were dispensing the milky feast. Peter now rode on first, and a crowd soon collected round him, who learning that their beloved master was at hand, went forth to meet and welcome him. Their warm and honest expressions of joy diffused an exquisite satisfaction over the heart of the good La Luc, who met them

with the kindness of a father, and who could scarcely forbear shedding tears to this testimony of their attachment. When the younger part of the peasants heard the news of his arrival, the general joy was such, that, led by the tabor and pipe, they danced before his carriage to the chateau, where they again welcomed him and his family with the enlivening strains of music. At the gate of the chateau they were received by Madame La Luc, and a happier party never met.

As the evening was uncommonly mild and beautiful, supper was spead in the garden. When the repast was over, Clara, whose heart was all glee, proposed a dance by moonlight. “It will be delicious,” said she; “the moonbeams are already dancing on the waters. See what a stream of radiance they throw across the lake, and how they sparkle round that little promontory on the left. The freshness of the hour too invites to dancing.”

They all agreed to the proposal.— “And let the good people who have so heartily welcomed us home be called in too,” said La Luc: “they shall all partake our happiness. There is devotion in making others happy, and gratitude ought to make us devout. Peter, bring more wine, and set some tables under the trees.” Peter flew, and, while chairs and tables were placing, Clara ran for her favourite lute, the lute which had formerly afforded her such delight, and which Adeline had often touched with a melancholy expression. Clara’s light hand now ran over the chords, and drew forth tones of tender sweetness, her voice accompanying the following

AIR.

Now at Moonlight’s fairy hour,
When faintly gleams each dewy steep,
And vale and mountain, lake and bow’r,
In solitary grandeur sleep;
When slowly sinks the evening breeze,
That lulls the mind in pensive care,
And Fancy loftier visions sees,
Bid Music wake the silent air.
Bid the merry, merry tabor sound,
And with the Fays of lawn or glade,

In tripping circlet beat the ground
Under the high trees' trembling shade.
"Now at Moonlight's fairy hour"
Shall Music breathe her dulcet voice,
And o'er the waves, with magic pow'r,
Call on Echo to rejoice!

Peter, who could not move in a sober step, had already spread refreshments under the trees, and in a short time the lawn was encircled with peasantry. The rural pipe and tabor were placed, at Clara's request, under the shade of her beloved acacias on the margin of the lake; the merry notes of music sounded, Adeline led off the dance, and the mountains answered only to the strains of mirth and melody.

The venerable La Luc, as he sat among the elder peasants, surveyed the scene — his children and people thus assembled round him in one grand compact of harmony and joy — the frequent tear bedewed his cheek, and he seemed to taste the fulness of an exalted delight.

So much was every heart roused to gladness, that the morning dawn began to peep upon the scene of their festivity, when every cottager returned to his home blessing the benevolence of La Luc.

After passing some weeks with La Luc, M. Verneuil bought a chateau in the village of Leloncourt, and as it was the only one not already occupied, Theodore looked out for a residence in the neighbourhood. At the distance of a few leagues, on the beautiful banks of the lake of Geneva, where the waters retire into a small bay, he purchased a villa. The chateau was characterized by an air of simplicity and taste, rather than of magnificence, which however was the chief trait in the surrounding scene. The chateau was almost encircled with woods, which forming a grand amphitheatre swept down to the water's edge, and abounded with wild and romantic walks. Here nature was suffered to sport in all her beautiful luxuriance, except where here, and there, the hand of art formed the foliage to admit a view of the blue waters of the lake, with the white sail that glided by, or of the distant mountains. In front of the chateau the woods opened to a lawn, and the eye was suffered to wander over the lake, whose bosom presented an evermoving picture, while its varied margin

sprinkled with villas, woods, and towns, and crowned beyond with the snowy and sublime alps, rising point behind point in aweful confusion, exhibited a scenery of almost unequalled magnificence.

Here, contemning the splendour of false happiness, and possessing the pure and rational delights of a love refined into the most tender friendship, surrounded by the friends so dear to them, and visited by a select and enlightened society — here, in the very bosom of felicity, lived Theodore and Adeline La Luc.

The passion of Louis De la Motte yielded at length to the powers of absence and necessity. He still loved Adeline, but it was with the placid tenderness of friendship, and when, at the earnest invitation of Theodore, he visited the villa, he beheld their happiness with a satisfaction unalloyed by any emotions of envy. He afterwards married a lady of some fortune at Geneva, and resigning his commission in the French service, settled on the borders of the lake, and increased the social delights of Theodore and Adeline.

Their former lives afforded an example of trials well endured — and their present, of virtues greatly rewarded; and this reward they continued to deserve — for not to themselves was their happiness contracted, but diffused to all who came within the sphere of their influence. The indigent and unhappy rejoiced in their benevolence, the virtuous and enlightened in their friendship, and their children in parents whose example impressed upon their hearts the precepts offered to their understandings.

THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLP HO

The Mysteries of Udolpho was originally published in four volumes on May 8th 1794 by G. G and J. Robinson of London. It was Radcliffe's fourth novel and remains her most popular today, gaining additional attention due to Jane Austen satirising the work in her successful novel *Northanger Abbey* . In *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* Radcliffe exploits the realm of terror while avoiding the horror genre and anything that would be deemed too explicit. The troubling episodes and incidents in the novel are created by the heroine's inability to express what she is viewing and the physical reaction she has to situations. It is the unsaid, the unexplained, the half-seen, which works as psychological terror in large sections of the work. The novel is set in 16th century France and Italy and the narrative centres on a motherless and soon orphaned girl Emily, who is separated from her desired suitor and forced into the care of an unloving aunt and a villainous step uncle. There are attempts to force her into a marriage, to steal her rightful property and remove her from the supposed protection of society.

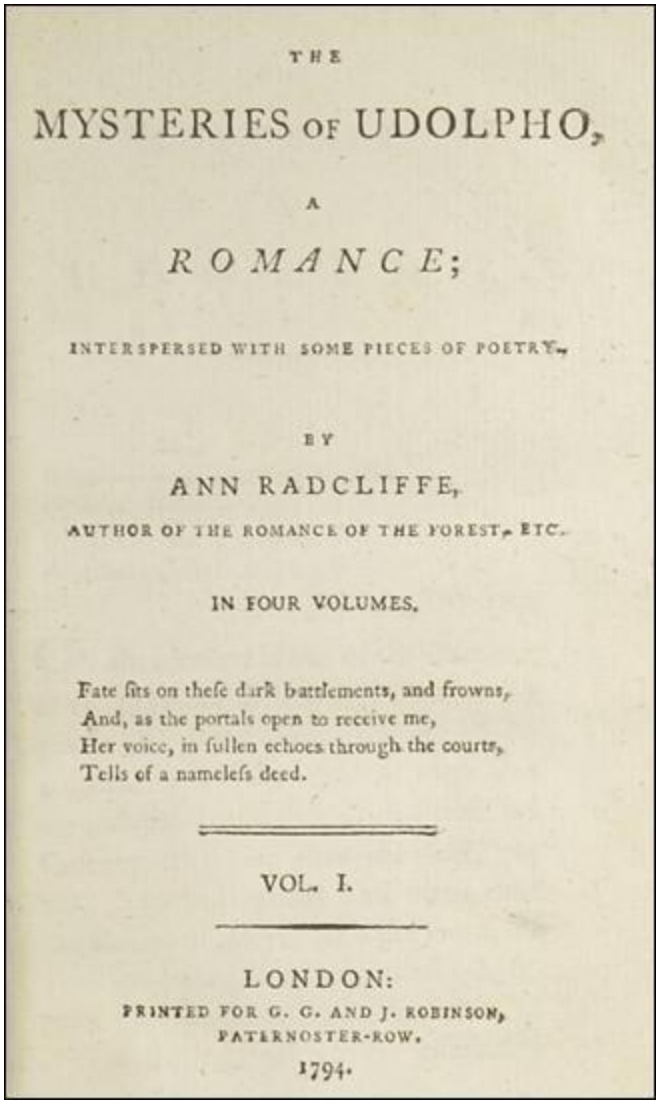
Emily St. Aubert is a quintessential Gothic heroine, endowed with great sensibility shown by her love of the arts, her fainting fits and penchant for crying. She, like most of Radcliffe's heroines, feels too much and is forced to undergo a series of frightening and potentially fatal situations, which attempt to teach her a balance between sentiment and reason. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* does not allow the supernatural to remain so; it provides rational explanations for these events and therefore reason is asserted by the conclusion of the novel. Emily's beloved is a highly sensitive and emotional young man that is greatly moved by the beauty of nature and Radcliffe portrays him so distraught at his separation from Emily that he becomes corrupted by city life; he too must learn to temper his sensibility with reason.

During the time of Radcliffe's writing the cult of sensibility and the idea of emphasis on feeling over reason assumed an important political dimension. The French Revolution was unfolding and there was fright and panic amongst the upper-classes of revolutionary ideas spreading to England and resulting in a violent overthrow of the established order. The idea of excessive sensibility was linked to political notions associated with

the French Revolution; the focus on individuality and emotional volatility was seen as anti-rationalist and subversive, which English conservatives feared would encourage a bloody upheaval on their shores. Emily is educated through the novel to tame her unrestrained sensibility and learn the importance of elevating reason over her passions, but never to detach her emotions from her life — a lesson in moderation.

Jane Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey* at the end of the eighteenth century, shortly after the success of *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* during a sustained period of success for Gothic romance novels. As a form of writing the novel was associated with a female readership and considered artistically and culturally inferior to poetry, philosophy and history which were all deemed to be masculine subjects. Austen sought to defend the value of the novel from critics, while also attacking aspects of the genre or writers she thought were intellectually feeble. The lack of reason often exhibited by the heroines of gothic fiction and their excessive sensibility is satirised by Austen in her main character, Catherine Moreland, who possesses none of the talents traditionally associated with the heroines of the genre. Catherine is reading *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the fanciful nature of it causes her to imagine that there are dreadful secrets hidden at *Northanger Abbey* where she is staying. Austen juxtaposes the flight of imagination typical in Radcliffe's book with the uninteresting, mundane reality of everyday life when Catherine discovers what she believes to be a manuscript full of secrets, locked away in chest, only to read it and realise that it is a laundry list. The fact that Austen chose *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as the Gothic text to satirise identifies the novel's popularity and influence during that period and it has remained a pillar of the genre since its first publication.

The first edition was published in four volumes.



THE

MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO,

A

ROMANCE;

INTERSPERSED WITH SOME PIECES OF POETRY.

BY

ANN RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE ROMANCE OF THE FOREST, ETC.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Fate sits on these dark battlements, and frowns,
And, as the portals open to receive me,
Her voice, in sullen echoes through the courts,
Tells of a nameless deed.

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Jane Austen, one of the many authors that have been inspired by Radcliffe's famous novel

Gothic convention – sensitive heroine overcome by the fear of the supernatural

VOLUME 1

CHAPTER I

home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polish’d friends
And dear relations mingle into bliss.
Thomson

On the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the chateau of Monsieur St. Aubert. From its windows were seen the pastoral landscapes of Guienne and Gascony stretching along the river, gay with luxuriant woods and vine, and plantations of olives. To the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenees, whose summits, veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms, seen, and lost again, as the partial vapours rolled along, were sometimes barren, and gleamed through the blue tinge of air, and sometimes frowned with forests of gloomy pine, that swept downward to their base. These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts; among whose flocks, and herds, and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose. To the north, and to the east, the plains of Guienne and Languedoc were lost in the mist of distance; on the west, Gascony was bounded by the waters of Biscay.

M. St. Aubert loved to wander, with his wife and daughter, on the margin of the Garonne, and to listen to the music that floated on its waves. He had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world; but the flattering portrait of mankind, which his heart had delineated in early youth, his experience had too sorrowfully corrected. Yet, amidst the changing visions of life, his principles remained unshaken, his benevolence unchilled; and he retired from the multitude ‘more in PITY than in anger,’ to scenes of simple nature, to the pure delights of literature, and to the exercise of domestic virtues.

He was a descendant from the younger branch of an illustrious family, and it was designed, that the deficiency of his patrimonial wealth should be supplied either by a splendid alliance in marriage, or by success in the intrigues of public affairs. But St. Aubert had too nice a sense of honour to fulfil the latter hope, and too small a portion of ambition to sacrifice what he called happiness, to the attainment of wealth. After the death of his father he married a very amiable woman, his equal in birth, and not his superior in fortune. The late Monsieur St. Aubert's liberality, or extravagance, had so much involved his affairs, that his son found it necessary to dispose of a part of the family domain, and, some years after his marriage, he sold it to Monsieur Quesnel, the brother of his wife, and retired to a small estate in Gascony, where conjugal felicity, and parental duties, divided his attention with the treasures of knowledge and the illuminations of genius.

To this spot he had been attached from his infancy. He had often made excursions to it when a boy, and the impressions of delight given to his mind by the homely kindness of the grey-headed peasant, to whom it was intrusted, and whose fruit and cream never failed, had not been obliterated by succeeding circumstances. The green pastures along which he had so often bounded in the exultation of health, and youthful freedom — the woods, under whose refreshing shade he had first indulged that pensive melancholy, which afterwards made a strong feature of his character — the wild walks of the mountains, the river, on whose waves he had floated, and the distant plains, which seemed boundless as his early hopes — were never after remembered by St. Aubert but with enthusiasm and regret. At length he disengaged himself from the world, and retired hither, to realize the wishes of many years.

The building, as it then stood, was merely a summer cottage, rendered interesting to a stranger by its neat simplicity, or the beauty of the surrounding scene; and considerable additions were necessary to make it a comfortable family residence. St. Aubert felt a kind of affection for every part of the fabric, which he remembered in his youth, and would not suffer a stone of it to be removed, so that the new building, adapted to the style of the old one, formed with it only a simple and elegant residence. The taste of Madame St. Aubert was conspicuous in its internal finishing, where the same chaste simplicity was observable in the furniture, and in

the few ornaments of the apartments, that characterized the manners of its inhabitants.

The library occupied the west side of the chateau, and was enriched by a collection of the best books in the ancient and modern languages. This room opened upon a grove, which stood on the brow of a gentle declivity, that fell towards the river, and the tall trees gave it a melancholy and pleasing shade; while from the windows the eye caught, beneath the spreading branches, the gay and luxuriant landscape stretching to the west, and overlooked on the left by the bold precipices of the Pyrenees. Adjoining the library was a green-house, stored with scarce and beautiful plants; for one of the amusements of St. Aubert was the study of botany, and among the neighbouring mountains, which afforded a luxurious feast to the mind of the naturalist, he often passed the day in the pursuit of his favourite science. He was sometimes accompanied in these little excursions by Madame St. Aubert, and frequently by his daughter; when, with a small osier basket to receive plants, and another filled with cold refreshments, such as the cabin of the shepherd did not afford, they wandered away among the most romantic and magnificent scenes, nor suffered the charms of Nature’s lowly children to abstract them from the observance of her stupendous works. When weary of sauntering among cliffs that seemed scarcely accessible but to the steps of the enthusiast, and where no track appeared on the vegetation, but what the foot of the izard had left; they would seek one of those green recesses, which so beautifully adorn the bosom of these mountains, where, under the shade of the lofty larch, or cedar, they enjoyed their simple repast, made sweeter by the waters of the cool stream, that crept along the turf, and by the breath of wild flowers and aromatic plants, that fringed the rocks, and inlaid the grass.

Adjoining the eastern side of the green-house, looking towards the plains of Languedoc, was a room, which Emily called hers, and which contained her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants. Here she usually exercised herself in elegant arts, cultivated only because they were congenial to her taste, and in which native genius, assisted by the instructions of Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, made her an early proficient. The windows of this room were particularly pleasant; they descended to the floor, and, opening upon the

little lawn that surrounded the house, the eye was led between groves of almond, palm-trees, flowering-ash, and myrtle, to the distant landscape, where the Garonne wandered.

The peasants of this gay climate were often seen on an evening, when the day's labour was done, dancing in groups on the margin of the river. Their sprightly melodies, debonnaire steps, the fanciful figure of their dances, with the tasteful and capricious manner in which the girls adjusted their simple dress, gave a character to the scene entirely French.

The front of the chateau, which, having a southern aspect, opened upon the grandeur of the mountains, was occupied on the ground floor by a rustic hall, and two excellent sitting rooms. The first floor, for the cottage had no second story, was laid out in bedchambers, except one apartment that opened to a balcony, and which was generally used for a breakfast-room.

In the surrounding ground, St. Aubert had made very tasteful improvements; yet, such was his attachment to objects he had remembered from his boyish days, that he had in some instances sacrificed taste to sentiment. There were two old larches that shaded the building, and interrupted the prospect; St. Aubert had sometimes declared that he believed he should have been weak enough to have wept at their fall. In addition to these larches he planted a little grove of beech, pine, and mountain-ash. On a lofty terrace, formed by the swelling bank of the river, rose a plantation of orange, lemon, and palm-trees, whose fruit, in the coolness of evening, breathed delicious fragrance. With these were mingled a few trees of other species. Here, under the ample shade of a plane-tree, that spread its majestic canopy towards the river, St. Aubert loved to sit in the fine evenings of summer, with his wife and children, watching, beneath its foliage, the setting sun, the mild splendour of its light fading from the distant landscape, till the shadows of twilight melted its various features into one tint of sober grey. Here, too, he loved to read, and to converse with Madame St. Aubert; or to play with his children, resigning himself to the influence of those sweet affections, which are ever attendant on simplicity and nature. He has often said, while tears of pleasure trembled in his eyes, that these were moments infinitely more delightful than any passed amid the brilliant and tumultuous scenes that are courted by the world. His heart was occupied; it had, what can be so

rarely said, no wish for a happiness beyond what it experienced. The consciousness of acting right diffused a serenity over his manners, which nothing else could impart to a man of moral perceptions like his, and which refined his sense of every surrounding blessing.

The deepest shade of twilight did not send him from his favourite plane-tree. He loved the soothing hour, when the last tints of light die away; when the stars, one by one, tremble through aether, and are reflected on the dark mirror of the waters; that hour, which, of all others, inspires the mind with pensive tenderness, and often elevates it to sublime contemplation. When the moon shed her soft rays among the foliage, he still lingered, and his pastoral supper of cream and fruits was often spread beneath it. Then, on the stillness of night, came the song of the nightingale, breathing sweetness, and awakening melancholy.

The first interruptions to the happiness he had known since his retirement, were occasioned by the death of his two sons. He lost them at that age when infantine simplicity is so fascinating; and though, in consideration of Madame St. Aubert's distress, he restrained the expression of his own, and endeavoured to bear it, as he meant, with philosophy, he had, in truth, no philosophy that could render him calm to such losses. One daughter was now his only surviving child; and, while he watched the unfolding of her infant character, with anxious fondness, he endeavoured, with unremitting effort, to counteract those traits in her disposition, which might hereafter lead her from happiness. She had discovered in her early years uncommon delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence; but with these was observable a degree of susceptibility too exquisite to admit of lasting peace. As she advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of a congenial disposition. But St. Aubert had too much good sense to prefer a charm to a virtue; and had penetration enough to see, that this charm was too dangerous to its possessor to be allowed the character of a blessing. He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way. While he instructed her to resist first impressions, and to acquire that

steady dignity of mind, that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstances, he taught himself a lesson of fortitude; for he was often obliged to witness, with seeming indifference, the tears and struggles which his caution occasioned her.

In person, Emily resembled her mother; having the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes, full of tender sweetness. But, lovely as was her person, it was the varied expression of her countenance, as conversation awakened the nicer emotions of her mind, that threw such a captivating grace around her:

Those tend'rer tints, that shun the careless eye,
And, in the world's contagious circle, die.

St. Aubert cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature. He taught her Latin and English, chiefly that she might understand the sublimity of their best poets. She discovered in her early years a taste for works of genius; and it was St. Aubert's principle, as well as his inclination, to promote every innocent means of happiness. 'A well-informed mind,' he would say, 'is the best security against the contagion of folly and of vice. The vacant mind is ever on the watch for relief, and ready to plunge into error, to escape from the languor of idleness. Store it with ideas, teach it the pleasure of thinking; and the temptations of the world without, will be counteracted by the gratifications derived from the world within. Thought, and cultivation, are necessary equally to the happiness of a country and a city life; in the first they prevent the uneasy sensations of indolence, and afford a sublime pleasure in the taste they create for the beautiful, and the grand; in the latter, they make dissipation less an object of necessity, and consequently of interest.'

It was one of Emily's earliest pleasures to ramble among the scenes of nature; nor was it in the soft and glowing landscape that she most delighted; she loved more the wild wood-walks, that skirted the mountain; and still more the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. In scenes like these she would often linger along, wrapt in a melancholy charm, till the last gleam

of day faded from the west; till the lonely sound of a sheep-bell, or the distant bark of a watch-dog, were all that broke on the stillness of the evening. Then, the gloom of the woods; the trembling of their leaves, at intervals, in the breeze; the bat, flitting on the twilight; the cottage-lights, now seen, and now lost — were circumstances that awakened her mind into effort, and led to enthusiasm and poetry.

Her favourite walk was to a little fishing-house, belonging to St. Aubert, in a woody glen, on the margin of a rivulet that descended from the Pyrenees, and, after foaming among their rocks, wound its silent way beneath the shades it reflected. Above the woods, that screened this glen, rose the lofty summits of the Pyrenees, which often burst boldly on the eye through the glades below. Sometimes the shattered face of a rock only was seen, crowned with wild shrubs; or a shepherd's cabin seated on a cliff, overshadowed by dark cypress, or waving ash. Emerging from the deep recesses of the woods, the glade opened to the distant landscape, where the rich pastures and vine-covered slopes of Gascony gradually declined to the plains; and there, on the winding shores of the Garonne, groves, and hamlets, and villas — their outlines softened by distance, melted from the eye into one rich harmonious tint.

This, too, was the favourite retreat of St. Aubert, to which he frequently withdrew from the fervour of noon, with his wife, his daughter, and his books; or came at the sweet evening hour to welcome the silent dusk, or to listen for the music of the nightingale. Sometimes, too, he brought music of his own, and awakened every fairy echo with the tender accents of his oboe; and often have the tones of Emily's voice drawn sweetness from the waves, over which they trembled.

It was in one of these excursions to this spot, that she observed the following lines written with a pencil on a part of the wainscot:

SONNET

Go, pencil! faithful to thy master’s sighs!
Go — tell the Goddess of the fairy scene,
When next her light steps wind these wood-walks green,
Whence all his tears, his tender sorrows, rise;
Ah! paint her form, her soul-illumin’d eyes,
The sweet expression of her pensive face,
The light’ning smile, the animated grace —
The portrait well the lover’s voice supplies;
Speaks all his heart must feel, his tongue would say:
Yet ah! not all his heart must sadly feel!
How oft the flow’ret’s silken leaves conceal
The drug that steals the vital spark away!
And who that gazes on that angel-smile,
Would fear its charm, or think it could beguile!

These lines were not inscribed to any person; Emily therefore could not apply them to herself, though she was undoubtedly the nymph of these shades. Having glanced round the little circle of her acquaintance without being detained by a suspicion as to whom they could be addressed, she was compelled to rest in uncertainty; an uncertainty which would have been more painful to an idle mind than it was to hers. She had no leisure to suffer this circumstance, trifling at first, to swell into importance by frequent remembrance. The little vanity it had excited (for the incertitude which forbade her to presume upon having inspired the sonnet, forbade her also to disbelieve it) passed away, and the incident was dismissed from her thoughts amid her books, her studies, and the exercise of social charities.

Soon after this period, her anxiety was awakened by the indisposition of her father, who was attacked with a fever; which, though not thought to be of a dangerous kind, gave a severe shock to his constitution. Madame St. Aubert and Emily attended him with unremitting care; but his recovery was very slow, and, as he advanced towards health, Madame seemed to decline.

The first scene he visited, after he was well enough to take the air, was his favourite fishing-house. A basket of provisions was sent thither, with books, and Emily's lute; for fishing-tackle he had no use, for he never could find amusement in torturing or destroying.

After employing himself, for about an hour, in botanizing, dinner was served. It was a repast, to which gratitude, for being again permitted to visit this spot, gave sweetness; and family happiness once more smiled beneath these shades. Monsieur St. Aubert conversed with unusual cheerfulness; every object delighted his senses. The refreshing pleasure from the first view of nature, after the pain of illness, and the confinement of a sick-chamber, is above the conceptions, as well as the descriptions, of those in health. The green woods and pastures; the flowery turf; the blue concave of the heavens; the balmy air; the murmur of the limpid stream; and even the hum of every little insect of the shade, seem to revivify the soul, and make mere existence bliss.

Madame St. Aubert, reanimated by the cheerfulness and recovery of her husband, was no longer sensible of the indisposition which had lately oppressed her; and, as she sauntered along the wood-walks of this romantic glen, and conversed with him, and with her daughter, she often looked at them alternately with a degree of tenderness, that filled her eyes with tears. St. Aubert observed this more than once, and gently reproved her for the emotion; but she could only smile, clasp his hand, and that of Emily, and weep the more. He felt the tender enthusiasm stealing upon himself in a degree that became almost painful; his features assumed a serious air, and he could not forbear secretly sighing— 'Perhaps I shall some time look back to these moments, as to the summit of my happiness, with hopeless regret. But let me not misuse them by useless anticipation; let me hope I shall not live to mourn the loss of those who are dearer to me than life.'

To relieve, or perhaps to indulge, the pensive temper of his mind, he bade Emily fetch the lute she knew how to touch with such sweet pathos. As she drew near the fishing-house, she was surprised to hear the tones of the instrument, which were awakened by the hand of taste, and uttered a plaintive air, whose exquisite melody engaged all her attention. She listened in profound silence, afraid to move from the spot, lest the sound of her steps should occasion her to lose a note of the music, or should

disturb the musician. Every thing without the building was still, and no person appeared. She continued to listen, till timidity succeeded to surprise and delight; a timidity, increased by a remembrance of the pencilled lines she had formerly seen, and she hesitated whether to proceed, or to return.

While she paused, the music ceased; and, after a momentary hesitation, she recollected courage to advance to the fishing-house, which she entered with faltering steps, and found unoccupied! Her lute lay on the table; every thing seemed undisturbed, and she began to believe it was another instrument she had heard, till she remembered, that, when she followed M. and Madame St. Aubert from this spot, her lute was left on a window seat. She felt alarmed, yet knew not wherefore; the melancholy gloom of evening, and the profound stillness of the place, interrupted only by the light trembling of leaves, heightened her fanciful apprehensions, and she was desirous of quitting the building, but perceived herself grow faint, and sat down. As she tried to recover herself, the pencilled lines on the wainscot met her eye; she started, as if she had seen a stranger; but, endeavouring to conquer the tremor of her spirits, rose, and went to the window. To the lines before noticed she now perceived that others were added, in which her name appeared.

Though no longer suffered to doubt that they were addressed to herself, she was as ignorant, as before, by whom they could be written. While she mused, she thought she heard the sound of a step without the building, and again alarmed, she caught up her lute, and hurried away. Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert she found in a little path that wound along the sides of the glen.

Having reached a green summit, shadowed by palm-trees, and overlooking the vallies and plains of Gascony, they seated themselves on the turf; and while their eyes wandered over the glorious scene, and they inhaled the sweet breath of flowers and herbs that enriched the grass, Emily played and sung several of their favourite airs, with the delicacy of expression in which she so much excelled.

Music and conversation detained them in this enchanting spot, till the sun’s last light slept upon the plains; till the white sails that glided beneath the mountains, where the Garonne wandered, became dim, and the gloom of evening stole over the landscape. It was a melancholy but not

unpleasing gloom. St. Aubert and his family rose, and left the place with regret; alas! Madame St. Aubert knew not that she left it for ever.

When they reached the fishing-house she missed her bracelet, and recollected that she had taken it from her arm after dinner, and had left it on the table when she went to walk. After a long search, in which Emily was very active, she was compelled to resign herself to the loss of it. What made this bracelet valuable to her was a miniature of her daughter to which it was attached, esteemed a striking resemblance, and which had been painted only a few months before. When Emily was convinced that the bracelet was really gone, she blushed, and became thoughtful. That some stranger had been in the fishing-house, during her absence, her lute, and the additional lines of a pencil, had already informed her: from the purport of these lines it was not unreasonable to believe, that the poet, the musician, and the thief were the same person. But though the music she had heard, the written lines she had seen, and the disappearance of the picture, formed a combination of circumstances very remarkable, she was irresistibly restrained from mentioning them; secretly determining, however, never again to visit the fishing-house without Monsieur or Madame St. Aubert.

They returned pensively to the chateau, Emily musing on the incident which had just occurred; St. Aubert reflecting, with placid gratitude, on the blessings he possessed; and Madame St. Aubert somewhat disturbed, and perplexed, by the loss of her daughter’s picture. As they drew near the house, they observed an unusual bustle about it; the sound of voices was distinctly heard, servants and horses were seen passing between the trees, and, at length, the wheels of a carriage rolled along. Having come within view of the front of the chateau, a landau, with smoking horses, appeared on the little lawn before it. St. Aubert perceived the liveries of his brother-in-law, and in the parlour he found Monsieur and Madame Quesnel already entered. They had left Paris some days before, and were on the way to their estate, only ten leagues distant from La Vallee, and which Monsieur Quesnel had purchased several years before of St. Aubert. This gentleman was the only brother of Madame St. Aubert; but the ties of relationship having never been strengthened by congeniality of character, the intercourse between them had not been frequent. M. Quesnel had lived altogether in the world; his aim had been consequence; splendour was the

object of his taste; and his address and knowledge of character had carried him forward to the attainment of almost all that he had courted. By a man of such a disposition, it is not surprising that the virtues of St. Aubert should be overlooked; or that his pure taste, simplicity, and moderated wishes, were considered as marks of a weak intellect, and of confined views. The marriage of his sister with St. Aubert had been mortifying to his ambition, for he had designed that the matrimonial connection she formed should assist him to attain the consequence which he so much desired; and some offers were made her by persons whose rank and fortune flattered his warmest hope. But his sister, who was then addressed also by St. Aubert, perceived, or thought she perceived, that happiness and splendour were not the same, and she did not hesitate to forego the last for the attainment of the former. Whether Monsieur Quesnel thought them the same, or not, he would readily have sacrificed his sister's peace to the gratification of his own ambition; and, on her marriage with St. Aubert, expressed in private his contempt of her spiritless conduct, and of the connection which it permitted. Madame St. Aubert, though she concealed this insult from her husband, felt, perhaps, for the first time, resentment lighted in her heart; and, though a regard for her own dignity, united with considerations of prudence, restrained her expression of this resentment, there was ever after a mild reserve in her manner towards M. Quesnel, which he both understood and felt.

In his own marriage he did not follow his sister's example. His lady was an Italian, and an heiress by birth; and, by nature and education, was a vain and frivolous woman.

They now determined to pass the night with St. Aubert; and as the chateau was not large enough to accommodate their servants, the latter were dismissed to the neighbouring village. When the first compliments were over, and the arrangements for the night made M. Quesnel began the display of his intelligence and his connections; while St. Aubert, who had been long enough in retirement to find these topics recommended by their novelty, listened, with a degree of patience and attention, which his guest mistook for the humility of wonder. The latter, indeed, described the few festivities which the turbulence of that period permitted to the court of Henry the Third, with a minuteness, that somewhat recompensed for his ostentation; but, when he came to speak of the character of the Duke de

Joyeuse, of a secret treaty, which he knew to be negotiating with the Porte, and of the light in which Henry of Navarre was received, M. St. Aubert recollected enough of his former experience to be assured, that his guest could be only of an inferior class of politicians; and that, from the importance of the subjects upon which he committed himself, he could not be of the rank to which he pretended to belong. The opinions delivered by M. Quesnel, were such as St. Aubert forebore to reply to, for he knew that his guest had neither humanity to feel, nor discernment to perceive, what is just.

Madame Quesnel, meanwhile, was expressing to Madame St. Aubert her astonishment, that she could bear to pass her life in this remote corner of the world, as she called it, and describing, from a wish, probably, of exciting envy, the splendour of the balls, banquets, and processions which had just been given by the court, in honour of the nuptials of the Duke de Joyeuse with Margaretta of Lorrain, the sister of the Queen. She described with equal minuteness the magnificence she had seen, and that from which she had been excluded; while Emily's vivid fancy, as she listened with the ardent curiosity of youth, heightened the scenes she heard of; and Madame St. Aubert, looking on her family, felt, as a tear stole to her eye, that though splendour may grace happiness, virtue only can bestow it.

'It is now twelve years, St. Aubert,' said M. Quesnel, 'since I purchased your family estate.'— 'Somewhere thereabout,' replied St. Aubert, suppressing a sigh. 'It is near five years since I have been there,' resumed Quesnel; 'for Paris and its neighbourhood is the only place in the world to live in, and I am so immersed in politics, and have so many affairs of moment on my hands, that I find it difficult to steal away even for a month or two.' St. Aubert remaining silent, M. Quesnel proceeded: 'I have sometimes wondered how you, who have lived in the capital, and have been accustomed to company, can exist elsewhere; — especially in so remote a country as this, where you can neither hear nor see any thing, and can in short be scarcely conscious of life.'

'I live for my family and myself,' said St. Aubert; 'I am now contented to know only happiness; — formerly I knew life.'

'I mean to expend thirty or forty thousand livres on improvements,' said M. Quesnel, without seeming to notice the words of St. Aubert; 'for I design, next summer, to bring here my friends, the Duke de Durefort and

the Marquis Ramont, to pass a month or two with me.' To St. Aubert's enquiry, as to these intended improvements, he replied, that he should take down the whole east wing of the chateau, and raise upon the site a set of stables. 'Then I shall build,' said he, 'a SALLE A MANGER, a SALON, a SALLE AU COMMUNE, and a number of rooms for servants; for at present there is not accommodation for a third part of my own people.'

'It accommodated our father's household,' said St. Aubert, grieved that the old mansion was to be thus improved, 'and that was not a small one.'

'Our notions are somewhat enlarged since those days,' said M. Quesnel; — 'what was then thought a decent style of living would not now be endured.' Even the calm St. Aubert blushed at these words, but his anger soon yielded to contempt. 'The ground about the chateau is encumbered with trees; I mean to cut some of them down.'

'Cut down the trees too!' said St. Aubert.

'Certainly. Why should I not? they interrupt my prospects. There is a chesnut which spreads its branches before the whole south side of the chateau, and which is so ancient that they tell me the hollow of its trunk will hold a dozen men. Your enthusiasm will scarcely contend that there can be either use, or beauty, in such a sapless old tree as this.'

'Good God!' exclaimed St. Aubert, 'you surely will not destroy that noble chesnut, which has flourished for centuries, the glory of the estate! It was in its maturity when the present mansion was built. How often, in my youth, have I climbed among its broad branches, and sat embowered amidst a world of leaves, while the heavy shower has pattered above, and not a rain drop reached me! How often I have sat with a book in my hand, sometimes reading, and sometimes looking out between the branches upon the wide landscape, and the setting sun, till twilight came, and brought the birds home to their little nests among the leaves! How often — but pardon me,' added St. Aubert, recollecting that he was speaking to a man who could neither comprehend, nor allow his feelings, 'I am talking of times and feelings as old-fashioned as the taste that would spare that venerable tree.'

'It will certainly come down,' said M. Quesnel; 'I believe I shall plant some Lombardy poplars among the clumps of chesnut, that I shall leave of the avenue; Madame Quesnel is partial to the poplar, and tells me how much it adorns a villa of her uncle, not far from Venice.'

‘On the banks of the Brenta, indeed,’ continued St. Aubert, ‘where its spiry form is intermingled with the pine, and the cypress, and where it plays over light and elegant porticos and colonnades, it, unquestionably, adorns the scene; but among the giants of the forest, and near a heavy gothic mansion— ‘

‘Well, my good sir,’ said M. Quesnel, ‘I will not dispute with you. You must return to Paris before our ideas can at all agree. But A-PROPOS of Venice, I have some thoughts of going thither, next summer; events may call me to take possession of that same villa, too, which they tell me is the most charming that can be imagined. In that case I shall leave the improvements I mention to another year, and I may, perhaps, be tempted to stay some time in Italy.’

Emily was somewhat surprised to hear him talk of being tempted to remain abroad, after he had mentioned his presence to be so necessary at Paris, that it was with difficulty he could steal away for a month or two; but St. Aubert understood the self-importance of the man too well to wonder at this trait; and the possibility, that these projected improvements might be deferred, gave him a hope, that they might never take place.

Before they separated for the night, M. Quesnel desired to speak with St. Aubert alone, and they retired to another room, where they remained a considerable time. The subject of this conversation was not known; but, whatever it might be, St. Aubert, when he returned to the supper-room, seemed much disturbed, and a shade of sorrow sometimes fell upon his features that alarmed Madame St. Aubert. When they were alone she was tempted to enquire the occasion of it, but the delicacy of mind, which had ever appeared in his conduct, restrained her: she considered that, if St. Aubert wished her to be acquainted with the subject of his concern, he would not wait on her enquiries.

On the following day, before M. Quesnel departed, he had a second conference with St. Aubert.

The guests, after dining at the chateau, set out in the cool of the day for Epourville, whither they gave him and Madame St. Aubert a pressing invitation, prompted rather by the vanity of displaying their splendour, than by a wish to make their friends happy.

Emily returned, with delight, to the liberty which their presence had restrained, to her books, her walks, and the rational conversation of M. and

Madame St. Aubert, who seemed to rejoice, no less, that they were delivered from the shackles, which arrogance and frivolity had imposed.

Madame St. Aubert excused herself from sharing their usual evening walk, complaining that she was not quite well, and St. Aubert and Emily went out together.

They chose a walk towards the mountains, intending to visit some old pensioners of St. Aubert, which, from his very moderate income, he contrived to support, though it is probable M. Quesnel, with his very large one, could not have afforded this.

After distributing to his pensioners their weekly stipends, listening patiently to the complaints of some, redressing the grievances of others, and softening the discontents of all, by the look of sympathy, and the smile of benevolence, St. Aubert returned home through the woods,

where

At fall of eve the fairy-people throng,
In various games and revelry to pass
The summer night, as village stories tell.*

*Thomson

‘The evening gloom of woods was always delightful to me,’ said St. Aubert, whose mind now experienced the sweet calm, which results from the consciousness of having done a beneficent action, and which disposes it to receive pleasure from every surrounding object. ‘I remember that in my youth this gloom used to call forth to my fancy a thousand fairy visions, and romantic images; and, I own, I am not yet wholly insensible of that high enthusiasm, which wakes the poet’s dream: I can linger, with solemn steps, under the deep shades, send forward a transforming eye into the distant obscurity, and listen with thrilling delight to the mystic murmuring of the woods.’

‘O my dear father,’ said Emily, while a sudden tear started to her eye, ‘how exactly you describe what I have felt so often, and which I thought nobody had ever felt but myself! But hark! here comes the sweeping sound over the wood-tops; — now it dies away; — how solemn the stillness that succeeds! Now the breeze swells again. It is like the voice of some supernatural being — the voice of the spirit of the woods, that watches over them by night. Ah! what light is yonder? But it is gone. And now it gleams again, near the root of that large chestnut: look, sir!’

‘Are you such an admirer of nature,’ said St. Aubert, ‘and so little acquainted with her appearances as not to know that for the glowworm? But come,’ added he gaily, ‘step a little further, and we shall see fairies, perhaps; they are often companions. The glowworm lends his light, and they in return charm him with music, and the dance. Do you see nothing tripping yonder?’

Emily laughed. ‘Well, my dear sir,’ said she, ‘since you allow of this alliance, I may venture to own I have anticipated you; and almost dare venture to repeat some verses I made one evening in these very woods.’

‘Nay,’ replied St. Aubert, ‘dismiss the ALMOST, and venture quite; let us hear what vagaries fancy has been playing in your mind. If she has given you one of her spells, you need not envy those of the fairies.’

‘If it is strong enough to enchant your judgment, sir,’ said Emily, ‘while I disclose her images, I need NOT envy them. The lines go in a sort of tripping measure, which I thought might suit the subject well enough, but I fear they are too irregular.’

THE GLOWWORM

How pleasant is the green-wood’s deep-matted shade
On a midsummer’s eve, when the fresh rain is o’er;
When the yellow beams slope, and sparkle thro’ the glade,
And swiftly in the thin air the light swallows soar!

But sweeter, sweeter still, when the sun sinks to rest,
And twilight comes on, with the fairies so gay
Tripping through the forest-walk, where flow’rs, unprest,
Bow not their tall heads beneath their frolic play.

To music’s softest sounds they dance away the hour,
Till moonlight steals down among the trembling leaves,
And checquers all the ground, and guides them to the bow’r,
The long haunted bow’r, where the nightingale grieves.

Then no more they dance, till her sad song is done,
But, silent as the night, to her mourning attend;
And often as her dying notes their pity have won,
They vow all her sacred haunts from mortals to defend.

When, down among the mountains, sinks the ev’ning star,
And the changing moon forsakes this shadowy sphere,
How cheerless would they be, tho’ they fairies are,
If I, with my pale light, came not near!

Yet cheerless tho’ they’d be, they’re ungrateful to my love!
For, often when the traveller’s benighted on his way,
And I glimmer in his path, and would guide him thro’ the grove,
They bind me in their magic spells to lead him far astray;

And in the mire to leave him, till the stars are all burnt out,
While, in strange-looking shapes, they frisk about the ground,
And, afar in the woods, they raise a dismal shout,
Till I shrink into my cell again for terror of the sound!

But, see where all the tiny elves come dancing in a ring,
With the merry, merry pipe, and the tabor, and the horn,
And the timbrel so clear, and the lute with dulcet string;
Then round about the oak they go till peeping of the morn.

Down yonder glade two lovers steal, to shun the fairy-queen,
Who frowns upon their plighted vows, and jealous is of me,
That yester-eve I lighted them, along the dewy green,
To seek the purple flow'r, whose juice from all her spells can free.

And now, to punish me, she keeps afar her jocund band,
With the merry, merry pipe, and the tabor, and the lute;
If I creep near yonder oak she will wave her fairy wand,
And to me the dance will cease, and the music all be mute.

O! had I but that purple flow'r whose leaves her charms can foil,
And knew like fays to draw the juice, and throw it on the wind,
I'd be her slave no longer, nor the traveller beguile,
And help all faithful lovers, nor fear the fairy kind!

But soon the VAPOUR OF THE WOODS will wander afar,
And the fickle moon will fade, and the stars disappear,
Then, cheerless will they be, tho' they fairies are,
If I, with my pale light, come not near!

Whatever St. Aubert might think of the stanzas, he would not deny his daughter the pleasure of believing that he approved them; and, having given his commendation, he sunk into a reverie, and they walked on in silence.

A faint erroneous ray
Glanc'd from th' imperfect surfaces of things,
Flung half an image on the straining eye;
While waving woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retain
The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld.*

*Thomson.

St. Aubert continued silent till he reached the chateau, where his wife had retired to her chamber. The languor and dejection, that had lately oppressed her, and which the exertion called forth by the arrival of her guests had suspended, now returned with increased effect. On the following day, symptoms of fever appeared, and St. Aubert, having sent for medical advice, learned, that her disorder was a fever of the same nature as that, from which he had lately recovered. She had, indeed, taken the infection, during her attendance upon him, and, her constitution being too weak to throw out the disease immediately, it had lurked in her veins, and occasioned the heavy languor of which she had complained. St. Aubert, whose anxiety for his wife overcame every other consideration, detained the physician in his house. He remembered the feelings and the reflections that had called a momentary gloom upon his mind, on the day when he had last visited the fishing-house, in company with Madame St. Aubert, and he now admitted a presentiment, that this illness would be a fatal one. But he effectually concealed this from her, and from his daughter, whom he endeavoured to reanimate with hopes that her constant assiduities would not be unavailing. The physician, when asked by St. Aubert for his opinion of the disorder, replied, that the event of it depended upon circumstances which he could not ascertain. Madame St.

Aubert seemed to have formed a more decided one; but her eyes only gave hints of this. She frequently fixed them upon her anxious friends with an expression of pity, and of tenderness, as if she anticipated the sorrow that awaited them, and that seemed to say, it was for their sakes only, for their sufferings, that she regretted life. On the seventh day, the disorder was at its crisis. The physician assumed a graver manner, which she observed, and took occasion, when her family had once quitted the chamber, to tell him, that she perceived her death was approaching. ‘Do not attempt to deceive me,’ said she, ‘I feel that I cannot long survive. I am prepared for the event, I have long, I hope, been preparing for it. Since I have not long to live, do not suffer a mistaken compassion to induce you to flatter my family with false hopes. If you do, their affliction will only be the heavier when it arrives: I will endeavour to teach them resignation by my example.’

The physician was affected; he promised to obey her, and told St. Aubert, somewhat abruptly, that there was nothing to expect. The latter was not philosopher enough to restrain his feelings when he received this information; but a consideration of the increased affliction which the observance of his grief would occasion his wife, enabled him, after some time, to command himself in her presence. Emily was at first overwhelmed with the intelligence; then, deluded by the strength of her wishes, a hope sprung up in her mind that her mother would yet recover, and to this she pertinaciously adhered almost to the last hour.

The progress of this disorder was marked, on the side of Madame St. Aubert, by patient suffering, and subjected wishes. The composure, with which she awaited her death, could be derived only from the retrospect of a life governed, as far as human frailty permits, by a consciousness of being always in the presence of the Deity, and by the hope of a higher world. But her piety could not entirely subdue the grief of parting from those whom she so dearly loved. During these her last hours, she conversed much with St. Aubert and Emily, on the prospect of futurity, and on other religious topics. The resignation she expressed, with the firm hope of meeting in a future world the friends she left in this, and the effort which sometimes appeared to conceal her sorrow at this temporary separation, frequently affected St. Aubert so much as to oblige him to leave the room. Having indulged his tears awhile, he would dry them and

return to the chamber with a countenance composed by an endeavour which did but increase his grief.

Never had Emily felt the importance of the lessons, which had taught her to restrain her sensibility, so much as in these moments, and never had she practised them with a triumph so complete. But when the last was over, she sunk at once under the pressure of her sorrow, and then perceived that it was hope, as well as fortitude, which had hitherto supported her. St. Aubert was for a time too devoid of comfort himself to bestow any on his daughter.

CHAPTER II

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul.

SHAKESPEARE

Madame St. Aubert was interred in the neighbouring village church; her husband and daughter attended her to the grave, followed by a long train of the peasantry, who were sincere mourners of this excellent woman.

On his return from the funeral, St. Aubert shut himself in his chamber. When he came forth, it was with a serene countenance, though pale in sorrow. He gave orders that his family should attend him. Emily only was absent; who, overcome with the scene she had just witnessed, had retired to her closet to weep alone. St. Aubert followed her thither: he took her hand in silence, while she continued to weep; and it was some moments before he could so far command his voice as to speak. It trembled while he said, ‘My Emily, I am going to prayers with my family; you will join us. We must ask support from above. Where else ought we to seek it — where else can we find it?’

Emily checked her tears, and followed her father to the parlour, where, the servants being assembled, St. Aubert read, in a low and solemn voice, the evening service, and added a prayer for the soul of the departed. During this, his voice often faltered, his tears fell upon the book, and at length he paused. But the sublime emotions of pure devotion gradually elevated his views above this world, and finally brought comfort to his heart.

When the service was ended, and the servants were withdrawn, he tenderly kissed Emily, and said, ‘I have endeavoured to teach you, from your earliest youth, the duty of self-command; I have pointed out to you the great importance of it through life, not only as it preserves us in the various and dangerous temptations that call us from rectitude and virtue, but as it limits the indulgences which are termed virtuous, yet which, extended beyond a certain boundary, are vicious, for their consequence is evil. All excess is vicious; even that sorrow, which is amiable in its origin, becomes a selfish and unjust passion, if indulged at the expence of our duties — by our duties I mean what we owe to ourselves, as well as to others. The indulgence of excessive grief enervates the mind, and almost incapacitates it for again partaking of those various innocent enjoyments

which a benevolent God designed to be the sunshine of our lives. My dear Emily, recollect and practise the precepts I have so often given you, and which your own experience has so often shewn you to be wise.

‘Your sorrow is useless. Do not receive this as merely a commonplace remark, but let reason THEREFORE restrain sorrow. I would not annihilate your feelings, my child, I would only teach you to command them; for whatever may be the evils resulting from a too susceptible heart, nothing can be hoped from an insensible one; that, on the other hand, is all vice — vice, of which the deformity is not softened, or the effect consoled for, by any semblance or possibility of good. You know my sufferings, and are, therefore, convinced that mine are not the light words which, on these occasions, are so often repeated to destroy even the sources of honest emotion, or which merely display the selfish ostentation of a false philosophy. I will shew my Emily, that I can practise what I advise. I have said thus much, because I cannot bear to see you wasting in useless sorrow, for want of that resistance which is due from mind; and I have not said it till now, because there is a period when all reasoning must yield to nature; that is past: and another, when excessive indulgence, having sunk into habit, weighs down the elasticity of the spirits so as to render conquest nearly impossible; this is to come. You, my Emily, will shew that you are willing to avoid it.’

Emily smiled through her tears upon her father: ‘Dear sir,’ said she, and her voice trembled; she would have added, ‘I will shew myself worthy of being your daughter;’ but a mingled emotion of gratitude, affection, and grief overcame her. St. Aubert suffered her to weep without interruption, and then began to talk on common topics.

The first person who came to condole with St. Aubert was a M. Barreaux, an austere and seemingly unfeeling man. A taste for botany had introduced them to each other, for they had frequently met in their wanderings among the mountains. M. Barreaux had retired from the world, and almost from society, to live in a pleasant chateau, on the skirts of the woods, near La Vallee. He also had been disappointed in his opinion of mankind; but he did not, like St. Aubert, pity and mourn for them; he felt more indignation at their vices, than compassion for their weaknesses.

St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to see him; for, though he had often pressed him to come to the chateau, he had never till now accepted the

invitation; and now he came without ceremony or reserve, entering the parlour as an old friend. The claims of misfortune appeared to have softened down all the ruggedness and prejudices of his heart. St. Aubert unhappy, seemed to be the sole idea that occupied his mind. It was in manners, more than in words, that he appeared to sympathize with his friends: he spoke little on the subject of their grief; but the minute attention he gave them, and the modulated voice, and softened look that accompanied it, came from his heart, and spoke to theirs.

At this melancholy period St. Aubert was likewise visited by Madame Cheron, his only surviving sister, who had been some years a widow, and now resided on her own estate near Tholouse. The intercourse between them had not been very frequent. In her condolements, words were not wanting; she understood not the magic of the look that speaks at once to the soul, or the voice that sinks like balm to the heart: but she assured St. Aubert that she sincerely sympathized with him, praised the virtues of his late wife, and then offered what she considered to be consolation. Emily wept unceasingly while she spoke; St. Aubert was tranquil, listened to what she said in silence, and then turned the discourse upon another subject.

At parting she pressed him and her niece to make her an early visit. ‘Change of place will amuse you,’ said she, ‘and it is wrong to give way to grief.’ St. Aubert acknowledged the truth of these words of course; but, at the same time, felt more reluctant than ever to quit the spot which his past happiness had consecrated. The presence of his wife had sanctified every surrounding scene, and, each day, as it gradually softened the acuteness of his suffering, assisted the tender enchantment that bound him to home.

But there were calls which must be complied with, and of this kind was the visit he paid to his brother-in-law M. Quesnel. An affair of an interesting nature made it necessary that he should delay this visit no longer, and, wishing to rouse Emily from her dejection, he took her with him to Epourville.

As the carriage entered upon the forest that adjoined his paternal domain, his eyes once more caught, between the chesnut avenue, the turreted corners of the chateau. He sighed to think of what had passed since he was last there, and that it was now the property of a man who neither revered nor valued it. At length he entered the avenue, whose lofty

trees had so often delighted him when a boy, and whose melancholy shade was now so congenial with the tone of his spirits. Every feature of the edifice, distinguished by an air of heavy grandeur, appeared successively between the branches of the trees — the broad turret, the arched gateway that led into the courts, the drawbridge, and the dry fosse which surrounded the whole.

The sound of carriage wheels brought a troop of servants to the great gate, where St. Aubert alighted, and from which he led Emily into the gothic hall, now no longer hung with the arms and ancient banners of the family. These were displaced, and the oak wainscotting, and beams that crossed the roof, were painted white. The large table, too, that used to stretch along the upper end of the hall, where the master of the mansion loved to display his hospitality, and whence the peal of laughter, and the song of conviviality, had so often resounded, was now removed; even the benches that had surrounded the hall were no longer there. The heavy walls were hung with frivolous ornaments, and every thing that appeared denoted the false taste and corrupted sentiments of the present owner.

St. Aubert followed a gay Parisian servant to a parlour, where sat *Mons.* and Madame Quesnel, who received him with a stately politeness, and, after a few formal words of condolement, seemed to have forgotten that they ever had a sister.

Emily felt tears swell into her eyes, and then resentment checked them. St. Aubert, calm and deliberate, preserved his dignity without assuming importance, and Quesnel was depressed by his presence without exactly knowing wherefore.

After some general conversation, St. Aubert requested to speak with him alone; and Emily, being left with Madame Quesnel, soon learned that a large party was invited to dine at the chateau, and was compelled to hear that nothing which was past and irremediable ought to prevent the festivity of the present hour.

St. Aubert, when he was told that company were expected, felt a mixed emotion of disgust and indignation against the insensibility of Quesnel, which prompted him to return home immediately. But he was informed, that Madame Cheron had been asked to meet him; and, when he looked at Emily, and considered that a time might come when the enmity of her uncle would be prejudicial to her, he determined not to incur it himself, by

conduct which would be resented as indecorous, by the very persons who now showed so little sense of decorum.

Among the visitors assembled at dinner were two Italian gentlemen, of whom one was named Montoni, a distant relation of Madame Quesnel, a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole, more of the haughtiness of command, and the quickness of discernment, than of any other character.

Signor Cavigni, his friend, appeared to be about thirty — inferior in dignity, but equal to him in penetration of countenance, and superior in insinuation of manner.

Emily was shocked by the salutation with which Madame Cheron met her father— ‘Dear brother,’ said she, ‘I am concerned to see you look so very ill; do, pray, have advice!’ St. Aubert answered, with a melancholy smile, that he felt himself much as usual; but Emily’s fears made her now fancy that her father looked worse than he really did.

Emily would have been amused by the new characters she saw, and the varied conversation that passed during dinner, which was served in a style of splendour she had seldom seen before, had her spirits been less oppressed. Of the guests, Signor Montoni was lately come from Italy, and he spoke of the commotions which at that period agitated the country; talked of party differences with warmth, and then lamented the probable consequences of the tumults. His friend spoke with equal ardour, of the politics of his country; praised the government and prosperity of Venice, and boasted of its decided superiority over all the other Italian states. He then turned to the ladies, and talked with the same eloquence, of Parisian fashions, the French opera, and French manners; and on the latter subject he did not fail to mingle what is so particularly agreeable to French taste. The flattery was not detected by those to whom it was addressed, though its effect, in producing submissive attention, did not escape his observation. When he could disengage himself from the assiduities of the other ladies, he sometimes addressed Emily: but she knew nothing of Parisian fashions, or Parisian operas; and her modesty, simplicity, and correct manners formed a decided contrast to those of her female companions.

After dinner, St. Aubert stole from the room to view once more the old chesnut which Quesnel talked of cutting down. As he stood under its shade, and looked up among its branches, still luxuriant, and saw here and there the blue sky trembling between them; the pursuits and events of his early days crowded fast to his mind, with the figures and characters of friends — long since gone from the earth; and he now felt himself to be almost an insulated being, with nobody but his Emily for his heart to turn to.

He stood lost amid the scenes of years which fancy called up, till the succession closed with the picture of his dying wife, and he started away, to forget it, if possible, at the social board.

St. Aubert ordered his carriage at an early hour, and Emily observed, that he was more than usually silent and dejected on the way home; but she considered this to be the effect of his visit to a place which spoke so eloquently of former times, nor suspected that he had a cause of grief which he concealed from her.

On entering the chateau she felt more depressed than ever, for she more than ever missed the presence of that dear parent, who, whenever she had been from home, used to welcome her return with smiles and fondness; now, all was silent and forsaken.

But what reason and effort may fail to do, time effects. Week after week passed away, and each, as it passed, stole something from the harshness of her affliction, till it was mellowed to that tenderness which the feeling heart cherishes as sacred. St. Aubert, on the contrary, visibly declined in health; though Emily, who had been so constantly with him, was almost the last person who observed it. His constitution had never recovered from the late attack of the fever, and the succeeding shock it received from Madame St. Aubert’s death had produced its present infirmity. His physician now ordered him to travel; for it was perceptible that sorrow had seized upon his nerves, weakened as they had been by the preceding illness; and variety of scene, it was probable, would, by amusing his mind, restore them to their proper tone.

For some days Emily was occupied in preparations to attend him; and he, by endeavours to diminish his expences at home during the journey — a purpose which determined him at length to dismiss his domestics. Emily seldom opposed her father’s wishes by questions or remonstrances, or she

would now have asked why he did not take a servant, and have represented that his infirm health made one almost necessary. But when, on the eve of their departure, she found that he had dismissed Jacques, Francis, and Mary, and detained only Theresa the old housekeeper, she was extremely surprised, and ventured to ask his reason for having done so. ‘To save expences, my dear,’ he replied— ‘we are going on an expensive excursion.’

The physician had prescribed the air of Languedoc and Provence; and St. Aubert determined, therefore, to travel leisurely along the shores of the Mediterranean, towards Provence.

They retired early to their chamber on the night before their departure; but Emily had a few books and other things to collect, and the clock had struck twelve before she had finished, or had remembered that some of her drawing instruments, which she meant to take with her, were in the parlour below. As she went to fetch these, she passed her father’s room, and, perceiving the door half open, concluded that he was in his study — for, since the death of Madame St. Aubert, it had been frequently his custom to rise from his restless bed, and go thither to compose his mind. When she was below stairs she looked into this room, but without finding him; and as she returned to her chamber, she tapped at his door, and receiving no answer, stepped softly in, to be certain whether he was there.

The room was dark, but a light glimmered through some panes of glass that were placed in the upper part of a closet-door. Emily believed her father to be in the closet, and, surprised that he was up at so late an hour, apprehended he was unwell, and was going to enquire; but, considering that her sudden appearance at this hour might alarm him, she removed her light to the staircase, and then stepped softly to the closet. On looking through the panes of glass, she saw him seated at a small table, with papers before him, some of which he was reading with deep attention and interest, during which he often wept and sobbed aloud. Emily, who had come to the door to learn whether her father was ill, was now detained there by a mixture of curiosity and tenderness. She could not witness his sorrow, without being anxious to know the subject of; and she therefore continued to observe him in silence, concluding that those papers were letters of her late mother. Presently he knelt down, and with a look so solemn as she had seldom seen him assume, and which was mingled with a

certain wild expression, that partook more of horror than of any other character, he prayed silently for a considerable time.

When he rose, a ghastly paleness was on his countenance. Emily was hastily retiring; but she saw him turn again to the papers, and she stopped. He took from among them a small case, and from thence a miniature picture. The rays of light fell strongly upon it, and she perceived it to be that of a lady, but not of her mother.

St. Aubert gazed earnestly and tenderly upon his portrait, put it to his lips, and then to his heart, and sighed with a convulsive force. Emily could scarcely believe what she saw to be real. She never knew till now that he had a picture of any other lady than her mother, much less that he had one which he evidently valued so highly; but having looked repeatedly, to be certain that it was not the resemblance of Madame St. Aubert, she became entirely convinced that it was designed for that of some other person.

At length St. Aubert returned the picture to its case; and Emily, recollecting that she was intruding upon his private sorrows, softly withdrew from the chamber.

CHAPTER III

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which nature to her vot'ry yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even;
All that the mountain's shelt'ring bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!
..... These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.

THE MINSTREL

St. Aubert, instead of taking the more direct road, that ran along the feet of the Pyrenees to Languedoc, chose one that, winding over the heights, afforded more extensive views and greater variety of romantic scenery. He turned a little out of his way to take leave of M. Barreaux, whom he found botanizing in the wood near his chateau, and who, when he was told the purpose of St. Aubert's visit, expressed a degree of concern, such as his friend had thought it was scarcely possible for him to feel on any similar occasion. They parted with mutual regret.

'If any thing could have tempted me from my retirement,' said M. Barreaux, 'it would have been the pleasure of accompanying you on this little tour. I do not often offer compliments; you may, therefore, believe me, when I say, that I shall look for your return with impatience.'

The travellers proceeded on their journey. As they ascended the heights, St. Aubert often looked back upon the chateau, in the plain below; tender images crowded to his mind; his melancholy imagination suggested that he should return no more; and though he checked this wandering thought, still he continued to look, till the haziness of distance blended his home with the general landscape, and St. Aubert seemed to

Drag at each remove a lengthening chain.

He and Emily continued sunk in musing silence for some leagues, from which melancholy reverie Emily first awoke, and her young fancy, struck with the grandeur of the objects around, gradually yielded to delightful impressions. The road now descended into glens, confined by stupendous walls of rock, grey and barren, except where shrubs fringed their summits, or patches of meagre vegetation tinted their recesses, in which the wild goat was frequently browsing. And now, the way led to the lofty cliffs, from whence the landscape was seen extending in all its magnificence.

Emily could not restrain her transport as she looked over the pine forests of the mountains upon the vast plains, that, enriched with woods, towns, blushing vines, and plantations of almonds, palms, and olives, stretched along, till their various colours melted in distance into one harmonious hue, that seemed to unite earth with heaven. Through the

whole of this glorious scene the majestic Garonne wandered; descending from its source among the Pyrenees, and winding its blue waves towards the Bay of Biscay.

The ruggedness of the unfrequented road often obliged the wanderers to alight from their little carriage, but they thought themselves amply repaid for this inconvenience by the grandeur of the scenes; and, while the muleteer led his animals slowly over the broken ground, the travellers had leisure to linger amid these solitudes, and to indulge the sublime reflections, which soften, while they elevate, the heart, and fill it with the certainty of a present God! Still the enjoyment of St. Aubert was touched with that pensive melancholy, which gives to every object a mellower tint, and breathes a sacred charm over all around.

They had provided against part of the evil to be encountered from a want of convenient inns, by carrying a stock of provisions in the carriage, so that they might take refreshment on any pleasant spot, in the open air, and pass the nights wherever they should happen to meet with a comfortable cottage. For the mind, also, they had provided, by a work on botany, written by M. Barreaux, and by several of the Latin and Italian poets; while Emily’s pencil enabled her to preserve some of those combinations of forms, which charmed her at every step.

The loneliness of the road, where, only now and then, a peasant was seen driving his mule, or some mountaineer-children at play among the rocks, heightened the effect of the scenery. St. Aubert was so much struck with it, that he determined, if he could hear of a road, to penetrate further among the mountains, and, bending his way rather more to the south, to emerge into Rousillon, and coast the Mediterranean along part of that country to Languedoc.

Soon after mid-day, they reached the summit of one of those cliffs, which, bright with the verdure of palm-trees, adorn, like gems, the tremendous walls of the rocks, and which overlooked the greater part of Gascony, and part of Languedoc. Here was shade, and the fresh water of a spring, that, gliding among the turf, under the trees, thence precipitated itself from rock to rock, till its dashing murmurs were lost in the abyss, though its white foam was long seen amid the darkness of the pines below.

This was a spot well suited for rest, and the travellers alighted to dine, while the mules were unharnessed to browse on the savoury herbs that

enriched this summit.

It was some time before St. Aubert or Emily could withdraw their attention from the surrounding objects, so as to partake of their little repast. Seated in the shade of the palms, St. Aubert pointed out to her observation the course of the rivers, the situation of great towns, and the boundaries of provinces, which science, rather than the eye, enabled him to describe. Notwithstanding this occupation, when he had talked awhile he suddenly became silent, thoughtful, and tears often swelled to his eyes, which Emily observed, and the sympathy of her own heart told her their cause. The scene before them bore some resemblance, though it was on a much grander scale, to a favourite one of the late Madame St. Aubert, within view of the fishing-house. They both observed this, and thought how delighted she would have been with the present landscape, while they knew that her eyes must never, never more open upon this world. St. Aubert remembered the last time of his visiting that spot in company with her, and also the mournfully presaging thoughts which had then arisen in his mind, and were now, even thus soon, realized! The recollections subdued him, and he abruptly rose from his seat, and walked away to where no eye could observe his grief.

When he returned, his countenance had recovered its usual serenity; he took Emily’s hand, pressed it affectionately, without speaking, and soon after called to the muleteer, who sat at a little distance, concerning a road among the mountains towards Rousillon. Michael said, there were several that way, but he did not know how far they extended, or even whether they were passable; and St. Aubert, who did not intend to travel after sun-set, asked what village they could reach about that time. The muleteer calculated that they could easily reach Mateau, which was in their present road; but that, if they took a road that sloped more to the south, towards Rousillon, there was a hamlet, which he thought they could gain before the evening shut in.

St. Aubert, after some hesitation, determined to take the latter course, and Michael, having finished his meal, and harnessed his mules, again set forward, but soon stopped; and St. Aubert saw him doing homage to a cross, that stood on a rock impending over their way. Having concluded his devotions, he smacked his whip in the air, and, in spite of the rough road, and the pain of his poor mules, which he had been lately lamenting,

rattled, in a full gallop, along the edge of a precipice, which it made the eye dizzy to look down. Emily was terrified almost to fainting; and St. Aubert, apprehending still greater danger from suddenly stopping the driver, was compelled to sit quietly, and trust his fate to the strength and discretion of the mules, who seemed to possess a greater portion of the latter quality than their master; for they carried the travellers safely into the valley, and there stopped upon the brink of the rivulet that watered it.

Leaving the splendour of extensive prospects, they now entered this narrow valley screened by

Rocks on rocks piled, as if by magic spell,

Here scorch'd by lightnings, there with ivy green.

The scene of barrenness was here and there interrupted by the spreading branches of the larch and cedar, which threw their gloom over the cliff, or athwart the torrent that rolled in the vale. No living creature appeared, except the izard, scrambling among the rocks, and often hanging upon points so dangerous, that fancy shrunk from the view of them. This was such a scene as SALVATOR would have chosen, had he then existed, for his canvas; St. Aubert, impressed by the romantic character of the place, almost expected to see banditti start from behind some projecting rock, and he kept his hand upon the arms with which he always travelled.

As they advanced, the valley opened; its savage features gradually softened, and, towards evening, they were among heathy mountains, stretched in far perspective, along which the solitary sheep-bell was heard, and the voice of the shepherd calling his wandering flocks to the nightly fold. His cabin, partly shadowed by the cork-tree and the ilex, which St. Aubert observed to flourish in higher regions of the air than any other trees, except the fir, was all the human habitation that yet appeared. Along the bottom of this valley the most vivid verdure was spread; and, in the little hollow recesses of the mountains, under the shade of the oak and chestnut, herds of cattle were grazing. Groups of them, too, were often seen reposing on the banks of the rivulet, or laving their sides in the cool stream, and sipping its wave.

The sun was now setting upon the valley; its last light gleamed upon the water, and heightened the rich yellow and purple tints of the heath and broom, that overspread the mountains. St. Aubert enquired of Michael the distance to the hamlet he had mentioned, but the man could not with

certainty tell; and Emily began to fear that he had mistaken the road. Here was no human being to assist, or direct them; they had left the shepherd and his cabin far behind, and the scene became so obscured in twilight, that the eye could not follow the distant perspective of the valley in search of a cottage, or a hamlet. A glow of the horizon still marked the west, and this was of some little use to the travellers. Michael seemed endeavouring to keep up his courage by singing; his music, however, was not of a kind to disperse melancholy; he sung, in a sort of chant, one of the most dismal ditties his present auditors had ever heard, and St. Aubert at length discovered it to be a vesper-hymn to his favourite saint.

They travelled on, sunk in that thoughtful melancholy, with which twilight and solitude impress the mind. Michael had now ended his ditty, and nothing was heard but the drowsy murmur of the breeze among the woods, and its light flutter, as it blew freshly into the carriage. They were at length roused by the sound of firearms. St. Aubert called to the muleteer to stop, and they listened. The noise was not repeated; but presently they heard a rustling among the brakes. St. Aubert drew forth a pistol, and ordered Michael to proceed as fast as possible; who had not long obeyed, before a horn sounded, that made the mountains ring. He looked again from the window, and then saw a young man spring from the bushes into the road, followed by a couple of dogs. The stranger was in a hunter’s dress. His gun was slung across his shoulders, the hunter’s horn hung from his belt, and in his hand was a small pike, which, as he held it, added to the manly grace of his figure, and assisted the agility of his steps.

After a moment’s hesitation, St. Aubert again stopped the carriage, and waited till he came up, that they might enquire concerning the hamlet they were in search of. The stranger informed him, that it was only half a league distant, that he was going thither himself, and would readily shew the way. St. Aubert thanked him for the offer, and, pleased with his chevalier-like air and open countenance, asked him to take a seat in the carriage; which the stranger, with an acknowledgment, declined, adding that he would keep pace with the mules. ‘But I fear you will be wretchedly accommodated,’ said he: ‘the inhabitants of these mountains are a simple people, who are not only without the luxuries of life, but almost destitute of what in other places are held to be its necessaries.’

‘I perceive you are not one of its inhabitants, sir,’ said St. Aubert.

‘No, sir, I am only a wanderer here.’

The carriage drove on, and the increasing dusk made the travellers very thankful that they had a guide; the frequent glens, too, that now opened among the mountains, would likewise have added to their perplexity. Emily, as she looked up one of these, saw something at a great distance like a bright cloud in the air. ‘What light is yonder, sir?’ said she.

St. Aubert looked, and perceived that it was the snowy summit of a mountain, so much higher than any around it, that it still reflected the sun’s rays, while those below lay in deep shade.

At length, the village lights were seen to twinkle through the dusk, and, soon after, some cottages were discovered in the valley, or rather were seen by reflection in the stream, on whose margin they stood, and which still gleamed with the evening light.

The stranger now came up, and St. Aubert, on further enquiry, found not only that there was no inn in the place, but not any sort of house of public reception. The stranger, however, offered to walk on, and enquire for a cottage to accommodate them; for which further civility St. Aubert returned his thanks, and said, that, as the village was so near, he would alight, and walk with him. Emily followed slowly in the carriage.

On the way, St. Aubert asked his companion what success he had had in the chase. ‘Not much, sir,’ he replied, ‘nor do I aim at it. I am pleased with the country, and mean to saunter away a few weeks among its scenes. My dogs I take with me more for companionship than for game. This dress, too, gives me an ostensible business, and procures me that respect from the people, which would, perhaps, be refused to a lonely stranger, who had no visible motive for coming among them.’

‘I admire your taste,’ said St. Aubert, ‘and, if I was a younger man, should like to pass a few weeks in your way exceedingly. I, too, am a wanderer, but neither my plan nor pursuits are exactly like yours — I go in search of health, as much as of amusement.’ St. Aubert sighed, and paused; and then, seeming to recollect himself, he resumed: ‘If I can hear of a tolerable road, that shall afford decent accommodation, it is my intention to pass into Rousillon, and along the seashore to Languedoc. You, sir, seem to be acquainted with the country, and can, perhaps, give me information on the subject.’

The stranger said, that what information he could give was entirely at his service; and then mentioned a road rather more to the east, which led to a town, whence it would be easy to proceed into Rousillon.

They now arrived at the village, and commenced their search for a cottage, that would afford a night's lodging. In several, which they entered, ignorance, poverty, and mirth seemed equally to prevail; and the owners eyed St. Aubert with a mixture of curiosity and timidity. Nothing like a bed could be found, and he had ceased to enquire for one, when Emily joined him, who observed the languor of her father's countenance, and lamented, that he had taken a road so ill provided with the comforts necessary for an invalid. Other cottages, which they examined, seemed somewhat less savage than the former, consisting of two rooms, if such they could be called; the first of these occupied by mules and pigs, the second by the family, which generally consisted of six or eight children, with their parents, who slept on beds of skins and dried beech leaves, spread upon a mud floor. Here, light was admitted, and smoke discharged, through an aperture in the roof; and here the scent of spirits (for the travelling smugglers, who haunted the Pyrenees, had made this rude people familiar with the use of liquors) was generally perceptible enough. Emily turned from such scenes, and looked at her father with anxious tenderness, which the young stranger seemed to observe; for, drawing St. Aubert aside, he made him an offer of his own bed. 'It is a decent one,' said he, 'when compared with what we have just seen, yet such as in other circumstances I should be ashamed to offer you.' St. Aubert acknowledged how much he felt himself obliged by this kindness, but refused to accept it, till the young stranger would take no denial. 'Do not give me the pain of knowing, sir,' said he, 'that an invalid, like you, lies on hard skins, while I sleep in a bed. Besides, sir, your refusal wounds my pride; I must believe you think my offer unworthy your acceptance. Let me shew you the way. I have no doubt my landlady can accommodate this young lady also.'

St. Aubert at length consented, that, if this could be done, he would accept his kindness, though he felt rather surprised, that the stranger had proved himself so deficient in gallantry, as to administer to the repose of an infirm man, rather than to that of a very lovely young woman, for he had not once offered the room for Emily. But she thought not of herself,

and the animated smile she gave him, told how much she felt herself obliged for the preference of her father.

On their way, the stranger, whose name was Valancourt, stepped on first to speak to his hostess, and she came out to welcome St. Aubert into a cottage, much superior to any he had seen. This good woman seemed very willing to accommodate the strangers, who were soon compelled to accept the only two beds in the place. Eggs and milk were the only food the cottage afforded; but against scarcity of provisions St. Aubert had provided, and he requested Valancourt to stay, and partake with him of less homely fare; an invitation, which was readily accepted, and they passed an hour in intelligent conversation. St. Aubert was much pleased with the manly frankness, simplicity, and keen susceptibility to the grandeur of nature, which his new acquaintance discovered; and, indeed, he had often been heard to say, that, without a certain simplicity of heart, this taste could not exist in any strong degree.

The conversation was interrupted by a violent uproar without, in which the voice of the muleteer was heard above every other sound. Valancourt started from his seat, and went to enquire the occasion; but the dispute continued so long afterwards, that St. Aubert went himself, and found Michael quarrelling with the hostess, because she had refused to let his mules lie in a little room where he and three of her sons were to pass the night. The place was wretched enough, but there was no other for these people to sleep in; and, with somewhat more of delicacy than was usual among the inhabitants of this wild tract of country, she persisted in refusing to let the animals have the same BEDCHAMBER with her children. This was a tender point with the muleteer; his honour was wounded when his mules were treated with disrespect, and he would have received a blow, perhaps, with more meekness. He declared that his beasts were as honest beasts, and as good beasts, as any in the whole province; and that they had a right to be well treated wherever they went. ‘They are as harmless as lambs,’ said he, ‘if people don’t affront them. I never knew them behave themselves amiss above once or twice in my life, and then they had good reason for doing so. Once, indeed, they kicked at a boy’s leg that lay asleep in the stable, and broke it; but I told them they were out

there, and by St. Anthony! I believe they understood me, for they never did so again.’

He concluded this eloquent harangue with protesting, that they should share with him, go where he would.

The dispute was at length settled by Valancourt, who drew the hostess aside, and desired she would let the muleteer and his beasts have the place in question to themselves, while her sons should have the bed of skins designed for him, for that he would wrap himself in his cloak, and sleep on the bench by the cottage door. But this she thought it her duty to oppose, and she felt it to be her inclination to disappoint the muleteer. Valancourt, however, was positive, and the tedious affair was at length settled.

It was late when St. Aubert and Emily retired to their rooms, and Valancourt to his station at the door, which, at this mild season, he preferred to a close cabin and a bed of skins. St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to find in his room volumes of Homer, Horace, and Petrarch; but the name of Valancourt, written in them, told him to whom they belonged.

CHAPTER IV

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene,
In darkness, and in storm he found delight;
Nor less than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffus’d his dazzling sheen.
Even sad vicissitude amus’d his soul;
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish’d not to controul.

THE MINSTREL

St. Aubert awoke at an early hour, refreshed by sleep, and desirous to set forward. He invited the stranger to breakfast with him; and, talking again of the road, Valancourt said, that, some months past, he had travelled as far as Beaujeu, which was a town of some consequence on the way to Rousillon. He recommended it to St. Aubert to take that route, and the latter determined to do so.

'The road from this hamlet,' said Valancourt, 'and that to Beaujeu, part at the distance of about a league and a half from hence; if you will give me leave, I will direct your muleteer so far. I must wander somewhere, and your company would make this a pleasanter ramble than any other I could take.'

St. Aubert thankfully accepted his offer, and they set out together, the young stranger on foot, for he refused the invitation of St. Aubert to take a seat in his little carriage.

The road wound along the feet of the mountains through a pastoral valley, bright with verdure, and varied with groves of dwarf oak, beech and sycamore, under whose branches herds of cattle reposed. The mountain-ash too, and the weeping birch, often threw their pendant foliage over the steeps above, where the scanty soil scarcely concealed their roots, and where their light branches waved to every breeze that fluttered from the mountains.

The travellers were frequently met at this early hour, for the sun had not yet risen upon the valley, by shepherds driving immense flocks from their folds to feed upon the hills. St. Aubert had set out thus early, not only that he might enjoy the first appearance of sunrise, but that he might inhale the first pure breath of morning, which above all things is refreshing to the spirits of the invalid. In these regions it was particularly so, where an abundance of wild flowers and aromatic herbs breathed forth their essence on the air.

The dawn, which softened the scenery with its peculiar grey tint, now dispersed, and Emily watched the progress of the day, first trembling on the tops of the highest cliffs, then touching them with splendid light, while

their sides and the vale below were still wrapt in dewy mist. Meanwhile, the sullen grey of the eastern clouds began to blush, then to redden, and then to glow with a thousand colours, till the golden light darted over all the air, touched the lower points of the mountain's brow, and glanced in long sloping beams upon the valley and its stream. All nature seemed to have awakened from death into life; the spirit of St. Aubert was renovated. His heart was full; he wept, and his thoughts ascended to the Great Creator.

Emily wished to trip along the turf, so green and bright with dew, and to taste the full delight of that liberty, which the izard seemed to enjoy as he bounded along the brow of the cliffs; while Valancourt often stopped to speak with the travellers, and with social feeling to point out to them the peculiar objects of his admiration. St. Aubert was pleased with him: 'Here is the real ingenuousness and ardour of youth,' said he to himself; 'this young man has never been at Paris.'

He was sorry when they came to the spot where the roads parted, and his heart took a more affectionate leave of him than is usual after so short an acquaintance. Valancourt talked long by the side of the carriage; seemed more than once to be going, but still lingered, and appeared to search anxiously for topics of conversation to account for his delay. At length he took leave. As he went, St. Aubert observed him look with an earnest and pensive eye at Emily, who bowed to him with a countenance full of timid sweetness, while the carriage drove on. St. Aubert, for whatever reason, soon after looked from the window, and saw Valancourt standing upon the bank of the road, resting on his pike with folded arms, and following the carriage with his eyes. He waved his hand, and Valancourt, seeming to awake from his reverie, returned the salute, and started away.

The aspect of the country now began to change, and the travellers soon found themselves among mountains covered from their base nearly to their summits with forests of gloomy pine, except where a rock of granite shot up from the vale, and lost its snowy top in the clouds. The rivulet, which had hitherto accompanied them, now expanded into a river; and, flowing deeply and silently along, reflected, as in a mirror, the blackness of the impending shades. Sometimes a cliff was seen lifting its bold head above the woods and the vapours, that floated mid-way down the mountains; and sometimes a face of perpendicular marble rose from the

water’s edge, over which the larch threw his gigantic arms, here scathed with lightning, and there floating in luxuriant foliage.

They continued to travel over a rough and unfrequented road, seeing now and then at a distance the solitary shepherd, with his dog, stalking along the valley, and hearing only the dashing of torrents, which the woods concealed from the eye, the long sullen murmur of the breeze, as it swept over the pines, or the notes of the eagle and the vulture, which were seen towering round the beetling cliff.

Often, as the carriage moved slowly over uneven ground, St. Aubert alighted, and amused himself with examining the curious plants that grew on the banks of the road, and with which these regions abound; while Emily, wrapt in high enthusiasm, wandered away under the shades, listening in deep silence to the lonely murmur of the woods.

Neither village nor hamlet was seen for many leagues; the goat-herd’s or the hunter’s cabin, perched among the cliffs of the rocks, were the only human habitations that appeared.

The travellers again took their dinner in the open air, on a pleasant spot in the valley, under the spreading shade of cedars; and then set forward towards Beaujeu.

The road now began to descend, and, leaving the pine forests behind, wound among rocky precipices. The evening twilight again fell over the scene, and the travellers were ignorant how far they might yet be from Beaujeu. St. Aubert, however, conjectured that the distance could not be very great, and comforted himself with the prospect of travelling on a more frequented road after reaching that town, where he designed to pass the night. Mingled woods, and rocks, and heathy mountains were now seen obscurely through the dusk; but soon even these imperfect images faded in darkness. Michael proceeded with caution, for he could scarcely distinguish the road; his mules, however, seemed to have more sagacity, and their steps were sure.

On turning the angle of a mountain, a light appeared at a distance, that illumined the rocks, and the horizon to a great extent. It was evidently a large fire, but whether accidental, or otherwise, there were no means of knowing. St. Aubert thought it was probably kindled by some of the numerous banditti, that infested the Pyrenees, and he became watchful and anxious to know whether the road passed near this fire. He had arms with

him, which, on an emergency, might afford some protection, though certainly a very unequal one, against a band of robbers, so desperate too as those usually were who haunted these wild regions. While many reflections rose upon his mind, he heard a voice shouting from the road behind, and ordering the muleteer to stop. St. Aubert bade him proceed as fast as possible; but either Michael, or his mules were obstinate, for they did not quit the old pace. Horses' feet were now heard; a man rode up to the carriage, still ordering the driver to stop; and St. Aubert, who could no longer doubt his purpose, was with difficulty able to prepare a pistol for his defence, when his hand was upon the door of the chaise. The man staggered on his horse, the report of the pistol was followed by a groan, and St. Aubert's horror may be imagined, when in the next instant he thought he heard the faint voice of Valancourt. He now himself bade the muleteer stop; and, pronouncing the name of Valancourt, was answered in a voice, that no longer suffered him to doubt. St. Aubert, who instantly alighted and went to his assistance, found him still sitting on his horse, but bleeding profusely, and appearing to be in great pain, though he endeavoured to soften the terror of St. Aubert by assurances that he was not materially hurt, the wound being only in his arm. St. Aubert, with the muleteer, assisted him to dismount, and he sat down on the bank of the road, where St. Aubert tried to bind up his arm, but his hands trembled so excessively that he could not accomplish it; and, Michael being now gone in pursuit of the horse, which, on being disengaged from his rider, had galloped off, he called Emily to his assistance. Receiving no answer, he went to the carriage, and found her sunk on the seat in a fainting fit. Between the distress of this circumstance and that of leaving Valancourt bleeding, he scarcely knew what he did; he endeavoured, however, to raise her, and called to Michael to fetch water from the rivulet that flowed by the road, but Michael was gone beyond the reach of his voice. Valancourt, who heard these calls, and also the repeated name of Emily, instantly understood the subject of his distress; and, almost forgetting his own condition, he hastened to her relief. She was reviving when he reached the carriage; and then, understanding that anxiety for him had occasioned her indisposition, he assured her, in a voice that trembled, but not from anguish, that his wound was of no consequence. While he said this St. Aubert turned round, and perceiving that he was still bleeding, the subject

of his alarm changed again, and he hastily formed some handkerchiefs into a bandage. This stopped the effusion of the blood; but St. Aubert, dreading the consequence of the wound, enquired repeatedly how far they were from Beaujeu; when, learning that it was at two leagues' distance, his distress increased, since he knew not how Valancourt, in his present state, would bear the motion of the carriage, and perceived that he was already faint from loss of blood. When he mentioned the subject of his anxiety, Valancourt entreated that he would not suffer himself to be thus alarmed on his account, for that he had no doubt he should be able to support himself very well; and then he talked of the accident as a slight one. The muleteer being now returned with Valancourt's horse, assisted him into the chaise; and, as Emily was now revived, they moved slowly on towards Beaujeu.

St. Aubert, when he had recovered from the terror occasioned him by this accident, expressed surprise on seeing Valancourt, who explained his unexpected appearance by saying, 'You, sir, renewed my taste for society; when you had left the hamlet, it did indeed appear a solitude. I determined, therefore, since my object was merely amusement, to change the scene; and I took this road, because I knew it led through a more romantic tract of mountains than the spot I have left. Besides,' added he, hesitating for an instant, 'I will own, and why should I not? that I had some hope of overtaking you.'

'And I have made you a very unexpected return for the compliment,' said St. Aubert, who lamented again the rashness which had produced the accident, and explained the cause of his late alarm. But Valancourt seemed anxious only to remove from the minds of his companions every unpleasant feeling relative to himself; and, for that purpose, still struggled against a sense of pain, and tried to converse with gaiety. Emily meanwhile was silent, except when Valancourt particularly addressed her, and there was at those times a tremulous tone in his voice that spoke much.

They were now so near the fire, which had long flamed at a distance on the blackness of night, that it gleamed upon the road, and they could distinguish figures moving about the blaze. The way winding still nearer, they perceived in the valley one of those numerous bands of gipsies, which at that period particularly haunted the wilds of the Pyrenees, and lived

partly by plundering the traveller. Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these people, shewn by the fire, which heightened the romantic effects of the scenery, as it threw a red dusky gleam upon the rocks and on the foliage of the trees, leaving heavy masses of shade and regions of obscurity, which the eye feared to penetrate.

They were preparing their supper; a large pot stood by the fire, over which several figures were busy. The blaze discovered a rude kind of tent, round which many children and dogs were playing, and the whole formed a picture highly grotesque. The travellers saw plainly their danger. Valancourt was silent, but laid his hand on one of St. Aubert's pistols; St. Aubert drew forth another, and Michael was ordered to proceed as fast as possible. They passed the place, however, without being attacked; the rovers being probably unprepared for the opportunity, and too busy about their supper to feel much interest, at the moment, in any thing besides.

After a league and a half more, passed in darkness, the travellers arrived at Beaujeu, and drove up to the only inn the place afforded; which, though superior to any they had seen since they entered the mountains, was bad enough.

The surgeon of the town was immediately sent for, if a surgeon he could be called, who prescribed for horses as well as for men, and shaved faces at least as dexterously as he set bones. After examining Valancourt's arm, and perceiving that the bullet had passed through the flesh without touching the bone, he dressed it, and left him with a solemn prescription of quiet, which his patient was not inclined to obey. The delight of ease had now succeeded to pain; for ease may be allowed to assume a positive quality when contrasted with anguish; and, his spirits thus reanimated, he wished to partake of the conversation of St. Aubert and Emily, who, released from so many apprehensions, were uncommonly cheerful. Late as it was, however, St. Aubert was obliged to go out with the landlord to buy meat for supper; and Emily, who, during this interval, had been absent as long as she could, upon excuses of looking to their accommodation, which she found rather better than she expected, was compelled to return, and converse with Valancourt alone. They talked of the character of the scenes they had passed, of the natural history of the country, of poetry, and of St. Aubert; a subject on which Emily always spoke and listened to with peculiar pleasure.

The travellers passed an agreeable evening; but St. Aubert was fatigued with his journey; and, as Valancourt seemed again sensible of pain, they separated soon after supper.

In the morning St. Aubert found that Valancourt had passed a restless night; that he was feverish, and his wound very painful. The surgeon, when he dressed it, advised him to remain quietly at Beaujeu; advice which was too reasonable to be rejected. St. Aubert, however, had no favourable opinion of this practitioner, and was anxious to commit Valancourt into more skilful hands; but learning, upon enquiry, that there was no town within several leagues which seemed more likely to afford better advice, he altered the plan of his journey, and determined to await the recovery of Valancourt, who, with somewhat more ceremony than sincerity, made many objections to this delay.

By order of his surgeon, Valancourt did not go out of the house that day; but St. Aubert and Emily surveyed with delight the environs of the town, situated at the feet of the Pyrenean Alps, that rose, some in abrupt precipices, and others swelling with woods of cedar, fir, and cypress, which stretched nearly to their highest summits. The cheerful green of the beech and mountain-ash was sometimes seen, like a gleam of light, amidst the dark verdure of the forest; and sometimes a torrent poured its sparkling flood, high among the woods.

Valancourt's indisposition detained the travellers at Beaujeu several days, during which interval St. Aubert had observed his disposition and his talents with the philosophic inquiry so natural to him. He saw a frank and generous nature, full of ardour, highly susceptible of whatever is grand and beautiful, but impetuous, wild, and somewhat romantic. Valancourt had known little of the world. His perceptions were clear, and his feelings just; his indignation of an unworthy, or his admiration of a generous action, were expressed in terms of equal vehemence. St. Aubert sometimes smiled at his warmth, but seldom checked it, and often repeated to himself, 'This young man has never been at Paris.' A sigh sometimes followed this silent ejaculation. He determined not to leave Valancourt till he should be perfectly recovered; and, as he was now well enough to travel, though not able to manage his horse, St. Aubert invited him to accompany him for a few days in the carriage. This he the more readily did, since he had discovered that Valancourt was of a family of the same name in Gascony,

with whose respectability he was well acquainted. The latter accepted the offer with great pleasure, and they again set forward among these romantic wilds about Rousillon.

They travelled leisurely; stopping wherever a scene uncommonly grand appeared; frequently alighting to walk to an eminence, whither the mules could not go, from which the prospect opened in greater magnificence; and often sauntering over hillocks covered with lavender, wild thyme, juniper, and tamarisc; and under the shades of woods, between those boles they caught the long mountain-vista, sublime beyond any thing that Emily had ever imagined.

St. Aubert sometimes amused himself with botanizing, while Valancourt and Emily strolled on; he pointing out to her notice the objects that particularly charmed him, and reciting beautiful passages from such of the Latin and Italian poets as he had heard her admire. In the pauses of conversation, when he thought himself not observed, he frequently fixed his eyes pensively on her countenance, which expressed with so much animation the taste and energy of her mind; and when he spoke again, there was a peculiar tenderness in the tone of his voice, that defeated any attempt to conceal his sentiments. By degrees these silent pauses became more frequent; till Emily, only, betrayed an anxiety to interrupt them; and she; who had been hitherto reserved, would now talk again, and again, of the woods and the vallies and the mountains, to avoid the danger of sympathy and silence.

From Beaujeu the road had constantly ascended, conducting the travellers into the higher regions of the air, where immense glaciers exhibited their frozen horrors, and eternal snow whitened the summits of the mountains. They often paused to contemplate these stupendous scenes, and, seated on some wild cliff, where only the ilex or the larch could flourish, looked over dark forests of fir, and precipices where human foot had never wandered, into the glen — so deep, that the thunder of the torrent, which was seen to foam along the bottom, was scarcely heard to murmur. Over these crags rose others of stupendous height, and fantastic shape; some shooting into cones; others impending far over their base, in huge masses of granite, along whose broken ridges was often lodged a weight of snow, that, trembling even to the vibration of a sound, threatened to bear destruction in its course to the vale. Around, on every side, far as

the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur — the long perspective of mountain-tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; vallies of ice, and forests of gloomy fir. The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt. A solemn expression characterized the feelings of St. Aubert; tears often came to his eyes, and he frequently walked away from his companions. Valancourt now and then spoke, to point to Emily's notice some feature of the scene. The thinness of the atmosphere, through which every object came so distinctly to the eye, surprised and deluded her; who could scarcely believe that objects, which appeared so near, were, in reality, so distant. The deep silence of these solitudes was broken only at intervals by the scream of the vultures, seen cowering round some cliff below, or by the cry of the eagle sailing high in the air; except when the travellers listened to the hollow thunder that sometimes muttered at their feet. While, above, the deep blue of the heavens was unobscured by the lightest cloud, half way down the mountains, long billows of vapour were frequently seen rolling, now wholly excluding the country below, and now opening, and partially revealing its features. Emily delighted to observe the grandeur of these clouds as they changed in shape and tints, and to watch their various effect on the lower world, whose features, partly veiled, were continually assuming new forms of sublimity.

After traversing these regions for many leagues, they began to descend towards Rousillon, and features of beauty then mingled with the scene. Yet the travellers did not look back without some regret to the sublime objects they had quitted; though the eye, fatigued with the extension of its powers, was glad to repose on the verdure of woods and pastures, that now hung on the margin of the river below; to view again the humble cottage shaded by cedars, the playful group of mountaineer-children, and the flowery nooks that appeared among the hills.

As they descended, they saw at a distance, on the right, one of the grand passes of the Pyrenees into Spain, gleaming with its battlements and towers to the splendour of the setting rays, yellow tops of woods colouring

the steeps below, while far above aspired the snowy points of the mountains, still reflecting a rosy hue.

St. Aubert began to look out for the little town he had been directed to by the people of Beaujeu, and where he meant to pass the night; but no habitation yet appeared. Of its distance Valancourt could not assist him to judge, for he had never been so far along this chain of Alps before. There was, however, a road to guide them; and there could be little doubt that it was the right one; for, since they had left Beaujeu, there had been no variety of tracks to perplex or mislead.

The sun now gave his last light, and St. Aubert bade the muleteer proceed with all possible dispatch. He found, indeed, the lassitude of illness return upon him, after a day of uncommon fatigue, both of body and mind, and he longed for repose. His anxiety was not soothed by observing a numerous train, consisting of men, horses, and loaded mules, winding down the steeps of an opposite mountain, appearing and disappearing at intervals among the woods, so that its numbers could not be judged of. Something bright, like arms, glanced in the setting ray, and the military dress was distinguishable upon the men who were in the van, and on others scattered among the troop that followed. As these wound into the vale, the rear of the party emerged from the woods, and exhibited a band of soldiers. St. Aubert’s apprehensions now subsided; he had no doubt that the train before him consisted of smugglers, who, in conveying prohibited goods over the Pyrenees, had been encountered, and conquered by a party of troops.

The travellers had lingered so long among the sublimer scenes of these mountains, that they found themselves entirely mistaken in their calculation that they could reach Montigny at sun-set; but, as they wound along the valley, the saw, on a rude Alpine bridge, that united two lofty crags of the glen, a group of mountaineer-children, amusing themselves with dropping pebbles into a torrent below, and watching the stones plunge into the water, that threw up its white spray high in the air as it received them, and returned a sullen sound, which the echoes of the mountains prolonged. Under the bridge was seen a perspective of the valley, with its cataract descending among the rocks, and a cottage on a cliff, overshadowed with pines. It appeared, that they could not be far from some small town. St. Aubert bade the muleteer stop, and then called to the

children to enquire if he was near Montigny; but the distance, and the roaring of the waters, would not suffer his voice to be heard; and the crags, adjoining the bridge, were of such tremendous height and steepness, that to have climbed either would have been scarcely practicable to a person unacquainted with the ascent. St. Aubert, therefore, did not waste more moments in delay. They continued to travel long after twilight had obscured the road, which was so broken, that, now thinking it safer to walk than to ride, they all alighted. The moon was rising, but her light was yet too feeble to assist them. While they stepped carefully on, they heard the vesper-bell of a convent. The twilight would not permit them to distinguish anything like a building, but the sounds seemed to come from some woods, that overhung an acclivity to the right. Valancourt proposed to go in search of this convent. ‘If they will not accommodate us with a night’s lodging,’ said he, ‘they may certainly inform us how far we are from Montigny, and direct us towards it.’ He was bounding forward, without waiting St. Aubert’s reply, when the latter stopped him. ‘I am very weary,’ said St. Aubert, ‘and wish for nothing so much as for immediate rest. We will all go to the convent; your good looks would defeat our purpose; but when they see mine and Emily’s exhausted countenances, they will scarcely deny us repose.’

As he said this, he took Emily’s arm within his, and, telling Michael to wait awhile in the road with the carriage, they began to ascend towards the woods, guided by the bell of the convent. His steps were feeble, and Valancourt offered him his arm, which he accepted. The moon now threw a faint light over their path, and, soon after, enabled them to distinguish some towers rising above the tops of the woods. Still following the note of the bell, they entered the shade of those woods, lighted only by the moonbeams, that glided down between the leaves, and threw a tremulous uncertain gleam upon the steep track they were winding. The gloom and the silence that prevailed, except when the bell returned upon the air, together with the wildness of the surrounding scene, struck Emily with a degree of fear, which, however, the voice and conversation of Valancourt somewhat repressed. When they had been some time ascending, St. Aubert complained of weariness, and they stopped to rest upon a little green summit, where the trees opened, and admitted the moonlight. He sat down upon the turf, between Emily and Valancourt. The bell had now ceased,

and the deep repose of the scene was undisturbed by any sound, for the low dull murmur of some distant torrents might be said to sooth, rather than to interrupt, the silence.

Before them, extended the valley they had quitted; its rocks, and woods to the left, just silvered by the rays, formed a contrast to the deep shadow, that involved the opposite cliffs, whose fringed summits only were tipped with light; while the distant perspective of the valley was lost in the yellow mist of moonlight. The travellers sat for some time wrapt in the complacency which such scenes inspire.

‘These scenes,’ said Valancourt, at length, ‘soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings, disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love — I always seem to love more in such an hour as this.’ His voice trembled, and he paused.

St. Aubert was silent; Emily perceived a warm tear fall upon the hand he held; she knew the object of his thoughts; hers too had, for some time, been occupied by the remembrance of her mother. He seemed by an effort to rouse himself. ‘Yes,’ said he, with an half-suppressed sigh, ‘the memory of those we love — of times for ever past! in such an hour as this steals upon the mind, like a strain of distant music in the stillness of night; — all tender and harmonious as this landscape, sleeping in the mellow moonlight.’ After the pause of a moment, St. Aubert added, ‘I have always fancied, that I thought with more clearness, and precision, at such an hour than at any other, and that heart must be insensible in a great degree, that does not soften to its influence. But many such there are.’

Valancourt sighed.

‘Are there, indeed, many such?’ said Emily.

‘A few years hence, my Emily,’ replied St. Aubert, ‘and you may smile at the recollection of that question — if you do not weep to it. But come, I am somewhat refreshed, let us proceed.’

Having emerged from the woods, they saw, upon a turfy hillock above, the convent of which they were in search. A high wall, that surrounded it, led them to an ancient gate, at which they knocked; and the poor monk, who opened it, conducted them into a small adjoining room, where he desired they would wait while he informed the superior of their request. In

this interval, several friars came in separately to look at them; and at length the first monk returned, and they followed him to a room, where the superior was sitting in an armchair, with a large folio volume, printed in black letter, open on a desk before him. He received them with courtesy, though he did not rise from his seat; and, having asked them a few questions, granted their request. After a short conversation, formal and solemn on the part of the superior, they withdrew to the apartment where they were to sup, and Valancourt, whom one of the inferior friars civilly desired to accompany, went to seek Michael and his mules. They had not descended half way down the cliffs, before they heard the voice of the muleteer echoing far and wide. Sometimes he called on St. Aubert, and sometimes on Valancourt; who having, at length, convinced him that he had nothing to fear either for himself, or his master; and having disposed of him, for the night, in a cottage on the skirts of the woods, returned to sup with his friends, on such sober fare as the monks thought it prudent to set before them. While St. Aubert was too much indisposed to share it, Emily, in her anxiety for her father, forgot herself; and Valancourt, silent and thoughtful, yet never inattentive to them, appeared particularly solicitous to accommodate and relieve St. Aubert, who often observed, while his daughter was pressing him to eat, or adjusting the pillow she had placed in the back of his armchair, that Valancourt fixed on her a look of pensive tenderness, which he was not displeased to understand.

They separated at an early hour, and retired to their respective apartments. Emily was shown to hers by a nun of the convent, whom she was glad to dismiss, for her heart was melancholy, and her attention so much abstracted, that conversation with a stranger was painful. She thought her father daily declining, and attributed his present fatigue more to the feeble state of his frame, than to the difficulty of the journey. A train of gloomy ideas haunted her mind, till she fell asleep.

In about two hours after, she was awakened by the chiming of a bell, and then heard quick steps pass along the gallery, into which her chamber opened. She was so little accustomed to the manners of a convent, as to be alarmed by this circumstance; her fears, ever alive for her father, suggested that he was very ill, and she rose in haste to go to him. Having paused, however, to let the persons in the gallery pass before she opened her door, her thoughts, in the mean time, recovered from the confusion of

sleep, and she understood that the bell was the call of the monks to prayers. It had now ceased, and, all being again still, she forbore to go to St. Aubert's room. Her mind was not disposed for immediate sleep, and the moonlight, that shone into her chamber, invited her to open the casement, and look out upon the country.

It was a still and beautiful night, the sky was unobscured by any cloud, and scarce a leaf of the woods beneath trembled in the air. As she listened, the midnight hymn of the monks rose softly from a chapel, that stood on one of the lower cliffs, an holy strain, that seemed to ascend through the silence of night to heaven, and her thoughts ascended with it. From the consideration of His works, her mind arose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power; wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God, and the majesty of His presence appeared. Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature; such devotion as can, perhaps, only be experienced, when the mind, rescued, for a moment, from the humbleness of earthly considerations, aspires to contemplate His power in the sublimity of His works, and His goodness in the infinity of His blessings.

Is it not now the hour,
The holy hour, when to the cloudless height
Of yon starred concave climbs the full-orbed moon,
And to this nether world in solemn stillness,
Gives sign, that, to the list'ning ear of Heaven
Religion's voice should plead? The very babe
Knows this, and, chance awak'd, his little hands
Lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch
Calls down a blessing.*

*Caractacus

The midnight chant of the monks soon after dropped into silence; but Emily remained at the casement, watching the setting moon, and the valley sinking into deep shade, and willing to prolong her present state of mind. At length she retired to her mattress, and sunk into tranquil slumber.

CHAPTER V

While in the rosy vale
Love breath’d his infant sighs, from anguish free.
Thomson

St. Aubert, sufficiently restored by a night’s repose to pursue his journey, set out in the morning, with his family and Valancourt, for Rousillon, which he hoped to reach before night-fall. The scenes, through which they now passed, were as wild and romantic, as any they had yet observed, with this difference, that beauty, every now and then, softened the landscape into smiles. Little woody recesses appeared among the mountains, covered with bright verdure and flowers; or a pastoral valley opened its grassy bosom in the shade of the cliffs, with flocks and herds loitering along the banks of a rivulet, that refreshed it with perpetual green. St. Aubert could not repent the having taken this fatiguing road, though he was this day, also, frequently obliged to alight, to walk along the rugged precipice, and to climb the steep and flinty mountain. The wonderful sublimity and variety of the prospects repaid him for all this, and the enthusiasm, with which they were viewed by his young companions, heightened his own, and awakened a remembrance of all the delightful emotions of his early days, when the sublime charms of nature were first unveiled to him. He found great pleasure in conversing with Valancourt, and in listening to his ingenuous remarks. The fire and simplicity of his manners seemed to render him a characteristic figure in the scenes around them; and St. Aubert discovered in his sentiments the justness and the dignity of an elevated mind, unbiased by intercourse with the world. He perceived, that his opinions were formed, rather than imbibed; were more the result of thought, than of learning. Of the world he seemed to know nothing; for he believed well of all mankind, and this opinion gave him the reflected image of his own heart.

St. Aubert, as he sometimes lingered to examine the wild plants in his path, often looked forward with pleasure to Emily and Valancourt, as they strolled on together; he, with a countenance of animated delight, pointing to her attention some grand feature of the scene; and she, listening and observing with a look of tender seriousness, that spoke the elevation of her mind. They appeared like two lovers who had never strayed beyond these

their native mountains; whose situation had secluded them from the frivolities of common life, whose ideas were simple and grand, like the landscapes among which they moved, and who knew no other happiness, than in the union of pure and affectionate hearts. St. Aubert smiled, and sighed at the romantic picture of felicity his fancy drew; and sighed again to think, that nature and simplicity were so little known to the world, as that their pleasures were thought romantic.

'The world,' said he, pursuing this train of thought, 'ridicules a passion which it seldom feels; its scenes, and its interests, distract the mind, deprave the taste, corrupt the heart, and love cannot exist in a heart that has lost the meek dignity of innocence. Virtue and taste are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste, and the most delicate affections of each combine in real love. How then are we to look for love in great cities, where selfishness, dissipation, and insincerity supply the place of tenderness, simplicity and truth?'

It was near noon, when the travellers, having arrived at a piece of steep and dangerous road, alighted to walk. The road wound up an ascent, that was clothed with wood, and, instead of following the carriage, they entered the refreshing shade. A dewy coolness was diffused upon the air, which, with the bright verdure of turf, that grew under the trees, the mingled fragrance of flowers and of balm, thyme, and lavender, that enriched it, and the grandeur of the pines, beech, and chestnuts, that overshadowed them, rendered this a most delicious retreat. Sometimes, the thick foliage excluded all view of the country; at others, it admitted some partial catches of the distant scenery, which gave hints to the imagination to picture landscapes more interesting, more impressive, than any that had been presented to the eye. The wanderers often lingered to indulge in these reveries of fancy.

The pauses of silence, such as had formerly interrupted the conversations of Valancourt and Emily, were more frequent today than ever. Valancourt often dropped suddenly from the most animating vivacity into fits of deep musing, and there was, sometimes, an unaffected melancholy in his smile, which Emily could not avoid understanding, for her heart was interested in the sentiment it spoke.

St. Aubert was refreshed by the shades, and they continued to saunter under them, following, as nearly as they could guess, the direction of the

road, till they perceived that they had totally lost it. They had continued near the brow of the precipice, allured by the scenery it exhibited, while the road wound far away over the cliff above. Valancourt called loudly to Michael, but heard no voice, except his own, echoing among the rocks, and his various efforts to regain the road were equally unsuccessful. While they were thus circumstanced, they perceived a shepherd's cabin, between the boles of the trees at some distance, and Valancourt bounded on first to ask assistance. When he reached it, he saw only two little children, at play, on the turf before the door. He looked into the hut, but no person was there, and the eldest of the boys told him that their father was with his flocks, and their mother was gone down into the vale, but would be back presently. As he stood, considering what was further to be done, on a sudden he heard Michael's voice roaring forth most manfully among the cliffs above, till he made their echoes ring. Valancourt immediately answered the call, and endeavoured to make his way through the thicket that clothed the steeps, following the direction of the sound. After much struggle over brambles and precipices, he reached Michael, and at length prevailed with him to be silent, and to listen to him. The road was at a considerable distance from the spot where St. Aubert and Emily were; the carriage could not easily return to the entrance of the wood, and, since it would be very fatiguing for St. Aubert to climb the long and steep road to the place where it now stood, Valancourt was anxious to find a more easy ascent, by the way he had himself passed.

Meanwhile St. Aubert and Emily approached the cottage, and rested themselves on a rustic bench, fastened between two pines, which overshadowed it, till Valancourt, whose steps they had observed, should return.

The eldest of the children desisted from his play, and stood still to observe the strangers, while the younger continued his little gambols, and teased his brother to join in them. St. Aubert looked with pleasure upon this picture of infantine simplicity, till it brought to his remembrance his own boys, whom he had lost about the age of these, and their lamented mother; and he sunk into a thoughtfulness, which Emily observing, she immediately began to sing one of those simple and lively airs he was so fond of, and which she knew how to give with the most captivating sweetness. St. Aubert smiled on her through his tears, took her hand and

pressed it affectionately, and then tried to dissipate the melancholy reflections that lingered in his mind.

While she sung, Valancourt approached, who was unwilling to interrupt her, and paused at a little distance to listen. When she had concluded, he joined the party, and told them, that he had found Michael, as well as a way, by which he thought they could ascend the cliff to the carriage. He pointed to the woody steeps above, which St. Aubert surveyed with an anxious eye. He was already wearied by his walk, and this ascent was formidable to him. He thought, however, it would be less toilsome than the long and broken road, and he determined to attempt it; but Emily, ever watchful of his ease, proposing that he should rest, and dine before they proceeded further, Valancourt went to the carriage for the refreshments deposited there.

On his return, he proposed removing a little higher up the mountain, to where the woods opened upon a grand and extensive prospect; and thither they were preparing to go, when they saw a young woman join the children, and caress and weep over them.

The travellers, interested by her distress, stopped to observe her. She took the youngest of the children in her arms, and, perceiving the strangers, hastily dried her tears, and proceeded to the cottage. St. Aubert, on enquiring the occasion of her sorrow, learned that her husband, who was a shepherd, and lived here in the summer months to watch over the flocks he led to feed upon these mountains, had lost, on the preceding night, his little all. A gang of gipsies, who had for some time infested the neighbourhood, had driven away several of his master's sheep. 'Jacques,' added the shepherd's wife, 'had saved a little money, and had bought a few sheep with it, and now they must go to his master for those that are stolen; and what is worse than all, his master, when he comes to know how it is, will trust him no longer with the care of his flocks, for he is a hard man! and then what is to become of our children!'

The innocent countenance of the woman, and the simplicity of her manner in relating her grievance, inclined St. Aubert to believe her story; and Valancourt, convinced that it was true, asked eagerly what was the value of the stolen sheep; on hearing which he turned away with a look of disappointment. St. Aubert put some money into her hand, Emily too gave something from her little purse, and they walked towards the cliff; but

Valancourt lingered behind, and spoke to the shepherd's wife, who was now weeping with gratitude and surprise. He enquired how much money was yet wanting to replace the stolen sheep, and found, that it was a sum very little short of all he had about him. He was perplexed and distressed. 'This sum then,' said he to himself, 'would make this poor family completely happy — it is in my power to give it — to make them completely happy! But what is to become of me? — how shall I contrive to reach home with the little money that will remain?' For a moment he stood, unwilling to forego the luxury of raising a family from ruin to happiness, yet considering the difficulties of pursuing his journey with so small a sum as would be left.

While he was in this state of perplexity, the shepherd himself appeared: his children ran to meet him; he took one of them in his arms, and, with the other clinging to his coat, came forward with a loitering step. His forlorn and melancholy look determined Valancourt at once; he threw down all the money he had, except a very few louis, and bounded away after St. Aubert and Emily, who were proceeding slowly up the steep. Valancourt had seldom felt his heart so light as at this moment; his gay spirits danced with pleasure; every object around him appeared more interesting, or beautiful, than before. St. Aubert observed the uncommon vivacity of his countenance: 'What has pleased you so much?' said he. 'O what a lovely day,' replied Valancourt, 'how brightly the sun shines, how pure is this air, what enchanting scenery!' 'It is indeed enchanting,' said St. Aubert, whom early experience had taught to understand the nature of Valancourt's present feelings. 'What pity that the wealthy, who can command such sunshine, should ever pass their days in gloom — in the cold shade of selfishness! For you, my young friend, may the sun always shine as brightly as at this moment; may your own conduct always give you the sunshine of benevolence and reason united!'

Valancourt, highly flattered by this compliment, could make no reply but by a smile of gratitude.

They continued to wind under the woods, between the grassy knolls of the mountain, and, as they reached the shady summit, which he had pointed out, the whole party burst into an exclamation. Behind the spot where they stood, the rock rose perpendicularly in a massy wall to a considerable height, and then branched out into overhanging crags. Their

grey tints were well contrasted by the bright hues of the plants and wild flowers, that grew in their fractured sides, and were deepened by the gloom of the pines and cedars, that waved above. The steeps below, over which the eye passed abruptly to the valley, were fringed with thickets of alpine shrubs; and, lower still, appeared the tufted tops of the chesnut woods, that clothed their base, among which peeped forth the shepherd's cottage, just left by the travellers, with its blueish smoke curling high in the air. On every side appeared the majestic summits of the Pyrenees, some exhibiting tremendous crags of marble, whose appearance was changing every instant, as the varying lights fell upon their surface; others, still higher, displaying only snowy points, while their lower steeps were covered almost invariably with forests of pine, larch, and oak, that stretched down to the vale. This was one of the narrow vallies, that open from the Pyrenees into the country of Rousillon, and whose green pastures, and cultivated beauty, form a decided and wonderful contrast to the romantic grandeur that environs it. Through a vista of the mountains appeared the lowlands of Rousillon, tinted with the blue haze of distance, as they united with the waters of the Mediterranean; where, on a promontory, which marked the boundary of the shore, stood a lonely beacon, over which were seen circling flights of sea-fowl. Beyond, appeared, now and then, a stealing sail, white with the sunbeam, and whose progress was perceivable by its approach to the lighthouse. Sometimes, too, was seen a sail so distant, that it served only to mark the line of separation between the sky and the waves.

On the other side of the valley, immediately opposite to the spot where the travellers rested, a rocky pass opened toward Gascony. Here no sign of cultivation appeared. The rocks of granite, that screened the glen, rose abruptly from their base, and stretched their barren points to the clouds, unvaried with woods, and uncheered even by a hunter's cabin. Sometimes, indeed, a gigantic larch threw its long shade over the precipice, and here and there a cliff reared on its brow a monumental cross, to tell the traveller the fate of him who had ventured thither before. This spot seemed the very haunt of banditti; and Emily, as she looked down upon it, almost expected to see them stealing out from some hollow cave to look for their prey. Soon after an object not less terrific struck her, — a gibbet standing on a point of rock near the entrance of the pass, and immediately over one of

the crosses she had before observed. These were hieroglyphics that told a plain and dreadful story. She forbore to point it out to St. Aubert, but it threw a gloom over her spirits, and made her anxious to hasten forward, that they might with certainty reach Rousillon before night-fall. It was necessary, however, that St. Aubert should take some refreshment, and, seating themselves on the short dry turf, they opened the basket of provisions, while

by breezy murmurs cool’d,
Broad o’er THEIR heads the verdant cedars wave,
And high palmetos lift their graceful shade.
—— THEY draw
Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales
Profusely breathing from the piney groves,
And vales of fragrance; there at a distance hear
The roaring floods, and cataracts.*
*Thomson

St. Aubert was revived by rest, and by the serene air of this summit; and Valancourt was so charmed with all around, and with the conversation of his companions, that he seemed to have forgotten he had any further to go. Having concluded their simple repast, they gave a long farewell look to the scene, and again began to ascend. St. Aubert rejoiced when he reached the carriage, which Emily entered with him; but Valancourt, willing to take a more extensive view of the enchanting country, into which they were about to descend, than he could do from a carriage, loosened his dogs, and once more bounded with them along the banks of the road. He often quitted it for points that promised a wider prospect, and the slow pace, at which the mules travelled, allowed him to overtake them with ease. Whenever a scene of uncommon magnificence appeared, he hastened to inform St. Aubert, who, though he was too much tired to walk himself, sometimes made the chaise wait, while Emily went to the neighbouring cliff.

It was evening when they descended the lower alps, that bind Rousillon, and form a majestic barrier round that charming country, leaving it open only on the east to the Mediterranean. The gay tints of cultivation once more beautified the landscape; for the lowlands were coloured with the richest hues, which a luxuriant climate, and an industrious people can

awaken into life. Groves of orange and lemon perfumed the air, their ripe fruit glowing among the foliage; while, sloping to the plains, extensive vineyards spread their treasures. Beyond these, woods and pastures, and mingled towns and hamlets stretched towards the sea, on whose bright surface gleamed many a distant sail; while, over the whole scene, was diffused the purple glow of evening. This landscape with the surrounding alps did, indeed, present a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime, of ‘beauty sleeping in the lap of horror.’

The travellers, having reached the plains, proceeded, between hedges of flowering myrtle and pomegranate, to the town of Arles, where they proposed to rest for the night. They met with simple, but neat accommodation, and would have passed a happy evening, after the toils and the delights of this day, had not the approaching separation thrown a gloom over their spirit. It was St. Aubert’s plan to proceed, on the morrow, to the borders of the Mediterranean, and travel along its shores into Languedoc; and Valancourt, since he was now nearly recovered, and had no longer a pretence for continuing with his new friends, resolved to leave them here. St. Aubert, who was much pleased with him, invited him to go further, but did not repeat the invitation, and Valancourt had resolution enough to forego the temptation of accepting it, that he might prove himself not unworthy of the favour. On the following morning, therefore, they were to part, St. Aubert to pursue his way to Languedoc, and Valancourt to explore new scenes among the mountains, on his return home. During this evening he was often silent and thoughtful; St. Aubert’s manner towards him was affectionate, though grave, and Emily was serious, though she made frequent efforts to appear cheerful. After one of the most melancholy evenings they had yet passed together, they separated for the night.

CHAPTER VI

I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free nature’s grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shews her brightening face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns, by living stream, at eve:
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
And I their toys to the great children leave:
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

THOMSON

In the morning, Valancourt breakfasted with St. Aubert and Emily, neither of whom seemed much refreshed by sleep. The languor of illness still hung over St. Aubert, and to Emily's fears his disorder appeared to be increasing fast upon him. She watched his looks with anxious affection, and their expression was always faithfully reflected in her own.

At the commencement of their acquaintance, Valancourt had made known his name and family. St. Aubert was not a stranger to either, for the family estates, which were now in the possession of an elder brother of Valancourt, were little more than twenty miles distant from La Vallee, and he had sometimes met the elder Valancourt on visits in the neighbourhood. This knowledge had made him more willingly receive his present companion; for, though his countenance and manners would have won him the acquaintance of St. Aubert, who was very apt to trust to the intelligence of his own eyes, with respect to countenances, he would not have accepted these, as sufficient introductions to that of his daughter.

The breakfast was almost as silent as the supper of the preceding night; but their musing was at length interrupted by the sound of the carriage wheels, which were to bear away St. Aubert and Emily. Valancourt started from his chair, and went to the window; it was indeed the carriage, and he returned to his seat without speaking. The moment was now come when they must part. St. Aubert told Valancourt, that he hoped he would never pass La Vallee without favouring him with a visit; and Valancourt, eagerly thanking him, assured him that he never would; as he said which he looked timidly at Emily, who tried to smile away the seriousness of her spirits. They passed a few minutes in interesting conversation, and St. Aubert then led the way to the carriage, Emily and Valancourt following in silence. The latter lingered at the door several minutes after they were seated, and none of the party seemed to have courage enough to say — Farewell. At length, St. Aubert pronounced the melancholy word, which Emily passed to Valancourt, who returned it, with a dejected smile, and the carriage drove on.

The travellers remained, for some time, in a state of tranquil pensiveness, which is not unpleasing. St. Aubert interrupted it by observing, ‘This is a very promising young man; it is many years since I have been so much pleased with any person, on so short an acquaintance. He brings back to my memory the days of my youth, when every scene was new and delightful!’ St. Aubert sighed, and sunk again into a reverie; and, as Emily looked back upon the road they had passed, Valancourt was seen, at the door of the little inn, following them with his eyes. Her perceived her, and waved his hand; and she returned the adieu, till the winding road shut her from his sight.

‘I remember when I was about his age,’ resumed St. Aubert, ‘and I thought, and felt exactly as he does. The world was opening upon me then, now — it is closing.’

‘My dear sir, do not think so gloomily,’ said Emily in a trembling voice, ‘I hope you have many, many years to live — for your own sake — for MY sake.’

‘Ah, my Emily!’ replied St. Aubert, ‘for thy sake! Well — I hope it is so.’ He wiped away a tear, that was stealing down his cheek, threw a smile upon his countenance, and said in a cheering voice, ‘there is something in the ardour and ingenuousness of youth, which is particularly pleasing to the contemplation of an old man, if his feelings have not been entirely corroded by the world. It is cheering and reviving, like the view of spring to a sick person; his mind catches somewhat of the spirit of the season, and his eyes are lighted up with a transient sunshine. Valancourt is this spring to me.’

Emily, who pressed her father’s hand affectionately, had never before listened with so much pleasure to the praises he bestowed; no, not even when he had bestowed them on herself.

They travelled on, among vineyards, woods, and pastures, delighted with the romantic beauty of the landscape, which was bounded, on one side, by the grandeur of the Pyrenees, and, on the other, by the ocean; and, soon after noon, they reached the town of Colioure, situated on the Mediterranean. Here they dined, and rested till towards the cool of day, when they pursued their way along the shores — those enchanting shores! — which extend to Languedoc. Emily gazed with enthusiasm on the

vastness of the sea, its surface varying, as the lights and shadows fell, and on its woody banks, mellowed with autumnal tints.

St. Aubert was impatient to reach Perpignan, where he expected letters from M. Quesnel; and it was the expectation of these letters, that had induced him to leave Colioure, for his feeble frame had required immediate rest. After travelling a few miles, he fell asleep; and Emily, who had put two or three books into the carriage, on leaving La Vallee, had now the leisure for looking into them. She sought for one, in which Valancourt had been reading the day before, and hoped for the pleasure of retracing a page, over which the eyes of a beloved friend had lately passed, of dwelling on the passages, which he had admired, and of permitting them to speak to her in the language of his own mind, and to bring himself to her presence. On searching for the book, she could find it no where, but in its stead perceived a volume of Petrarch's poems, that had belonged to Valancourt, whose name was written in it, and from which he had frequently read passages to her, with all the pathetic expression, that characterized the feelings of the author. She hesitated in believing, what would have been sufficiently apparent to almost any other person, that he had purposely left this book, instead of the one she had lost, and that love had prompted the exchange; but, having opened it with impatient pleasure, and observed the lines of his pencil drawn along the various passages he had read aloud, and under others more descriptive of delicate tenderness than he had dared to trust his voice with, the conviction came, at length, to her mind. For some moments she was conscious only of being beloved; then, a recollection of all the variations of tone and countenance, with which he had recited these sonnets, and of the soul, which spoke in their expression, pressed to her memory, and she wept over the memorial of his affection.

They arrived at Perpignan soon after sunset, where St. Aubert found, as he had expected, letters from M. Quesnel, the contents of which so evidently and grievously affected him, that Emily was alarmed, and pressed him, as far as her delicacy would permit, to disclose the occasion of his concern; but he answered her only by tears, and immediately began to talk on other topics. Emily, though she forbore to press the one most interesting to her, was greatly affected by her father's manner, and passed a night of sleepless solicitude.

In the morning they pursued their journey along the coast towards Leucate, another town on the Mediterranean, situated on the borders of Languedoc and Rousillon. On the way, Emily renewed the subject of the preceding night, and appeared so deeply affected by St. Aubert's silence and dejection, that he relaxed from his reserve. 'I was unwilling, my dear Emily,' said he, 'to throw a cloud over the pleasure you receive from these scenes, and meant, therefore, to conceal, for the present, some circumstances, with which, however, you must at length have been made acquainted. But your anxiety has defeated my purpose; you suffer as much from this, perhaps, as you will do from a knowledge of the facts I have to relate. M. Quesnel's visit proved an unhappy one to me; he came to tell me part of the news he has now confirmed. You may have heard me mention a M. Motteville, of Paris, but you did not know that the chief of my personal property was invested in his hands. I had great confidence in him, and I am yet willing to believe, that he is not wholly unworthy of my esteem. A variety of circumstances have concurred to ruin him, and — I am ruined with him.'

St. Aubert paused to conceal his emotion.

'The letters I have just received from M. Quesnel,' resumed he, struggling to speak with firmness, 'enclosed others from Motteville, which confirmed all I dreaded.'

'Must we then quit La Vallee?' said Emily, after a long pause of silence. 'That is yet uncertain,' replied St. Aubert, 'it will depend upon the compromise Motteville is able to make with his creditors. My income, you know, was never large, and now it will be reduced to little indeed! It is for you, Emily, for you, my child, that I am most afflicted.' His last words faltered; Emily smiled tenderly upon him through her tears, and then, endeavouring to overcome her emotion, 'My dear father,' said she, 'do not grieve for me, or for yourself; we may yet be happy; — if La Vallee remains for us, we must be happy. We will retain only one servant, and you shall scarcely perceive the change in your income. Be comforted, my dear sir; we shall not feel the want of those luxuries, which others value so highly, since we never had a taste for them; and poverty cannot deprive us of many consolations. It cannot rob us of the affection we have for each other, or degrade us in our own opinion, or in that of any person, whose opinion we ought to value.'

St. Aubert concealed his face with his handkerchief, and was unable to speak; but Emily continued to urge to her father the truths, which himself had impressed upon her mind.

‘Besides, my dear sir, poverty cannot deprive us of intellectual delights. It cannot deprive you of the comfort of affording me examples of fortitude and benevolence; nor me of the delight of consoling a beloved parent. It cannot deaden our taste for the grand, and the beautiful, or deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature — those sublime spectacles, so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries! are open for the enjoyment of the poor, as well as of the rich. Of what, then, have we to complain, so long as we are not in want of necessaries? Pleasures, such as wealth cannot buy, will still be ours. We retain, then, the sublime luxuries of nature, and lose only the frivolous ones of art.’

St. Aubert could not reply: he caught Emily to his bosom, their tears flowed together, but — they were not tears of sorrow. After this language of the heart, all other would have been feeble, and they remained silent for some time. Then, St. Aubert conversed as before; for, if his mind had not recovered its natural tranquillity, it at least assumed the appearance of it.

They reached the romantic town of Leucate early in the day, but St. Aubert was weary, and they determined to pass the night there. In the evening, he exerted himself so far as to walk with his daughter to view the environs that overlook the lake of Leucate, the Mediterranean, part of Rousillon, with the Pyrenees, and a wide extent of the luxuriant province of Languedoc, now blushing with the ripened vintage, which the peasants were beginning to gather. St. Aubert and Emily saw the busy groups, caught the joyous song, that was wafted on the breeze, and anticipated, with apparent pleasure, their next day’s journey over this gay region. He designed, however, still to wind along the seashore. To return home immediately was partly his wish, but from this he was withheld by a desire to lengthen the pleasure, which the journey gave his daughter, and to try the effect of the sea air on his own disorder.

On the following day, therefore, they recommenced their journey through Languedoc, winding the shores of the Mediterranean; the Pyrenees still forming the magnificent background of their prospects, while on their right was the ocean, and, on their left, wide extended plains melting into the blue horizon. St. Aubert was pleased, and conversed much with Emily,

yet his cheerfulness was sometimes artificial, and sometimes a shade of melancholy would steal upon his countenance, and betray him. This was soon chased away by Emily's smile; who smiled, however, with an aching heart, for she saw that his misfortunes preyed upon his mind, and upon his enfeebled frame.

It was evening when they reached a small village of Upper Languedoc, where they meant to pass the night, but the place could not afford them beds; for here, too, it was the time of the vintage, and they were obliged to proceed to the next post. The languor of illness and of fatigue, which returned upon St. Aubert, required immediate repose, and the evening was now far advanced; but from necessity there was no appeal, and he ordered Michael to proceed.

The rich plains of Languedoc, which exhibited all the glories of the vintage, with the gaieties of a French festival, no longer awakened St. Aubert to pleasure, whose condition formed a mournful contrast to the hilarity and youthful beauty which surrounded him. As his languid eyes moved over the scene, he considered, that they would soon, perhaps, be closed for ever on this world. 'Those distant and sublime mountains,' said he secretly, as he gazed on a chain of the Pyrenees that stretched towards the west, 'these luxuriant plains, this blue vault, the cheerful light of day, will be shut from my eyes! The song of the peasant, the cheering voice of man — will no longer sound for me!'

The intelligent eyes of Emily seemed to read what passed in the mind of her father, and she fixed them on his face, with an expression of such tender pity, as recalled his thoughts from every desultory object of regret, and he remembered only, that he must leave his daughter without protection. This reflection changed regret to agony; he sighed deeply, and remained silent, while she seemed to understand that sigh, for she pressed his hand affectionately, and then turned to the window to conceal her tears. The sun now threw a last yellow gleam on the waves of the Mediterranean, and the gloom of twilight spread fast over the scene, till only a melancholy ray appeared on the western horizon, marking the point where the sun had set amid the vapours of an autumnal evening. A cool breeze now came from the shore, and Emily let down the glass; but the air, which was refreshing to health, was as chilling to sickness, and St. Aubert desired, that the window might be drawn up. Increasing illness made him now

more anxious than ever to finish the day's journey, and he stopped the muleteer to enquire how far they had yet to go to the next post. He replied, 'Nine miles.' 'I feel I am unable to proceed much further,' said St. Aubert; 'enquire, as you go, if there is any house on the road that would accommodate us for the night.' He sunk back in the carriage, and Michael, cracking his whip in the air, set off, and continued on the full gallop, till St. Aubert, almost fainting, called to him to stop. Emily looked anxiously from the window, and saw a peasant walking at some little distance on the road, for whom they waited, till he came up, when he was asked, if there was any house in the neighbourhood that accommodated travellers. He replied, that he knew of none. 'There is a chateau, indeed, among those woods on the right,' added he, 'but I believe it receives nobody, and I cannot show you the way, for I am almost a stranger here.' St. Aubert was going to ask him some further question concerning the chateau, but the man abruptly passed on. After some consideration, he ordered Michael to proceed slowly to the woods. Every moment now deepened the twilight, and increased the difficulty of finding the road. Another peasant soon after passed. 'Which is the way to the chateau in the woods?' cried Michael.

'The chateau in the woods!' exclaimed the peasant— 'Do you mean that with the turret, yonder?'

'I don't know as for the turret, as you call it,' said Michael, 'I mean that white piece of a building, that we see at a distance there, among the trees.'

'Yes, that is the turret; why, who are you, that you are going thither?' said the man with surprise.

St. Aubert, on hearing this odd question, and observing the peculiar tone in which it was delivered, looked out from the carriage. 'We are travellers,' said he, 'who are in search of a house of accommodation for the night; is there any hereabout?'

'None, Monsieur, unless you have a mind to try your luck yonder,' replied the peasant, pointing to the woods, 'but I would not advise you to go there.'

'To whom does the chateau belong?'

'I scarcely know myself, Monsieur.'

'It is uninhabited, then?' 'No, not uninhabited; the steward and housekeeper are there, I believe.'

On hearing this, St. Aubert determined to proceed to the chateau, and risque the refusal of being accommodated for the night; he therefore desired the countryman would shew Michael the way, and bade him expect reward for his trouble. The man was for a moment silent, and then said, that he was going on other business, but that the road could not be missed, if they went up an avenue to the right, to which he pointed. St. Aubert was going to speak, but the peasant wished him good night, and walked on.

The carriage now moved towards the avenue, which was guarded by a gate, and Michael having dismounted to open it, they entered between rows of ancient oak and chesnut, whose intermingled branches formed a lofty arch above. There was something so gloomy and desolate in the appearance of this avenue, and its lonely silence, that Emily almost shuddered as she passed along; and, recollecting the manner in which the peasant had mentioned the chateau, she gave a mysterious meaning to his words, such as she had not suspected when he uttered them. These apprehensions, however, she tried to check, considering that they were probably the effect of a melancholy imagination, which her father's situation, and a consideration of her own circumstances, had made sensible to every impression.

They passed slowly on, for they were now almost in darkness, which, together with the unevenness of the ground, and the frequent roots of old trees, that shot up above the soil, made it necessary to proceed with caution. On a sudden Michael stopped the carriage; and, as St. Aubert looked from the window to enquire the cause, he perceived a figure at some distance moving up the avenue. The dusk would not permit him to distinguish what it was, but he bade Michael go on.

'This seems a wild place,' said Michael; 'there is no house hereabout, don't your honour think we had better turn back?'

'Go a little farther, and if we see no house then, we will return to the road,' replied St. Aubert.

Michael proceeded with reluctance, and the extreme slowness of his pace made St. Aubert look again from the window to hasten him, when again he saw the same figure. He was somewhat startled: probably the gloominess of the spot made him more liable to alarm than usual; however this might be, he now stopped Michael, and bade him call to the person in the avenue.

‘Please your honour, he may be a robber,’ said Michael. ‘It does not please me,’ replied St. Aubert, who could not forbear smiling at the simplicity of his phrase, ‘and we will, therefore, return to the road, for I see no probability of meeting here with what we seek.’

Michael turned about immediately, and was retracing his way with alacrity, when a voice was heard from among the trees on the left. It was not the voice of command, or distress, but a deep hollow tone, which seemed to be scarcely human. The man whipped his mules till they went as fast as possible, regardless of the darkness, the broken ground, and the necks of the whole party, nor once stopped till he reached the gate, which opened from the avenue into the high-road, where he went into a more moderate pace.

‘I am very ill,’ said St. Aubert, taking his daughter’s hand. ‘You are worse, then, sir!’ said Emily, extremely alarmed by his manner, ‘you are worse, and here is no assistance. Good God! what is to be done!’ He leaned his head on her shoulder, while she endeavoured to support him with her arm, and Michael was again ordered to stop. When the rattling of the wheels had ceased, music was heard on their air; it was to Emily the voice of Hope. ‘Oh! we are near some human habitation!’ said she, ‘help may soon be had.’

She listened anxiously; the sounds were distant, and seemed to come from a remote part of the woods that bordered the road; and, as she looked towards the spot whence they issued, she perceived in the faint moonlight something like a chateau. It was difficult, however, to reach this; St. Aubert was now too ill to bear the motion of the carriage; Michael could not quit his mules; and Emily, who still supported her father, feared to leave him, and also feared to venture alone to such a distance, she knew not whither, or to whom. Something, however, it was necessary to determine upon immediately; St. Aubert, therefore, told Michael to proceed slowly; but they had not gone far, when he fainted, and the carriage was again stopped. He lay quite senseless.— ‘My dear, dear father!’ cried Emily in great agony, who began to fear that he was dying, ‘speak, if it is only one word to let me hear the sound of your voice!’ But no voice spoke in reply. In the agony of terror she bade Michael bring water from the rivulet, that flowed along the road; and, having received some in the man’s hat, with trembling hands she sprinkled it over her

father’s face, which, as the moon’s rays now fell upon it, seemed to bear the impression of death. Every emotion of selfish fear now gave way to a stronger influence, and, committing St. Aubert to the care of Michael, who refused to go far from his mules, she stepped from the carriage in search of the chateau she had seen at a distance. It was a still moonlight night, and the music, which yet sounded on the air, directed her steps from the high road, up a shadowy lane, that led to the woods. Her mind was for some time so entirely occupied by anxiety and terror for her father, that she felt none for herself, till the deepening gloom of the overhanging foliage, which now wholly excluded the moonlight, and the wildness of the place, recalled her to a sense of her adventurous situation. The music had ceased, and she had no guide but chance. For a moment she paused in terrified perplexity, till a sense of her father’s condition again overcoming every consideration for herself, she proceeded. The lane terminated in the woods, but she looked round in vain for a house, or a human being, and as vainly listened for a sound to guide her. She hurried on, however, not knowing whither, avoiding the recesses of the woods, and endeavouring to keep along their margin, till a rude kind of avenue, which opened upon a moonlight spot, arrested her attention. The wildness of this avenue brought to her recollection the one leading to the turreted chateau, and she was inclined to believe, that this was a part of the same domain, and probably led to the same point. While she hesitated, whether to follow it or not, a sound of many voices in loud merriment burst upon her ear. It seemed not the laugh of cheerfulness, but of riot, and she stood appalled. While she paused, she heard a distant voice, calling from the way she had come, and not doubting but it was that of Michael, her first impulse was to hasten back; but a second thought changed her purpose; she believed that nothing less than the last extremity could have prevailed with Michael to quit his mules, and fearing that her father was now dying, she rushed forward, with a feeble hope of obtaining assistance from the people in the woods. Her heart beat with fearful expectation, as she drew near the spot whence the voices issued, and she often startled when her steps disturbed the fallen leaves. The sounds led her towards the moonlight glade she had before noticed; at a little distance from which she stopped, and saw, between the boles of the trees, a small circular level of green turf, surrounded by the woods, on which appeared a group of figures. On drawing nearer, she

distinguished these, by their dress, to be peasants, and perceived several cottages scattered round the edge of the woods, which waved loftily over this spot. While she gazed, and endeavoured to overcome the apprehensions that withheld her steps, several peasant girls came out of a cottage; music instantly struck up, and the dance began. It was the joyous music of the vintage! the same she had before heard upon the air. Her heart, occupied with terror for her father, could not feel the contrast, which this gay scene offered to her own distress; she stepped hastily forward towards a group of elder peasants, who were seated at the door of a cottage, and, having explained her situation, entreated their assistance. Several of them rose with alacrity, and, offering any service in their power, followed Emily, who seemed to move on the wind, as fast as they could towards the road.

When she reached the carriage she found St. Aubert restored to animation. On the recovery of his senses, having heard from Michael whither his daughter was gone, anxiety for her overcame every regard for himself, and he had sent him in search of her. He was, however, still languid, and, perceiving himself unable to travel much farther, he renewed his enquiries for an inn, and concerning the chateau in the woods. ‘The chateau cannot accommodate you, sir,’ said a venerable peasant who had followed Emily from the woods, ‘it is scarcely inhabited; but, if you will do me the honour to visit my cottage, you shall be welcome to the best bed it affords.’

St. Aubert was himself a Frenchman; he therefore was not surprised at French courtesy; but, ill as he was, he felt the value of the offer enhanced by the manner which accompanied it. He had too much delicacy to apologize, or to appear to hesitate about availing himself of the peasant’s hospitality, but immediately accepted it with the same frankness with which it was offered.

The carriage again moved slowly on; Michael following the peasants up the lane, which Emily had just quitted, till they came to the moonlight glade. St. Aubert’s spirits were so far restored by the courtesy of his host, and the near prospect of repose, that he looked with a sweet complacency upon the moonlight scene, surrounded by the shadowy woods, through which, here and there, an opening admitted the streaming splendour, discovering a cottage, or a sparkling rivulet. He listened, with no painful

emotion, to the merry notes of the guitar and tamborine; and, though tears came to his eyes, when he saw the debonnaire dance of the peasants, they were not merely tears of mournful regret. With Emily it was otherwise; immediate terror for her father had now subsided into a gentle melancholy, which every note of joy, by awakening comparison, served to heighten.

The dance ceased on the approach of the carriage, which was a phenomenon in these sequestered woods, and the peasantry flocked round it with eager curiosity. On learning that it brought a sick stranger, several girls ran across the turf, and returned with wine and baskets of grapes, which they presented to the travellers, each with kind contention pressing for a preference. At length, the carriage stopped at a neat cottage, and his venerable conductor, having assisted St. Aubert to alight, led him and Emily to a small inner room, illuminated only by moonbeams, which the open casement admitted. St. Aubert, rejoicing in rest, seated himself in an armchair, and his senses were refreshed by the cool and balmy air, that lightly waved the embowering honeysuckles, and wafted their sweet breath into the apartment. His host, who was called La Voisin, quitted the room, but soon returned with fruits, cream, and all the pastoral luxury his cottage afforded; having set down which, with a smile of unfeigned welcome, he retired behind the chair of his guest. St. Aubert insisted on his taking a seat at the table, and, when the fruit had allayed the fever of his palate, and he found himself somewhat revived, he began to converse with his host, who communicated several particulars concerning himself and his family, which were interesting, because they were spoken from the heart, and delineated a picture of the sweet courtesies of family kindness. Emily sat by her father, holding his hand, and, while she listened to the old man, her heart swelled with the affectionate sympathy he described, and her tears fell to the mournful consideration, that death would probably soon deprive her of the dearest blessing she then possessed. The soft moonlight of an autumnal evening, and the distant music, which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind. The old man continued to talk of his family, and St. Aubert remained silent. ‘I have only one daughter living,’ said La Voisin, ‘but she is happily married, and is every thing to me. When I lost my wife,’ he added with a sigh, ‘I came to live with Agnes, and her family; she has several children, who are all dancing on the green yonder, as merry as grasshoppers — and long may they be so! I hope

to die among them, monsieur. I am old now, and cannot expect to live long, but there is some comfort in dying surrounded by one's children.'

'My good friend,' said St. Aubert, while his voice trembled, 'I hope you will long live surrounded by them.'

'Ah, sir! at my age I must not expect that!' replied the old man, and he paused: 'I can scarcely wish it,' he resumed, 'for I trust that whenever I die I shall go to heaven, where my poor wife is gone before me. I can sometimes almost fancy I see her of a still moonlight night, walking among these shades she loved so well. Do you believe, monsieur, that we shall be permitted to revisit the earth, after we have quitted the body?'

Emily could no longer stifle the anguish of her heart; her tears fell fast upon her father's hand, which she yet held. He made an effort to speak, and at length said in a low voice, 'I hope we shall be permitted to look down on those we have left on the earth, but I can only hope it. Futurity is much veiled from our eyes, and faith and hope are our only guides concerning it. We are not enjoined to believe, that disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved, but we may innocently hope it. It is a hope which I will never resign,' continued he, while he wiped the tears from his daughter's eyes, 'it will sweeten the bitter moments of death!' Tears fell slowly on his cheeks; La Voisin wept too, and there was a pause of silence. Then, La Voisin, renewing the subject, said, 'But you believe, sir, that we shall meet in another world the relations we have loved in this; I must believe this.' 'Then do believe it,' replied St. Aubert, 'severe, indeed, would be the pangs of separation, if we believed it to be eternal. Look up, my dear Emily, we shall meet again!' He lifted his eyes towards heaven, and a gleam of moonlight, which fell upon his countenance, discovered peace and resignation, stealing on the lines of sorrow.

La Voisin felt that he had pursued the subject too far, and he dropped it, saying, 'We are in darkness, I forgot to bring a light.'

'No,' said St. Aubert, 'this is a light I love. Sit down, my good friend. Emily, my love, I find myself better than I have been all day; this air refreshes me. I can enjoy this tranquil hour, and that music, which floats so sweetly at a distance. Let me see you smile. Who touches that guitar so tastefully? are there two instruments, or is it an echo I hear?'

'It is an echo, monsieur, I fancy. That guitar is often heard at night, when all is still, but nobody knows who touches it, and it is sometimes

accompanied by a voice so sweet, and so sad, one would almost think the woods were haunted.' 'They certainly are haunted,' said St. Aubert with a smile, 'but I believe it is by mortals.' 'I have sometimes heard it at midnight, when I could not sleep,' rejoined La Voisin, not seeming to notice this remark, 'almost under my window, and I never heard any music like it. It has often made me think of my poor wife till I cried. I have sometimes got up to the window to look if I could see anybody, but as soon as I opened the casement all was hushed, and nobody to be seen; and I have listened, and listened till I have been so timorous, that even the trembling of the leaves in the breeze has made me start. They say it often comes to warn people of their death, but I have heard it these many years, and outlived the warning.'

Emily, though she smiled at the mention of this ridiculous superstition, could not, in the present tone of her spirits, wholly resist its contagion.

'Well, but, my good friend,' said St. Aubert, 'has nobody had courage to follow the sounds? If they had, they would probably have discovered who is the musician.' 'Yes, sir, they have followed them some way into the woods, but the music has still retreated, and seemed as distant as ever, and the people have at last been afraid of being led into harm, and would go no further. It is very seldom that I have heard these sounds so early in the evening. They usually come about midnight, when that bright planet, which is rising above the turret yonder, sets below the woods on the left.'

'What turret?' asked St. Aubert with quickness, 'I see none.'

'Your pardon, monsieur, you do see one indeed, for the moon shines full upon it; — up the avenue yonder, a long way off; the chateau it belongs to is hid among the trees.'

'Yes, my dear sir,' said Emily, pointing, 'don't you see something glitter above the dark woods? It is a fane, I fancy, which the rays fall upon.'

'O yes, I see what you mean; and who does the chateau belong to?'

'The Marquis de Villeroi was its owner,' replied La Voisin, emphatically.

'Ah!' said St. Aubert, with a deep sigh, 'are we then so near Le-Blanc!' He appeared much agitated.

'It used to be the Marquis's favourite residence,' resumed La Voisin, 'but he took a dislike to the place, and has not been there for many years. We have heard lately that he is dead, and that it is fallen into other hands.'

St. Aubert, who had sat in deep musing, was roused by the last words. ‘Dead!’ he exclaimed, ‘Good God! when did he die?’

‘He is reported to have died about five weeks since,’ replied La Voisin. ‘Did you know the Marquis, sir?’

‘This is very extraordinary!’ said St. Aubert without attending to the question. ‘Why is it so, my dear sir?’ said Emily, in a voice of timid curiosity. He made no reply, but sunk again into a reverie; and in a few moments, when he seemed to have recovered himself, asked who had succeeded to the estates. ‘I have forgot his title, monsieur,’ said La Voisin; ‘but my lord resides at Paris chiefly; I hear no talk of his coming hither.’

‘The chateau is shut up then, still?’

‘Why, little better, sir; the old housekeeper, and her husband the steward, have the care of it, but they live generally in a cottage hard by.’

‘The chateau is spacious, I suppose,’ said Emily, ‘and must be desolate for the residence of only two persons.’

‘Desolate enough, mademoiselle,’ replied La Voisin, ‘I would not pass one night in the chateau, for the value of the whole domain.’

‘What is that?’ said St. Aubert, roused again from thoughtfulness. As his host repeated his last sentence, a groan escaped from St. Aubert, and then, as if anxious to prevent it from being noticed, he hastily asked La Voisin how long he had lived in this neighbourhood. ‘Almost from my childhood, sir,’ replied his host.

‘You remember the late marchioness, then?’ said St. Aubert in an altered voice.

‘Ah, monsieur! — that I do well. There are many besides me who remember her.’

‘Yes— ‘ said St. Aubert, ‘and I am one of those.’

‘Alas, sir! you remember, then, a most beautiful and excellent lady. She deserved a better fate.’

Tears stood in St. Aubert’s eyes; ‘Enough,’ said he, in a voice almost stifled by the violence of his emotions,— ‘it is enough, my friend.’

Emily, though extremely surprised by her father’s manner, forbore to express her feelings by any question. La Voisin began to apologize, but St. Aubert interrupted him; ‘Apology is quite unnecessary,’ said he, ‘let us change the topic. You was speaking of the music we just now heard.’

‘I was, monsieur — but hark! — it comes again; listen to that voice!’ They were all silent;

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose, like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ‘ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still, to be so displaced.*
*Milton.

In a few moments the voice died into air, and the instrument, which had been heard before, sounded in low symphony. St. Aubert now observed, that it produced a tone much more full and melodious than that of a guitar, and still more melancholy and soft than the lute. They continued to listen, but the sounds returned no more. ‘This is strange!’ said St. Aubert, at length interrupting the silence. ‘Very strange!’ said Emily. ‘It is so,’ rejoined La Voisin, and they were again silent.

After a long pause, ‘It is now about eighteen years since I first heard that music,’ said La Voisin; ‘I remember it was on a fine summer’s night, much like this, but later, that I was walking in the woods, and alone. I remember, too, that my spirits were very low, for one of my boys was ill, and we feared we should lose him. I had been watching at his bedside all the evening while his mother slept; for she had sat up with him the night before. I had been watching, and went out for a little fresh air, the day had been very sultry. As I walked under the shades and mused, I heard music at a distance, and thought it was Claude playing upon his flute, as he often did of a fine evening, at the cottage door. But, when I came to a place where the trees opened, (I shall never forget it!) and stood looking up at the north-lights, which shot up the heaven to a great height, I heard all of a sudden such sounds! — they came so as I cannot describe. It was like the music of angels, and I looked up again almost expecting to see them in the sky. When I came home, I told what I had heard, but they laughed at me, and said it must be some of the shepherds playing on their pipes, and I could not persuade them to the contrary. A few nights after, however, my wife herself heard the same sounds, and was as much surprised as I was, and Father Denis frightened her sadly by saying, that it was music come to

warn her of her child’s death, and that music often came to houses where there was a dying person.’

Emily, on hearing this, shrunk with a superstitious dread entirely new to her, and could scarcely conceal her agitation from St. Aubert.

‘But the boy lived, monsieur, in spite of Father Denis.’

‘Father Denis!’ said St. Aubert, who had listened to ‘narrative old age’ with patient attention, ‘are we near a convent, then?’

‘Yes, sir; the convent of St. Clair stands at no great distance, on the sea shore yonder.’

‘Ah!’ said St. Aubert, as if struck with some sudden remembrance, ‘the convent of St. Clair!’ Emily observed the clouds of grief, mingled with a faint expression of horror, gathering on his brow; his countenance became fixed, and, touched as it now was by the silver whiteness of the moonlight, he resembled one of those marble statues of a monument, which seem to bend, in hopeless sorrow, over the ashes of the dead, shewn

by the blunted light

That the dim moon through painted casements lends.*

* The Emigrants.

‘But, my dear sir,’ said Emily, anxious to dissipate his thoughts, ‘you forget that repose is necessary to you. If our kind host will give me leave, I will prepare your bed, for I know how you like it to be made.’ St. Aubert, recollecting himself, and smiling affectionately, desired she would not add to her fatigue by that attention; and La Voisin, whose consideration for his guest had been suspended by the interests which his own narrative had recalled, now started from his seat, and, apologizing for not having called Agnes from the green, hurried out of the room.

In a few moments he returned with his daughter, a young woman of pleasing countenance, and Emily learned from her, what she had not before suspected, that, for their accommodation, it was necessary part of La Voisin’s family should leave their beds; she lamented this circumstance, but Agnes, by her reply, fully proved that she inherited, at least, a share of her father’s courteous hospitality. It was settled, that some of her children and Michael should sleep in the neighbouring cottage.

‘If I am better, tomorrow, my dear,’ said St. Aubert when Emily returned to him, ‘I mean to set out at an early hour, that we may rest, during the heat of the day, and will travel towards home. In the present

state of my health and spirits I cannot look on a longer journey with pleasure, and I am also very anxious to reach La Vallee.' Emily, though she also desired to return, was grieved at her father's sudden wish to do so, which she thought indicated a greater degree of indisposition than he would acknowledge. St. Aubert now retired to rest, and Emily to her little chamber, but not to immediate repose. Her thoughts returned to the late conversation, concerning the state of departed spirits; a subject, at this time, particularly affecting to her, when she had every reason to believe that her dear father would ere long be numbered with them. She leaned pensively on the little open casement, and in deep thought fixed her eyes on the heaven, whose blue unclouded concave was studded thick with stars, the worlds, perhaps, of spirits, unsphered of mortal mould. As her eyes wandered along the boundless aether, her thoughts rose, as before, towards the sublimity of the Deity, and to the contemplation of futurity. No busy note of this world interrupted the course of her mind; the merry dance had ceased, and every cottager had retired to his home. The still air seemed scarcely to breathe upon the woods, and, now and then, the distant sound of a solitary sheep-bell, or of a closing casement, was all that broke on silence. At length, even this hint of human being was heard no more. Elevated and enwrapt, while her eyes were often wet with tears of sublime devotion and solemn awe, she continued at the casement, till the gloom of midnight hung over the earth, and the planet, which La Voisin had pointed out, sunk below the woods. She then recollected what he had said concerning this planet, and the mysterious music; and, as she lingered at the window, half hoping and half fearing that it would return, her mind was led to the remembrance of the extreme emotion her father had shewn on mention of the Marquis La Villeroi's death, and of the fate of the Marchioness, and she felt strongly interested concerning the remote cause of this emotion. Her surprise and curiosity were indeed the greater, because she did not recollect ever to have heard him mention the name of Villeroi.

No music, however, stole on the silence of the night, and Emily, perceiving the lateness of the hour, returned to a scene of fatigue, remembered that she was to rise early in the morning, and withdrew from the window to repose.

CHAPTER VII

Let those deplore their doom,
Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
But lofty souls can look beyond the tomb,
Can smile at fate, and wonder how they mourn.
Shall Spring to these sad scenes no more return?
Is yonder wave the sun’s eternal bed? —
Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
And Spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead!

BEATTIE

Emily, called, as she had requested, at an early hour, awoke, little refreshed by sleep, for uneasy dreams had pursued her, and marred the kindest blessing of the unhappy. But, when she opened her casement, looked out upon the woods, bright with the morning sun, and inspired the pure air, her mind was soothed. The scene was filled with that cheering freshness, which seems to breathe the very spirit of health, and she heard only sweet and PICTURESQUE sounds, if such an expression may be allowed — the matin-bell of a distant convent, the faint murmur of the sea-waves, the song of birds, and the far-off low of cattle, which she saw coming slowly on between the trunks of trees. Struck with the circumstances of imagery around her, she indulged the pensive tranquillity which they inspired; and while she leaned on her window, waiting till St. Aubert should descend to breakfast, her ideas arranged themselves in the following lines:

THE FIRST HOUR OF MORNING

How sweet to wind the forest’s tangled shade,
When early twilight, from the eastern bound,
Dawns on the sleeping landscape in the glade,
And fades as morning spreads her blush around!

When ev’ry infant flower, that wept in night,
Lifts its chill head soft glowing with a tear,
Expands its tender blossom to the light,
And gives its incense to the genial air.

How fresh the breeze that wafts the rich perfume,
And swells the melody of waking birds;
The hum of bees, beneath the verdant gloom,
And woodman’s song, and low of distant herds!

Then, doubtful gleams the mountain’s hoary head,
Seen through the parting foliage from afar;
And, farther still, the ocean’s misty bed,
With flitting sails, that partial sunbeams share.

But, vain the sylvan shade — the breath of May,
The voice of music floating on the gale,
And forms, that beam through morning’s dewy veil,
If health no longer bid the heart be gay!
O balmy hour! ‘tis thine her wealth to give,
Here spread her blush, and bid the parent live!

Emily now heard persons moving below in the cottage, and presently the voice of Michael, who was talking to his mules, as he led them forth from a hut adjoining. As she left her room, St. Aubert, who was now risen, met

her at the door, apparently as little restored by sleep as herself. She led him down stairs to the little parlour, in which they had supped on the preceding night, where they found a neat breakfast set out, while the host and his daughter waited to bid them good-morrow.

‘I envy you this cottage, my good friends,’ said St. Aubert, as he met them, ‘it is so pleasant, so quiet, and so neat; and this air, that one breathes — if any thing could restore lost health, it would surely be this air.’

La Voisin bowed gratefully, and replied, with the gallantry of a Frenchman, ‘Our cottage may be envied, sir, since you and Mademoiselle have honoured it with your presence.’ St. Aubert gave him a friendly smile for his compliment, and sat down to a table, spread with cream, fruit, new cheese, butter, and coffee. Emily, who had observed her father with attention and thought he looked very ill, endeavoured to persuade him to defer travelling till the afternoon; but he seemed very anxious to be at home, and his anxiety he expressed repeatedly, and with an earnestness that was unusual with him. He now said, he found himself as well as he had been of late, and that he could bear travelling better in the cool hour of the morning, than at any other time. But, while he was talking with his venerable host, and thanking him for his kind attentions, Emily observed his countenance change, and, before she could reach him, he fell back in his chair. In a few moments he recovered from the sudden faintness that had come over him, but felt so ill, that he perceived himself unable to set out, and, having remained a little while, struggling against the pressure of indisposition, he begged he might be helped up stairs to bed. This request renewed all the terror which Emily had suffered on the preceding evening; but, though scarcely able to support herself, under the sudden shock it gave her, she tried to conceal her apprehensions from St. Aubert, and gave her trembling arm to assist him to the door of his chamber.

When he was once more in bed, he desired that Emily, who was then weeping in her own room, might be called; and, as she came, he waved his hand for every other person to quit the apartment. When they were alone, he held out his hand to her, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance, with an expression so full of tenderness and grief, that all her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into an agony of tears. St. Aubert seemed struggling to acquire firmness, but was still unable to speak; he could only press her hand, and check the tears that stood trembling in his eyes. At length he

commanded his voice, ‘My dear child,’ said he, trying to smile through his anguish, ‘my dear Emily!’ — and paused again. He raised his eyes to heaven, as if in prayer, and then, in a firmer tone, and with a look, in which the tenderness of the father was dignified by the pious solemnity of the saint, he said, ‘My dear child, I would soften the painful truth I have to tell you, but I find myself quite unequal to the art. Alas! I would, at this moment, conceal it from you, but that it would be most cruel to deceive you. It cannot be long before we must part; let us talk of it, that our thoughts and our prayers may prepare us to bear it.’ His voice faltered, while Emily, still weeping, pressed his hand close to her heart, which swelled with a convulsive sigh, but she could not look up.

‘Let me not waste these moments,’ said St. Aubert, recovering himself, ‘I have much to say. There is a circumstance of solemn consequence, which I have to mention, and a solemn promise to obtain from you; when this is done I shall be easier. You have observed, my dear, how anxious I am to reach home, but know not all my reasons for this. Listen to what I am going to say. — Yet stay — before I say more give me this promise, a promise made to your dying father!’ — St. Aubert was interrupted; Emily, struck by his last words, as if for the first time, with a conviction of his immediate danger, raised her head; her tears stopped, and, gazing at him for a moment with an expression of unutterable anguish, a slight convulsion seized her, and she sunk senseless in her chair. St. Aubert’s cries brought La Voisin and his daughter to the room, and they administered every means in their power to restore her, but, for a considerable time, without effect. When she recovered, St. Aubert was so exhausted by the scene he had witnessed, that it was many minutes before he had strength to speak; he was, however, somewhat revived by a cordial, which Emily gave him; and, being again alone with her, he exerted himself to tranquilize her spirits, and to offer her all the comfort of which her situation admitted. She threw herself into his arms, wept on his neck, and grief made her so insensible to all he said, that he ceased to offer the alleviations, which he himself could not, at this moment, feel, and mingled his silent tears with hers. Recalled, at length, to a sense of duty, she tried to spare her father from a farther view of her suffering; and, quitting his embrace, dried her tears, and said something, which she meant for consolation. ‘My dear Emily,’ replied St. Aubert, ‘my dear child, we must

look up with humble confidence to that Being, who has protected and comforted us in every danger, and in every affliction we have known; to whose eye every moment of our lives has been exposed; he will not, he does not, forsake us now; I feel his consolations in my heart. I shall leave you, my child, still in his care; and, though I depart from this world, I shall be still in his presence. Nay, weep not again, my Emily. In death there is nothing new, or surprising, since we all know, that we are born to die; and nothing terrible to those, who can confide in an all-powerful God. Had my life been spared now, after a very few years, in the course of nature, I must have resigned it; old age, with all its train of infirmity, its privations and its sorrows, would have been mine; and then, at last, death would have come, and called forth the tears you now shed. Rather, my child, rejoice, that I am saved from such suffering, and that I am permitted to die with a mind unimpaired, and sensible of the comforts of faith and resignation.' St. Aubert paused, fatigued with speaking. Emily again endeavoured to assume an air of composure; and, in replying to what he had said, tried to sooth him with a belief, that he had not spoken in vain.

When he had reposed a while, he resumed the conversation. 'Let me return,' said he, 'to a subject, which is very near my heart. I said I had a solemn promise to receive from you; let me receive it now, before I explain the chief circumstance which it concerns; there are others, of which your peace requires that you should rest in ignorance. Promise, then, that you will perform exactly what I shall enjoin.'

Emily, awed by the earnest solemnity of his manner, dried her tears, that had begun again to flow, in spite of her efforts to suppress them; and, looking eloquently at St. Aubert, bound herself to do whatever he should require by a vow, at which she shuddered, yet knew not why.

He proceeded: 'I know you too well, my Emily, to believe, that you would break any promise, much less one thus solemnly given; your assurance gives me peace, and the observance of it is of the utmost importance to your tranquillity. Hear, then, what I am going to tell you. The closet, which adjoins my chamber at La Vallee, has a sliding board in the floor. You will know it by a remarkable knot in the wood, and by its being the next board, except one, to the wainscot, which fronts the door. At the distance of about a yard from that end, nearer the window, you will perceive a line across it, as if the plank had been joined; — the way to

open it is this: — Press your foot upon the line; the end of the board will then sink, and you may slide it with ease beneath the other. Below, you will see a hollow place.' St. Aubert paused for breath, and Emily sat fixed in deep attention. 'Do you understand these directions, my dear?' said he. Emily, though scarcely able to speak, assured him that she did.

'When you return home, then,' he added with a deep sigh —

At the mention of her return home, all the melancholy circumstances, that must attend this return, rushed upon her fancy; she burst into convulsive grief, and St. Aubert himself, affected beyond the resistance of the fortitude which he had, at first, summoned, wept with her. After some moments, he composed himself. 'My dear child,' said he, 'be comforted. When I am gone, you will not be forsaken — I leave you only in the more immediate care of that Providence, which has never yet forsaken me. Do not afflict me with this excess of grief; rather teach me by your example to bear my own.' He stopped again, and Emily, the more she endeavoured to restrain her emotion, found it the less possible to do so.

St. Aubert, who now spoke with pain, resumed the subject. 'That closet, my dear, — when you return home, go to it; and, beneath the board I have described, you will find a packet of written papers. Attend to me now, for the promise you have given particularly relates to what I shall direct. These papers you must burn — and, solemnly I command you, WITHOUT EXAMINING THEM.'

Emily's surprise, for a moment, overcame her grief, and she ventured to ask, why this must be? St. Aubert replied, that, if it had been right for him to explain his reasons, her late promise would have been unnecessarily exacted. 'It is sufficient for you, my love, to have a deep sense of the importance of observing me in this instance.' St. Aubert proceeded. 'Under that board you will also find about two hundred louis d'ors, wrapped in a silk purse; indeed, it was to secure whatever money might be in the chateau, that this secret place was contrived, at a time when the province was overrun by troops of men, who took advantage of the tumults, and became plunderers.

'But I have yet another promise to receive from you, which is — that you will never, whatever may be your future circumstances, SELL the chateau.' St. Aubert even enjoined her, whenever she might marry, to make it an article in the contract, that the chateau should always be hers.

He then gave her a more minute account of his present circumstances than he had yet done, adding, ‘The two hundred louis, with what money you will now find in my purse, is all the ready money I have to leave you. I have told you how I am circumstanced with M. Motteville, at Paris. Ah, my child! I leave you poor — but not destitute,’ he added, after a long pause. Emily could make no reply to any thing he now said, but knelt at the bedside, with her face upon the quilt, weeping over the hand she held there.

After this conversation, the mind of St. Aubert appeared to be much more at ease; but, exhausted by the effort of speaking, he sunk into a kind of doze, and Emily continued to watch and weep beside him, till a gentle tap at the chamber-door roused her. It was La Voisin, come to say, that a confessor from the neighbouring convent was below, ready to attend St. Aubert. Emily would not suffer her father to be disturbed, but desired, that the priest might not leave the cottage. When St. Aubert awoke from this doze, his senses were confused, and it was some moments before he recovered them sufficiently to know, that it was Emily who sat beside him. He then moved his lips, and stretched forth his hand to her; as she received which, she sunk back in her chair, overcome by the impression of death on his countenance. In a few minutes he recovered his voice, and Emily then asked, if he wished to see the confessor; he replied, that he did; and, when the holy father appeared, she withdrew. They remained alone together above half an hour; when Emily was called in, she found St. Aubert more agitated than when she had left him, and she gazed, with a slight degree of resentment, at the friar, as the cause of this; who, however, looked mildly and mournfully at her, and turned away. St. Aubert, in a tremulous voice, said, he wished her to join in prayer with him, and asked if La Voisin would do so too. The old man and his daughter came; they both wept, and knelt with Emily round the bed, while the holy father read in a solemn voice the service for the dying. St. Aubert lay with a serene countenance, and seemed to join fervently in the devotion, while tears often stole from beneath his closed eyelids, and Emily’s sobs more than once interrupted the service.

When it was concluded, and extreme unction had been administered, the friar withdrew. St. Aubert then made a sign for La Voisin to come nearer. He gave him his hand, and was, for a moment, silent. At length, he said, in

a trembling voice, ‘My good friend, our acquaintance has been short, but long enough to give you an opportunity of shewing me much kind attention. I cannot doubt, that you will extend this kindness to my daughter, when I am gone; she will have need of it. I entrust her to your care during the few days she will remain here. I need say no more — you know the feelings of a father, for you have children; mine would be, indeed, severe if I had less confidence in you.’ He paused. La Voisin assured him, and his tears bore testimony to his sincerity, that he would do all he could to soften her affliction, and that, if St. Aubert wished it, he would even attend her into Gascony; an offer so pleasing to St. Aubert, that he had scarcely words to acknowledge his sense of the old man’s kindness, or to tell him, that he accepted it. The scene, that followed between St. Aubert and Emily, affected La Voisin so much, that he quitted the chamber, and she was again left alone with her father, whose spirits seemed fainting fast, but neither his senses, or his voice, yet failed him; and, at intervals, he employed much of these last awful moments in advising his daughter, as to her future conduct. Perhaps, he never had thought more justly, or expressed himself more clearly, than he did now.

‘Above all, my dear Emily,’ said he, ‘do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance. And, since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them. I know you will say, (for you are young, my Emily) I know you will say, that you are contented sometimes to suffer, rather than to give up your refined sense of happiness, at others; but, when your mind has been long harassed by vicissitude, you will be content to rest, and you will then recover from your delusion. You will perceive, that the phantom of happiness is exchanged for the substance; for happiness arises in a state of peace, not of tumult. It is of a temperate and uniform nature, and can no more exist in a heart, that is continually alive to minute circumstances, than in one that is dead to feeling. You see, my dear, that, though I would guard you against the dangers of sensibility, I am not an advocate for

apathy. At your age I should have said THAT is a vice more hateful than all the errors of sensibility, and I say so still. I call it a VICE, because it leads to positive evil; in this, however, it does no more than an ill-governed sensibility, which, by such a rule, might also be called a vice; but the evil of the former is of more general consequence. I have exhausted myself,' said St. Aubert, feebly, 'and have wearied you, my Emily; but, on a subject so important to your future comfort, I am anxious to be perfectly understood.'

Emily assured him, that his advice was most precious to her, and that she would never forget it, or cease from endeavouring to profit by it. St. Aubert smiled affectionately and sorrowfully upon her. 'I repeat it,' said he, 'I would not teach you to become insensible, if I could; I would only warn you of the evils of susceptibility, and point out how you may avoid them. Beware, my love, I conjure you, of that self-delusion, which has been fatal to the peace of so many persons; beware of priding yourself on the gracefulness of sensibility; if you yield to this vanity, your happiness is lost for ever. Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude, than the grace of sensibility. Do not, however, confound fortitude with apathy; apathy cannot know the virtue. Remember, too, that one act of beneficence, one act of real usefulness, is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world. Sentiment is a disgrace, instead of an ornament, unless it lead us to good actions. The miser, who thinks himself respectable, merely because he possesses wealth, and thus mistakes the means of doing good, for the actual accomplishment of it, is not more blameable than the man of sentiment, without active virtue. You may have observed persons, who delight so much in this sort of sensibility to sentiment, which excludes that to the calls of any practical virtue, that they turn from the distressed, and, because their sufferings are painful to be contemplated, do not endeavour to relieve them. How despicable is that humanity, which can be contented to pity, where it might assuage!'

St. Aubert, some time after, spoke of Madame Cheron, his sister. 'Let me inform you of a circumstance, that nearly affects your welfare,' he added. 'We have, you know, had little intercourse for some years, but, as she is now your only female relation, I have thought it proper to consign you to her care, as you will see in my will, till you are of age, and to recommend you to her protection afterwards. She is not exactly the person,

to whom I would have committed my Emily, but I had no alternative, and I believe her to be upon the whole — a good kind of woman. I need not recommend it to your prudence, my love, to endeavour to conciliate her kindness; you will do this for his sake, who has often wished to do so for yours.'

Emily assured him, that, whatever he requested she would religiously perform to the utmost of her ability. 'Alas!' added she, in a voice interrupted by sighs, 'that will soon be all which remains for me; it will be almost my only consolation to fulfil your wishes.'

St. Aubert looked up silently in her face, as if would have spoken, but his spirit sunk a while, and his eyes became heavy and dull. She felt that look at her heart. 'My dear father!' she exclaimed; and then, checking herself, pressed his hand closer, and hid her face with her handkerchief. Her tears were concealed, but St. Aubert heard her convulsive sobs. His spirits returned. 'O my child!' said he, faintly, 'let my consolations be yours. I die in peace; for I know, that I am about to return to the bosom of my Father, who will still be your Father, when I am gone. Always trust in him, my love, and he will support you in these moments, as he supports me.'

Emily could only listen, and weep; but the extreme composure of his manner, and the faith and hope he expressed, somewhat soothed her anguish. Yet, whenever she looked upon his emaciated countenance, and saw the lines of death beginning to prevail over it — saw his sunk eyes, still bent on her, and their heavy lids pressing to a close, there was a pang in her heart, such as defied expression, though it required filial virtue, like hers, to forbear the attempt.

He desired once more to bless her; 'Where are you, my dear?' said he, as he stretched forth his hands. Emily had turned to the window, that he might not perceive her anguish; she now understood, that his sight had failed him. When he had given her his blessing, and it seemed to be the last effort of expiring life, he sunk back on his pillow. She kissed his forehead; the damps of death had settled there, and, forgetting her fortitude for a moment, her tears mingled with them. St. Aubert lifted up

his eyes; the spirit of a father returned to them, but it quickly vanished, and he spoke no more.

St. Aubert lingered till about three o’clock in the afternoon, and, thus gradually sinking into death, he expired without a struggle, or a sigh.

Emily was led from the chamber by La Voisin and his daughter, who did what they could to comfort her. The old man sat and wept with her. Agnes was more erroneously officious.

CHAPTER VIII

O’er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve,
Aerial forms shall sit at eve,
and bend the pensive head.

COLLINS

The monk, who had before appeared, returned in the evening to offer consolation to Emily, and brought a kind message from the lady abbess, inviting her to the convent. Emily, though she did not accept the offer, returned an answer expressive of her gratitude. The holy conversation of the friar, whose mild benevolence of manners bore some resemblance to those of St. Aubert, soothed the violence of her grief, and lifted her heart to the Being, who, extending through all place and all eternity, looks on the events of this little world as on the shadows of a moment, and beholds equally, and in the same instant, the soul that has passed the gates of death, and that, which still lingers in the body. ‘In the sight of God,’ said Emily, ‘my dear father now exists, as truly as he yesterday existed to me; it is to me only that he is dead; to God and to himself he yet lives!’

The good monk left her more tranquil than she had been since St. Aubert died; and, before she retired to her little cabin for the night, she trusted herself so far as to visit the corpse. Silent, and without weeping, she stood by its side. The features, placid and serene, told the nature of the last sensations, that had lingered in the now deserted frame. For a moment she turned away, in horror of the stillness in which death had fixed that countenance, never till now seen otherwise than animated; then gazed on it with a mixture of doubt and awful astonishment. Her reason could scarcely overcome an involuntary and unaccountable expectation of seeing that beloved countenance still susceptible. She continued to gaze wildly; took up the cold hand; spoke; still gazed, and then burst into a transport of grief. La Voisin, hearing her sobs, came into the room to lead her away, but she heard nothing, and only begged that he would leave her.

Again alone, she indulged her tears, and, when the gloom of evening obscured the chamber, and almost veiled from her eyes the object of her distress, she still hung over the body; till her spirits, at length, were exhausted, and she became tranquil. La Voisin again knocked at the door, and entreated that she would come to the common apartment. Before she went, she kissed the lips of St. Aubert, as she was wont to do when she bade him good night. Again she kissed them; her heart felt as if it would

break, a few tears of agony started to her eyes, she looked up to heaven, then at St. Aubert, and left the room.

Retired to her lonely cabin, her melancholy thoughts still hovered round the body of her deceased parent; and, when she sunk into a kind of slumber, the images of her waking mind still haunted her fancy. She thought she saw her father approaching her with a benign countenance; then, smiling mournfully and pointing upwards, his lips moved, but, instead of words, she heard sweet music borne on the distant air, and presently saw his features glow with the mild rapture of a superior being. The strain seemed to swell louder, and she awoke. The vision was gone, but music yet came to her ear in strains such as angels might breathe. She doubted, listened, raised herself in the bed, and again listened. It was music, and not an illusion of her imagination. After a solemn steady harmony, it paused; then rose again, in mournful sweetness, and then died, in a cadence, that seemed to bear away the listening soul to heaven. She instantly remembered the music of the preceding night, with the strange circumstances, related by La Voisin, and the affecting conversation it had led to, concerning the state of departed spirits. All that St. Aubert had said, on that subject, now pressed upon her heart, and overwhelmed it. What a change in a few hours! He, who then could only conjecture, was now made acquainted with truth; was himself become one of the departed! As she listened, she was chilled with superstitious awe, her tears stopped; and she rose, and went to the window. All without was obscured in shade; but Emily, turning her eyes from the massy darkness of the woods, whose waving outline appeared on the horizon, saw, on the left, that effulgent planet, which the old man had pointed out, setting over the woods. She remembered what he had said concerning it, and, the music now coming at intervals on the air, she unclosed the casement to listen to the strains, that soon gradually sunk to a greater distance, and tried to discover whence they came. The obscurity prevented her from distinguishing any object on the green platform below; and the sounds became fainter and fainter, till they softened into silence. She listened, but they returned no more. Soon after, she observed the planet trembling between the fringed tops of the woods, and, in the next moment, sink behind them. Chilled with a melancholy awe, she retired once more to her bed, and, at length, forgot for a while her sorrows in sleep.

On the following morning, she was visited by a sister of the convent, who came, with kind offices and a second invitation from the lady abbess; and Emily, though she could not forsake the cottage, while the remains of her father were in it, consented, however painful such a visit must be, in the present state of her spirits, to pay her respects to the abbess, in the evening.

About an hour before sun-set, La Voisin shewed her the way through the woods to the convent, which stood in a small bay of the Mediterranean, crowned by a woody amphitheatre; and Emily, had she been less unhappy, would have admired the extensive sea view, that appeared from the green slope, in front of the edifice, and the rich shores, hung with woods and pastures, that extended on either hand. But her thoughts were now occupied by one sad idea, and the features of nature were to her colourless and without form. The bell for vespers struck, as she passed the ancient gate of the convent, and seemed the funereal note for St. Aubert. Little incidents affect a mind, enervated by sorrow; Emily struggled against the sickening faintness, that came over her, and was led into the presence of the abbess, who received her with an air of maternal tenderness; an air of such gentle solicitude and consideration, as touched her with an instantaneous gratitude; her eyes were filled with tears, and the words she would have spoken faltered on her lips. The abbess led her to a seat, and sat down beside her, still holding her hand and regarding her in silence, as Emily dried her tears and attempted to speak. ‘Be composed, my daughter,’ said the abbess in a soothing voice, ‘do not speak yet; I know all you would say. Your spirits must be soothed. We are going to prayers; — will you attend our evening service? It is comfortable, my child, to look up in our afflictions to a father, who sees and pities us, and who chastens in his mercy.’

Emily’s tears flowed again, but a thousand sweet emotions mingled with them. The abbess suffered her to weep without interruption, and watched over her with a look of benignity, that might have characterized the countenance of a guardian angel. Emily, when she became tranquil, was encouraged to speak without reserve, and to mention the motive, that made her unwilling to quit the cottage, which the abbess did not oppose even by a hint; but praised the filial piety of her conduct, and added a hope, that she would pass a few days at the convent, before she returned to La Vallee.

‘You must allow yourself a little time to recover from your first shock, my daughter, before you encounter a second; I will not affect to conceal from you how much I know your heart must suffer, on returning to the scene of your former happiness. Here, you will have all, that quiet and sympathy and religion can give, to restore your spirits. But come,’ added she, observing the tears swell in Emily’s eyes, ‘we will go to the chapel.’

Emily followed to the parlour, where the nuns were assembled, to whom the abbess committed her, saying, ‘This is a daughter, for whom I have much esteem; be sisters to her.’

They passed on in a train to the chapel, where the solemn devotion, with which the service was performed, elevated her mind, and brought to it the comforts of faith and resignation.

Twilight came on, before the abbess’s kindness would suffer Emily to depart, when she left the convent, with a heart much lighter than she had entered it, and was reconducted by La Voisin through the woods, the pensive gloom of which was in unison with the temper of her mind; and she pursued the little wild path, in musing silence, till her guide suddenly stopped, looked round, and then struck out of the path into the high grass, saying he had mistaken the road. He now walked on quickly, and Emily, proceeding with difficulty over the obscured and uneven ground, was left at some distance, till her voice arrested him, who seemed unwilling to stop, and still hurried on. ‘If you are in doubt about the way,’ said Emily, ‘had we not better enquire it at the chateau yonder, between the trees?’

‘No,’ replied La Voisin, ‘there is no occasion. When we reach that brook, ma’amselle, (you see the light upon the water there, beyond the woods) when we reach that brook, we shall be at home presently. I don’t know how I happened to mistake the path; I seldom come this way after sun-set.’

‘It is solitary enough,’ said Emily, ‘but you have no banditti here.’

‘No, ma’amselle — no banditti.’

‘What are you afraid of then, my good friend? you are not superstitious?’ ‘No, not superstitious; but, to tell you the truth, lady, nobody likes to go near that chateau, after dusk.’ ‘By whom is it inhabited,’ said Emily, ‘that it is so formidable?’ ‘Why, ma’amselle, it is scarcely inhabited, for our lord the Marquis, and the lord of all these find woods, too, is dead. He had not once been in it, for these many years, and

his people, who have the care of it, live in a cottage close by.' Emily now understood this to be the chateau, which La Voisin had formerly pointed out, as having belonged to the Marquis Villeroi, on the mention of which her father had appeared so much affected.

'Ah! it is a desolate place now,' continued La Voisin, 'and such a grand, fine place, as I remember it!' Emily enquired what had occasioned this lamentable change; but the old man was silent, and Emily, whose interest was awakened by the fear he had expressed, and above all by a recollection of her father's agitation, repeated the question, and added, 'If you are neither afraid of the inhabitants, my good friend, nor are superstitious, how happens it, that you dread to pass near that chateau in the dark?'

'Perhaps, then, I am a little superstitious, ma'amselle; and, if you knew what I do, you might be so too. Strange things have happened there. Monsieur, your good father, appeared to have known the late Marchioness.' 'Pray inform me what did happen?' said Emily, with much emotion.

'Alas! ma'amselle,' answered La Voisin, 'enquire no further; it is not for me to lay open the domestic secrets of my lord.' — Emily, surprised by the old man's words, and his manner of delivering them, forbore to repeat her question; a nearer interest, the remembrance of St. Aubert, occupied her thoughts, and she was led to recollect the music she heard on the preceding night, which she mentioned to La Voisin. 'You was not alone, ma'amselle, in this,' he replied, 'I heard it too; but I have so often heard it, at the same hour, that I was scarcely surprised.'

'You doubtless believe this music to have some connection with the chateau,' said Emily suddenly, 'and are, therefore, superstitious.' 'It may be so, ma'amselle, but there are other circumstances, belonging to that chateau, which I remember, and sadly too.' A heavy sigh followed: but Emily's delicacy restrained the curiosity these words revived, and she enquired no further.

On reaching the cottage, all the violence of her grief returned; it seemed as if she had escaped its heavy pressure only while she was removed from the object of it. She passed immediately to the chamber, where the remains of her father were laid, and yielded to all the anguish of hopeless grief. La Voisin, at length, persuaded her to leave the room, and she returned to her

own, where, exhausted by the sufferings of the day, she soon fell into deep sleep, and awoke considerably refreshed.

When the dreadful hour arrived, in which the remains of St. Aubert were to be taken from her for ever, she went alone to the chamber to look upon his countenance yet once again, and La Voisin, who had waited patiently below stairs, till her despair should subside, with the respect due to grief, forbore to interrupt the indulgence of it, till surprise, at the length of her stay, and then apprehension overcame his delicacy, and he went to lead her from the chamber. Having tapped gently at the door, without receiving an answer, he listened attentively, but all was still; no sigh, no sob of anguish was heard. Yet more alarmed by this silence, he opened the door, and found Emily lying senseless across the foot of the bed, near which stood the coffin. His calls procured assistance, and she was carried to her room, where proper applications, at length, restored her.

During her state of insensibility, La Voisin had given directions for the coffin to be closed, and he succeeded in persuading Emily to forbear revisiting the chamber. She, indeed, felt herself unequal to this, and also perceived the necessity of sparing her spirits, and recollecting fortitude sufficient to bear her through the approaching scene. St. Aubert had given a particular injunction, that his remains should be interred in the church of the convent of St. Clair, and, in mentioning the north chancel, near the ancient tomb of the Villerois, had pointed out the exact spot, where he wished to be laid. The superior had granted this place for the interment, and thither, therefore, the sad procession now moved, which was met, at the gates, by the venerable priest, followed by a train of friars. Every person, who heard the solemn chant of the anthem, and the peal of the organ, that struck up, when the body entered the church, and saw also the feeble steps, and the assumed tranquillity of Emily, gave her involuntary tears. She shed none, but walked, her face partly shaded by a thin black veil, between two persons, who supported her, preceded by the abbess, and followed by nuns, whose plaintive voices mellowed the swelling harmony of the dirge. When the procession came to the grave the music ceased. Emily drew the veil entirely over her face, and, in a momentary pause, between the anthem and the rest of the service, her sobs were distinctly audible. The holy father began the service, and Emily again commanded her feelings, till the coffin was let down, and she heard the earth rattle on

its lid. Then, as she shuddered, a groan burst from her heart, and she leaned for support on the person who stood next to her. In a few moments she recovered; and, when she heard those affecting and sublime words: ‘His body is buried in peace, and his soul returns to Him that gave it,’ her anguish softened into tears.

The abbess led her from the church into her own parlour, and there administered all the consolations, that religion and gentle sympathy can give. Emily struggled against the pressure of grief; but the abbess, observing her attentively, ordered a bed to be prepared, and recommended her to retire to repose. She also kindly claimed her promise to remain a few days at the convent; and Emily, who had no wish to return to the cottage, the scene of all her sufferings, had leisure, now that no immediate care pressed upon her attention, to feel the indisposition, which disabled her from immediately travelling.

Meanwhile, the maternal kindness of the abbess, and the gentle attentions of the nuns did all, that was possible, towards soothing her spirits and restoring her health. But the latter was too deeply wounded, through the medium of her mind, to be quickly revived. She lingered for some weeks at the convent, under the influence of a slow fever, wishing to return home, yet unable to go thither; often even reluctant to leave the spot where her father’s relics were deposited, and sometimes soothing herself with the consideration, that, if she died here, her remains would repose beside those of St. Aubert. In the meanwhile, she sent letters to Madame Cheron and to the old housekeeper, informing them of the sad event, that had taken place, and of her own situation. From her aunt she received an answer, abounding more in commonplace condolement, than in traits of real sorrow, which assured her, that a servant should be sent to conduct her to La Vallee, for that her own time was so much occupied by company, that she had no leisure to undertake so long a journey. However Emily might prefer La Vallee to Tholouse, she could not be insensible to the indecorous and unkind conduct of her aunt, in suffering her to return thither, where she had no longer a relation to console and protect her; a conduct, which was the more culpable, since St. Aubert had appointed Madame Cheron the guardian of his orphan daughter.

Madame Cheron’s servant made the attendance of the good La Voisin unnecessary; and Emily, who felt sensibly her obligations to him, for all

his kind attention to her late father, as well as to herself, was glad to spare him a long, and what, at his time of life, must have been a troublesome journey.

During her stay at the convent, the peace and sanctity that reigned within, the tranquil beauty of the scenery without, and the delicate attentions of the abbess and the nuns, were circumstances so soothing to her mind, that they almost tempted her to leave a world, where she had lost her dearest friends, and devote herself to the cloister, in a spot, rendered sacred to her by containing the tomb of St. Aubert. The pensive enthusiasm, too, so natural to her temper, had spread a beautiful illusion over the sanctified retirement of a nun, that almost hid from her view the selfishness of its security. But the touches, which a melancholy fancy, slightly tinctured with superstition, gave to the monastic scene, began to fade, as her spirits revived, and brought once more to her heart an image, which had only transiently been banished thence. By this she was silently awakened to hope and comfort and sweet affections; visions of happiness gleamed faintly at a distance, and, though she knew them to be illusions, she could not resolve to shut them out for ever. It was the remembrance of Valancourt, of his taste, his genius, and of the countenance which glowed with both, that, perhaps, alone determined her to return to the world. The grandeur and sublimity of the scenes, amidst which they had first met, had fascinated her fancy, and had imperceptibly contributed to render Valancourt more interesting by seeming to communicate to him somewhat of their own character. The esteem, too, which St. Aubert had repeatedly expressed for him, sanctioned this kindness; but, though his countenance and manner had continually expressed his admiration of her, he had not otherwise declared it; and even the hope of seeing him again was so distant, that she was scarcely conscious of it, still less that it influenced her conduct on this occasion.

It was several days after the arrival of Madame Cheron’s servant before Emily was sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey to La Vallee. On the evening preceding her departure, she went to the cottage to take leave of La Voisin and his family, and to make them a return for their kindness. The old man she found sitting on a bench at his door, between his daughter, and his son-in-law, who was just returned from his daily labour, and who was playing upon a pipe, that, in tone, resembled an oboe. A flask

of wine stood beside the old man, and, before him, a small table with fruit and bread, round which stood several of his grandsons, fine rosy children, who were taking their supper, as their mother distributed it. On the edge of the little green, that spread before the cottage, were cattle and a few sheep reposing under the trees. The landscape was touched with the mellow light of the evening sun, whose long slanting beams played through a vista of the woods, and lighted up the distant turrets of the chateau. She paused a moment, before she emerged from the shade, to gaze upon the happy group before her — on the complacency and ease of healthy age, depictured on the countenance of La Voisin; the maternal tenderness of Agnes, as she looked upon her children, and the innocency of infantine pleasures, reflected in their smiles. Emily looked again at the venerable old man, and at the cottage; the memory of her father rose with full force upon her mind, and she hastily stepped forward, afraid to trust herself with a longer pause. She took an affectionate and affecting leave of La Voisin and his family; he seemed to love her as his daughter, and shed tears; Emily shed many. She avoided going into the cottage, since she knew it would revive emotions, such as she could not now endure.

One painful scene yet awaited her, for she determined to visit again her father's grave; and that she might not be interrupted, or observed in the indulgence of her melancholy tenderness, she deferred her visit, till every inhabitant of the convent, except the nun who promised to bring her the key of the church, should be retired to rest. Emily remained in her chamber, till she heard the convent bell strike twelve, when the nun came, as she had appointed, with the key of a private door, that opened into the church, and they descended together the narrow winding staircase, that led thither. The nun offered to accompany Emily to the grave, adding, 'It is melancholy to go alone at this hour;' but the former, thanking her for the consideration, could not consent to have any witness of her sorrow; and the sister, having unlocked the door, gave her the lamp. 'You will remember, sister,' said she, 'that in the east aisle, which you must pass, is a newly opened grave; hold the light to the ground, that you may not stumble over the loose earth.' Emily, thanking her again, took the lamp, and, stepping into the church, sister Mariette departed. But Emily paused a moment at the door; a sudden fear came over her, and she returned to the foot of the staircase, where, as she heard the steps of the nun ascending,

and, while she held up the lamp, saw her black veil waving over the spiral balusters, she was tempted to call her back. While she hesitated, the veil disappeared, and, in the next moment, ashamed of her fears, she returned to the church. The cold air of the aisles chilled her, and their deep silence and extent, feebly shone upon by the moonlight, that streamed through a distant gothic window, would at any other time have awed her into superstition; now, grief occupied all her attention. She scarcely heard the whispering echoes of her own steps, or thought of the open grave, till she found herself almost on its brink. A friar of the convent had been buried there on the preceding evening, and, as she had sat alone in her chamber at twilight, she heard, at distance, the monks chanting the requiem for his soul. This brought freshly to her memory the circumstances of her father's death; and, as the voices, mingling with a low querulous peal of the organ, swelled faintly, gloomy and affecting visions had arisen upon her mind. Now she remembered them, and, turning aside to avoid the broken ground, these recollections made her pass on with quicker steps to the grave of St. Aubert, when in the moonlight, that fell athwart a remote part of the aisle, she thought she saw a shadow gliding between the pillars. She stopped to listen, and, not hearing any footstep, believed that her fancy had deceived her, and, no longer apprehensive of being observed, proceeded. St. Aubert was buried beneath a plain marble, bearing little more than his name and the date of his birth and death, near the foot of the stately monument of the Villerois. Emily remained at his grave, till a chime, that called the monks to early prayers, warned her to retire; then, she wept over it a last farewel, and forced herself from the spot. After this hour of melancholy indulgence, she was refreshed by a deeper sleep, than she had experienced for a long time, and, on awakening, her mind was more tranquil and resigned, than it had been since St. Aubert's death.

But, when the moment of her departure from the convent arrived, all her grief returned; the memory of the dead, and the kindness of the living attached her to the place; and for the sacred spot, where her father's remains were interred, she seemed to feel all those tender affections which we conceive for home. The abbess repeated many kind assurances of regard at their parting, and pressed her to return, if ever she should find her condition elsewhere unpleasant; many of the nuns also expressed

unaffected regret at her departure, and Emily left the convent with many tears, and followed by sincere wishes for her happiness.

She had travelled several leagues, before the scenes of the country, through which she passed, had power to rouse her for a moment from the deep melancholy, into which she was sunk, and, when they did, it was only to remind her, that, on her last view of them, St. Aubert was at her side, and to call up to her remembrance the remarks he had delivered on similar scenery. Thus, without any particular occurrence, passed the day in languor and dejection. She slept that night in a town on the skirts of Languedoc, and, on the following morning, entered Gascony.

Towards the close of this day, Emily came within view of the plains in the neighbourhood of La Vallee, and the wellknown objects of former times began to press upon her notice, and with them recollections, that awakened all her tenderness and grief. Often, while she looked through her tears upon the wild grandeur of the Pyrenees, now varied with the rich lights and shadows of evening, she remembered, that, when last she saw them, her father partook with her of the pleasure they inspired. Suddenly some scene, which he had particularly pointed out to her, would present itself, and the sick languor of despair would steal upon her heart. ‘There!’ she would exclaim, ‘there are the very cliffs, there the wood of pines, which he looked at with such delight, as we passed this road together for the last time. There, too, under the crag of that mountain, is the cottage, peeping from among the cedars, which he bade me remember, and copy with my pencil. O my father, shall I never see you more!’

As she drew near the chateau, these melancholy memorials of past times multiplied. At length, the chateau itself appeared, amid the glowing beauty of St. Aubert’s favourite landscape. This was an object, which called for fortitude, not for tears; Emily dried hers, and prepared to meet with calmness the trying moment of her return to that home, where there was no longer a parent to welcome her. ‘Yes,’ said she, ‘let me not forget the lessons he has taught me! How often he has pointed out the necessity of resisting even virtuous sorrow; how often we have admired together the greatness of a mind, that can at once suffer and reason! O my father! if you are permitted to look down upon your child, it will please you to see, that she remembers, and endeavours to practise, the precepts you have given her.’

A turn on the road now allowed a nearer view of the chateau, the chimneys, tipped with light, rising from behind St. Aubert's favourite oaks, whose foliage partly concealed the lower part of the building. Emily could not suppress a heavy sigh. 'This, too, was his favourite hour,' said she, as she gazed upon the long evening shadows, stretched athwart the landscape. 'How deep the repose, how lovely the scene! lovely and tranquil as in former days!'

Again she resisted the pressure of sorrow, till her ear caught the gay melody of the dance, which she had so often listened to, as she walked with St. Aubert, on the margin of the Garonne, when all her fortitude forsook her, and she continued to weep, till the carriage stopped at the little gate, that opened upon what was now her own territory. She raised her eyes on the sudden stopping of the carriage, and saw her father's old housekeeper coming to open the gate. Manchon also came running, and barking before her; and when his young mistress alighted, fawned, and played round her, gasping with joy.

'Dear ma'amselle!' said Theresa, and paused, and looked as if she would have offered something of condolement to Emily, whose tears now prevented reply. The dog still fawned and ran round her, and then flew towards the carriage, with a short quick bark. 'Ah, ma'amselle! — my poor master!' said Theresa, whose feelings were more awakened than her delicacy, 'Manchon's gone to look for him.' Emily sobbed aloud; and, on looking towards the carriage, which still stood with the door open, saw the animal spring into it, and instantly leap out, and then with his nose on the ground run round the horses.

'Don't cry so, ma'amselle,' said Theresa, 'it breaks my heart to see you.' The dog now came running to Emily, then returned to the carriage, and then back again to her, whining and discontented. 'Poor rogue!' said Theresa, 'thou hast lost thy master, thou mayst well cry! But come, my dear young lady, be comforted. What shall I get to refresh you?' Emily gave her hand to the old servant, and tried to restrain her grief, while she made some kind enquiries concerning her health. But she still lingered in the walk which led to the chateau, for within was no person to meet her with the kiss of affection; her own heart no longer palpitated with impatient joy to meet again the wellknown smile, and she dreaded to see objects, which would recall the full remembrance of her former happiness.

She moved slowly towards the door, paused, went on, and paused again. How silent, how forsaken, how forlorn did the chateau appear! Trembling to enter it, yet blaming herself for delaying what she could not avoid, she, at length, passed into the hall; crossed it with a hurried step, as if afraid to look round, and opened the door of that room, which she was wont to call her own. The gloom of evening gave solemnity to its silent and deserted air. The chairs, the tables, every article of furniture, so familiar to her in happier times, spoke eloquently to her heart. She seated herself, without immediately observing it, in a window, which opened upon the garden, and where St. Aubert had often sat with her, watching the sun retire from the rich and extensive prospect, that appeared beyond the groves.

Having indulged her tears for some time, she became more composed; and, when Theresa, after seeing the baggage deposited in her lady's room, again appeared, she had so far recovered her spirits, as to be able to converse with her.

'I have made up the green bed for you, ma'amselle,' said Theresa, as she set the coffee upon the table. 'I thought you would like it better than your own now; but I little thought this day month, that you would come back alone. A-well-a-day! the news almost broke my heart, when it did come. Who would have believed, that my poor master, when he went from home, would never return again!' Emily hid her face with her handkerchief, and waved her hand.

'Do taste the coffee,' said Theresa. 'My dear young lady, be comforted — we must all die. My dear master is a saint above.' Emily took the handkerchief from her face, and raised her eyes full of tears towards heaven; soon after she dried them, and, in a calm, but tremulous voice, began to enquire concerning some of her late father's pensioners.

'Alas-a-day!' said Theresa, as she poured out the coffee, and handed it to her mistress, 'all that could come, have been here every day to enquire after you and my master.' She then proceeded to tell, that some were dead whom they had left well; and others, who were ill, had recovered. 'And see, ma'amselle,' added Theresa, 'there is old Mary coming up the garden now; she has looked every day these three years as if she would die, yet she is alive still. She has seen the chaise at the door, and knows you are come home.'

The sight of this poor old woman would have been too much for Emily, and she begged Theresa would go and tell her, that she was too ill to see any person that night. ‘Tomorrow I shall be better, perhaps; but give her this token of my remembrance.’

Emily sat for some time, given up to sorrow. Not an object, on which her eye glanced, but awakened some remembrance, that led immediately to the subject of her grief. Her favourite plants, which St. Aubert had taught her to nurse; the little drawings, that adorned the room, which his taste had instructed her to execute; the books, that he had selected for her use, and which they had read together; her musical instruments, whose sounds he loved so well, and which he sometimes awakened himself — every object gave new force to sorrow. At length, she roused herself from this melancholy indulgence, and, summoning all her resolution, stepped forward to go into those forlorn rooms, which, though she dreaded to enter, she knew would yet more powerfully affect her, if she delayed to visit them.

Having passed through the green-house, her courage for a moment forsook her, when she opened the door of the library; and, perhaps, the shade, which evening and the foliage of the trees near the windows threw across the room, heightened the solemnity of her feelings on entering that apartment, where every thing spoke of her father. There was an arm chair, in which he used to sit; she shrunk when she observed it, for she had so often seen him seated there, and the idea of him rose so distinctly to her mind, that she almost fancied she saw him before her. But she checked the illusions of a distempered imagination, though she could not subdue a certain degree of awe, which now mingled with her emotions. She walked slowly to the chair, and seated herself in it; there was a reading-desk before it, on which lay a book open, as it had been left by her father. It was some moments before she recovered courage enough to examine it; and, when she looked at the open page, she immediately recollected, that St. Aubert, on the evening before his departure from the chateau, had read to her some passages from this his favourite author. The circumstance now affected her extremely; she looked at the page, wept, and looked again. To her the book appeared sacred and invaluable, and she would not have moved it, or closed the page, which he had left open, for the treasures of the Indies. Still she sat before the desk, and could not resolve to quit it,

though the increasing gloom, and the profound silence of the apartment, revived a degree of painful awe. Her thoughts dwelt on the probable state of departed spirits, and she remembered the affecting conversation, which had passed between St. Aubert and La Voisin, on the night preceding his death.

As she mused she saw the door slowly open, and a rustling sound in a remote part of the room startled her. Through the dusk she thought she perceived something move. The subject she had been considering, and the present tone of her spirits, which made her imagination respond to every impression of her senses, gave her a sudden terror of something supernatural. She sat for a moment motionless, and then, her dissipated reason returning, ‘What should I fear?’ said she. ‘If the spirits of those we love ever return to us, it is in kindness.’

The silence, which again reigned, made her ashamed of her late fears, and she believed, that her imagination had deluded her, or that she had heard one of those unaccountable noises, which sometimes occur in old houses. The same sound, however, returned; and, distinguishing something moving towards her, and in the next instant press beside her into the chair, she shrieked; but her fleeting senses were instantly recalled, on perceiving that it was Manchon who sat by her, and who now licked her hands affectionately.

Perceiving her spirits unequal to the task she had assigned herself of visiting the deserted rooms of the chateau this night, when she left the library, she walked into the garden, and down to the terrace, that overhung the river. The sun was now set; but, under the dark branches of the almond trees, was seen the saffron glow of the west, spreading beyond the twilight of middle air. The bat flitted silently by; and, now and then, the mourning note of the nightingale was heard. The circumstances of the hour brought to her recollection some lines, which she had once heard St. Aubert recite on this very spot, and she had now a melancholy pleasure in repeating them.

SONNET

Now the bat circles on the breeze of eve,
That creeps, in shudd’ring fits, along the wave,
And trembles ‘mid the woods, and through the cave
Whose lonely sighs the wanderer deceive;
For oft, when melancholy charms his mind,
He thinks the Spirit of the rock he hears,
Nor listens, but with sweetly-thrilling fears,
To the low, mystic murmurs of the wind!
Now the bat circles, and the twilight-dew
Falls silent round, and, o’er the mountain-cliff,
The gleaming wave, and far-discover’d skiff,
Spreads the gray veil of soft, harmonious hue.
So falls o’er Grief the dew of pity’s tear
Dimming her lonely visions of despair.

Emily, wandering on, came to St. Aubert’s favourite plane-tree, where so often, at this hour, they had sat beneath the shade together, and with her dear mother so often had conversed on the subject of a future state. How often, too, had her father expressed the comfort he derived from believing, that they should meet in another world! Emily, overcome by these recollections, left the plane-tree, and, as she leaned pensively on the wall of the terrace, she observed a group of peasants dancing gaily on the banks of the Garonne, which spread in broad expanse below, and reflected the evening light. What a contrast they formed to the desolate, unhappy Emily! They were gay and debonnaire, as they were wont to be when she, too, was gay — when St. Aubert used to listen to their merry music, with a countenance beaming pleasure and benevolence. Emily, having looked for a moment on this sprightly band, turned away, unable to bear the remembrances it excited; but where, alas! could she turn, and not meet new objects to give acuteness to grief?

As she walked slowly towards the house, she was met by Theresa. ‘Dear ma’amselle,’ said she, ‘I have been seeking you up and down this half

hour, and was afraid some accident had happened to you. How can you like to wander about so in this night air! Do come into the house. Think what my poor master would have said, if he could see you. I am sure, when my dear lady died, no gentleman could take it more to heart than he did, yet you know he seldom shed a tear.'

'Pray, Theresa, cease,' said Emily, wishing to interrupt this ill-judged, but well-meaning harangue; Theresa's loquacity, however, was not to be silenced so easily. 'And when you used to grieve so,' she added, 'he often told you how wrong it was — for that my mistress was happy. And, if she was happy, I am sure he is so too; for the prayers of the poor, they say, reach heaven.' During this speech, Emily had walked silently into the chateau, and Theresa lighted her across the hall into the common sitting parlour, where she had laid the cloth, with one solitary knife and fork, for supper. Emily was in the room before she perceived that it was not her own apartment, but she checked the emotion which inclined her to leave it, and seated herself quietly by the little supper table. Her father's hat hung upon the opposite wall; while she gazed at it, a faintness came over her. Theresa looked at her, and then at the object, on which her eyes were settled, and went to remove it; but Emily waved her hand— 'No,' said she, 'let it remain. I am going to my chamber.' 'Nay, ma'amselle, supper is ready.' 'I cannot take it,' replied Emily, 'I will go to my room, and try to sleep. Tomorrow I shall be better.'

'This is poor doings!' said Theresa. 'Dear lady! do take some food! I have dressed a pheasant, and a fine one it is. Old Monsieur Barreaux sent it this morning, for I saw him yesterday, and told him you were coming. And I know nobody that seemed more concerned, when he heard the sad news, then he.'

'Did he?' said Emily, in a tender voice, while she felt her poor heart warmed for a moment by a ray of sympathy.

At length, her spirits were entirely overcome, and she retired to her room.

CHAPTER IX

Can Music’s voice, can Beauty’s eye,
Can Painting’s glowing hand supply
A charm so suited to my mind,
As blows this hollow gust of wind?
As drops this little weeping rill,
Soft tinkling down the moss-grown hill;
While, through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray?

MASON

Emily, some time after her return to La Vallee, received letters from her aunt, Madame Cheron, in which, after some commonplace condolement and advice, she invited her to Tholouse, and added, that, as her late brother had entrusted Emily's EDUCATION to her, she should consider herself bound to overlook her conduct. Emily, at this time, wished only to remain at La Vallee, in the scenes of her early happiness, now rendered infinitely dear to her, as the late residence of those, whom she had lost for ever, where she could weep unobserved, retrace their steps, and remember each minute particular of their manners. But she was equally anxious to avoid the displeasure of Madame Cheron.

Though her affection would not suffer her to question, even a moment, the propriety of St. Aubert's conduct in appointing Madame Cheron for her guardian, she was sensible, that this step had made her happiness depend, in a great degree, on the humour of her aunt. In her reply, she begged permission to remain, at present, at La Vallee, mentioning the extreme dejection of her spirits, and the necessity she felt for quiet and retirement to restore them. These she knew were not to be found at Madame Cheron's, whose inclinations led her into a life of dissipation, which her ample fortune encouraged; and, having given her answer, she felt somewhat more at ease.

In the first days of her affliction, she was visited by Monsieur Barreaux, a sincere mourner for St. Aubert. 'I may well lament my friend,' said he, 'for I shall never meet with his resemblance. If I could have found such a man in what is called society, I should not have left it.'

M. Barreaux's admiration of her father endeared him extremely to Emily, whose heart found almost its first relief in conversing of her parents, with a man, whom she so much revered, and who, though with such an ungracious appearance, possessed to much goodness of heart and delicacy of mind.

Several weeks passed away in quiet retirement, and Emily's affliction began to soften into melancholy. She could bear to read the books she had before read with her father; to sit in his chair in the library — to watch the

flowers his hand had planted — to awaken the tones of that instrument his fingers had pressed, and sometimes even to play his favourite air.

When her mind had recovered from the first shock of affliction, perceiving the danger of yielding to indolence, and that activity alone could restore its tone, she scrupulously endeavoured to pass all her hours in employment. And it was now that she understood the full value of the education she had received from St. Aubert, for in cultivating her understanding he had secured her an asylum from indolence, without recourse to dissipation, and rich and varied amusement and information, independent of the society, from which her situation secluded her. Nor were the good effects of this education confined to selfish advantages, since, St. Aubert having nourished every amiable qualify of her heart, it now expanded in benevolence to all around her, and taught her, when she could not remove the misfortunes of others, at least to soften them by sympathy and tenderness; — a benevolence that taught her to feel for all, that could suffer.

Madame Cheron returned no answer to Emily's letter, who began to hope, that she should be permitted to remain some time longer in her retirement, and her mind had now so far recovered its strength, that she ventured to view the scenes, which most powerfully recalled the images of past times. Among these was the fishing-house; and, to indulge still more the affectionate melancholy of the visit, she took thither her lute, that she might again hear there the tones, to which St. Aubert and her mother had so often delighted to listen. She went alone, and at that still hour of the evening which is so soothing to fancy and to grief. The last time she had been here she was in company with Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, a few days preceding that, on which the latter was seized with a fatal illness. Now, when Emily again entered the woods, that surrounded the building, they awakened so forcibly the memory of former times, that her resolution yielded for a moment to excess of grief. She stopped, leaned for support against a tree, and wept for some minutes, before she had recovered herself sufficiently to proceed. The little path, that led to the building, was overgrown with grass and the flowers which St. Aubert had scattered carelessly along the border were almost choked with weeds — the tall thistle — the fox-glove, and the nettle. She often paused to look on the desolate spot, now so silent and forsaken, and when, with a trembling

hand, she opened the door of the fishing-house, ‘Ah!’ said she, ‘every thing — every thing remains as when I left it last — left it with those who never must return!’ She went to a window, that overhung the rivulet, and, leaning over it, with her eyes fixed on the current, was soon lost in melancholy reverie. The lute she had brought lay forgotten beside her; the mournful sighing of the breeze, as it waved the high pines above, and its softer whispers among the osiers, that bowed upon the banks below, was a kind of music more in unison with her feelings. It did not vibrate on the chords of unhappy memory, but was soothing to the heart as the voice of Pity. She continued to muse, unconscious of the gloom of evening, and that the sun’s last light trembled on the heights above, and would probably have remained so much longer, if a sudden footstep, without the building, had not alarmed her attention, and first made her recollect that she was unprotected. In the next moment, a door opened, and a stranger appeared, who stopped on perceiving Emily, and then began to apologize for his intrusion. But Emily, at the sound of his voice, lost her fear in a stronger emotion: its tones were familiar to her ear, and, though she could not readily distinguish through the dusk the features of the person who spoke, she felt a remembrance too strong to be distrusted.

He repeated his apology, and Emily then said something in reply, when the stranger eagerly advancing, exclaimed, ‘Good God! can it be — surely I am not mistaken — ma’amselle St. Aubert? — is it not?’

‘It is indeed,’ said Emily, who was confirmed in her first conjecture, for she now distinguished the countenance of Valancourt, lighted up with still more than its usual animation. A thousand painful recollections crowded to her mind, and the effort, which she made to support herself, only served to increase her agitation. Valancourt, meanwhile, having enquired anxiously after her health, and expressed his hopes, that M. St. Aubert had found benefit from travelling, learned from the flood of tears, which she could no longer repress, the fatal truth. He led her to a seat, and sat down by her, while Emily continued to weep, and Valancourt to hold the hand, which she was unconscious he had taken, till it was wet with the tears, which grief for St. Aubert and sympathy for herself had called forth.

‘I feel,’ said he at length, ‘I feel how insufficient all attempt at consolation must be on this subject. I can only mourn with you, for I cannot doubt the source of your tears. Would to God I were mistaken!’

Emily could still answer only by tears, till she rose, and begged they might leave the melancholy spot, when Valancourt, though he saw her feebleness, could not offer to detain her, but took her arm within his, and led her from the fishing-house. They walked silently through the woods, Valancourt anxious to know, yet fearing to ask any particulars concerning St. Aubert; and Emily too much distressed to converse. After some time, however, she acquired fortitude enough to speak of her father, and to give a brief account of the manner of his death; during which recital Valancourt's countenance betrayed strong emotion, and, when he heard that St. Aubert had died on the road, and that Emily had been left among strangers, he pressed her hand between his, and involuntarily exclaimed, 'Why was I not there!' but in the next moment recollected himself, for he immediately returned to the mention of her father; till, perceiving that her spirits were exhausted, he gradually changed the subject, and spoke of himself. Emily thus learned that, after they had parted, he had wandered, for some time, along the shores of the Mediterranean, and had then returned through Languedoc into Gascony, which was his native province, and where he usually resided.

When he had concluded his little narrative, he sunk into a silence, which Emily was not disposed to interrupt, and it continued, till they reached the gate of the chateau, when he stopped, as if he had known this to be the limit of his walk. Here, saying, that it was his intention to return to Estuviere on the following day, he asked her if she would permit him to take leave of her in the morning; and Emily, perceiving that she could not reject an ordinary civility, without expressing by her refusal an expectation of something more, was compelled to answer, that she should be at home.

She passed a melancholy evening, during which the retrospect of all that had happened, since she had seen Valancourt, would rise to her imagination; and the scene of her father's death appeared in tints as fresh, as if it had passed on the preceding day. She remembered particularly the earnest and solemn manner, in which he had required her to destroy the manuscript papers, and, awakening from the lethargy, in which sorrow had held her, she was shocked to think she had not yet obeyed him, and determined, that another day should not reproach her with the neglect.

CHAPTER X

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer’s cloud,
Without our special wonder?

MACBETH

On the next morning, Emily ordered a fire to be lighted in the stove of the chamber, where St. Aubert used to sleep; and, as soon as she had breakfasted, went thither to burn the papers. Having fastened the door to prevent interruption, she opened the closet where they were concealed, as she entered which, she felt an emotion of unusual awe, and stood for some moments surveying it, trembling, and almost afraid to remove the board. There was a great chair in one corner of the closet, and, opposite to it, stood the table, at which she had seen her father sit, on the evening that preceded his departure, looking over, with so much emotion, what she believed to be these very papers.

The solitary life, which Emily had led of late, and the melancholy subjects, on which she had suffered her thoughts to dwell, had rendered her at times sensible to the ‘thick-coming fancies’ of a mind greatly enervated. It was lamentable, that her excellent understanding should have yielded, even for a moment, to the reveries of superstition, or rather to those starts of imagination, which deceive the senses into what can be called nothing less than momentary madness. Instances of this temporary failure of mind had more than once occurred since her return home; particularly when, wandering through this lonely mansion in the evening twilight, she had been alarmed by appearances, which would have been unseen in her more cheerful days. To this infirm state of her nerves may be attributed what she imagined, when, her eyes glancing a second time on the armchair, which stood in an obscure part of the closet, the countenance of her dead father appeared there. Emily stood fixed for a moment to the floor, after which she left the closet. Her spirits, however, soon returned; she reproached herself with the weakness of thus suffering interruption in an act of serious importance, and again opened the door. By the directions which St. Aubert had given her, she readily found the board he had described in an opposite corner of the closet, near the window; she distinguished also the line he had mentioned, and, pressing it as he had bade her, it slid down, and disclosed the bundle of papers, together with some scattered ones, and the purse of louis. With a trembling hand she

removed them, replaced the board, paused a moment, and was rising from the floor, when, on looking up, there appeared to her alarmed fancy the same countenance in the chair. The illusion, another instance of the unhappy effect which solitude and grief had gradually produced upon her mind, subdued her spirits; she rushed forward into the chamber, and sunk almost senseless into a chair. Returning reason soon overcame the dreadful, but pitiable attack of imagination, and she turned to the papers, though still with so little recollection, that her eyes involuntarily settled on the writing of some loose sheets, which lay open; and she was unconscious, that she was transgressing her father's strict injunction, till a sentence of dreadful import awakened her attention and her memory together. She hastily put the papers from her; but the words, which had roused equally her curiosity and terror, she could not dismiss from her thoughts. So powerfully had they affected her, that she even could not resolve to destroy the papers immediately; and the more she dwelt on the circumstance, the more it inflamed her imagination. Urged by the most forcible, and apparently the most necessary, curiosity to enquire farther, concerning the terrible and mysterious subject, to which she had seen an allusion, she began to lament her promise to destroy the papers. For a moment, she even doubted, whether it could justly be obeyed, in contradiction to such reasons as there appeared to be for further information. But the delusion was momentary.

'I have given a solemn promise,' said she, 'to observe a solemn injunction, and it is not my business to argue, but to obey. Let me hasten to remove the temptation, that would destroy my innocence, and embitter my life with the consciousness of irremediable guilt, while I have strength to reject it.'

Thus reanimated with a sense of her duty, she completed the triumph of her integrity over temptation, more forcible than any she had ever known, and consigned the papers to the flames. Her eyes watched them as they slowly consumed, she shuddered at the recollection of the sentence she had just seen, and at the certainty, that the only opportunity of explaining it was then passing away for ever.

It was long after this, that she recollected the purse; and as she was depositing it, unopened, in a cabinet, perceiving that it contained something of a size larger than coin, she examined it. 'His hand deposited

them here,’ said she, as she kissed some pieces of the coin, and wetted them with her tears, ‘his hand — which is now dust!’ At the bottom of the purse was a small packet, having taken out which, and unfolded paper after paper, she found to be an ivory case, containing the miniature of a — lady! She started— ‘The same,’ said she, ‘my father wept over!’ On examining the countenance she could recollect no person that it resembled. It was of uncommon beauty, and was characterized by an expression of sweetness, shaded with sorrow, and tempered by resignation.

St. Aubert had given no directions concerning this picture, nor had even named it; she, therefore, thought herself justified in preserving it. More than once remembering his manner, when he had spoken of the Marchioness of Villeroi, she felt inclined to believe that this was her resemblance; yet there appeared no reason why he should have preserved a picture of that lady, or, having preserved it, why he should lament over it in a manner so striking and affecting as she had witnessed on the night preceding his departure.

Emily still gazed on the countenance, examining its features, but she knew not where to detect the charm that captivated her attention, and inspired sentiments of such love and pity. Dark brown hair played carelessly along the open forehead; the nose was rather inclined to aquiline; the lips spoke in a smile, but it was a melancholy one; the eyes were blue, and were directed upwards with an expression of peculiar meekness, while the soft cloud of the brow spoke of the fine sensibility of the temper.

Emily was roused from the musing mood into which the picture had thrown her, by the closing of the garden gate; and, on turning her eyes to the window, she saw Valancourt coming towards the chateau. Her spirits agitated by the subjects that had lately occupied her mind, she felt unprepared to see him, and remained a few moments in the chamber to recover herself.

When she met him in the parlour, she was struck with the change that appeared in his air and countenance since they had parted in Rousillon, which twilight and the distress she suffered on the preceding evening had prevented her from observing. But dejection and languor disappeared, for a moment, in the smile that now enlightened his countenance, on perceiving her. ‘You see,’ said he, ‘I have availed myself of the permission

with which you honoured me — of bidding YOU farewell, whom I had the happiness of meeting only yesterday.'

Emily smiled faintly, and, anxious to say something, asked if he had been long in Gascony. 'A few days only,' replied Valancourt, while a blush passed over his cheek. 'I engaged in a long ramble after I had the misfortune of parting with the friends who had made my wanderings among the Pyrenees so delightful.'

A tear came to Emily's eye, as Valancourt said this, which he observed; and, anxious to draw off her attention from the remembrance that had occasioned it, as well as shocked at his own thoughtlessness, he began to speak on other subjects, expressing his admiration of the chateau, and its prospects. Emily, who felt somewhat embarrassed how to support a conversation, was glad of such an opportunity to continue it on indifferent topics. They walked down to the terrace, where Valancourt was charmed with the river scenery, and the views over the opposite shores of Guienne.

As he leaned on the wall of the terrace, watching the rapid current of the Garonne, 'I was a few weeks ago,' said he, 'at the source of this noble river; I had not then the happiness of knowing you, or I should have regretted your absence — it was a scene so exactly suited to your taste. It rises in a part of the Pyrenees, still wilder and more sublime, I think, than any we passed in the way to Rousillon.' He then described its fall among the precipices of the mountains, where its waters, augmented by the streams that descend from the snowy summits around, rush into the Vallee d'Aran, between whose romantic heights it foams along, pursuing its way to the north west till it emerges upon the plains of Languedoc. Then, washing the walls of Tholouse, and turning again to the north west, it assumes a milder character, as it fertilizes the pastures of Gascony and Guienne, in its progress to the Bay of Biscay.

Emily and Valancourt talked of the scenes they had passed among the Pyrenean Alps; as he spoke of which there was often a tremulous tenderness in his voice, and sometimes he expatiated on them with all the fire of genius, sometimes would appear scarcely conscious of the topic, though he continued to speak. This subject recalled forcibly to Emily the idea of her father, whose image appeared in every landscape, which Valancourt particularized, whose remarks dwelt upon her memory, and whose enthusiasm still glowed in her heart. Her silence, at length,

reminded Valancourt how nearly his conversation approached to the occasion of her grief, and he changed the subject, though for one scarcely less affecting to Emily. When he admired the grandeur of the plane-tree, that spread its wide branches over the terrace, and under whose shade they now sat, she remembered how often she had sat thus with St. Aubert, and heard him express the same admiration.

‘This was a favourite tree with my dear father,’ said she; ‘he used to love to sit under its foliage with his family about him, in the fine evenings of summer.’

Valancourt understood her feelings, and was silent; had she raised her eyes from the ground she would have seen tears in his. He rose, and leaned on the wall of the terrace, from which, in a few moments, he returned to his seat, then rose again, and appeared to be greatly agitated; while Emily found her spirits so much depressed, that several of her attempts to renew the conversation were ineffectual. Valancourt again sat down, but was still silent, and trembled. At length he said, with a hesitating voice, ‘This lovely scene! — I am going to leave — to leave you — perhaps for ever! These moments may never return; I cannot resolve to neglect, though I scarcely dare to avail myself of them. Let me, however, without offending the delicacy of your sorrow, venture to declare the admiration I must always feel of your goodness — O! that at some future period I might be permitted to call it love!’

Emily’s emotion would not suffer her to reply; and Valancourt, who now ventured to look up, observing her countenance change, expected to see her faint, and made an involuntary effort to support her, which recalled Emily to a sense of her situation, and to an exertion of her spirits. Valancourt did not appear to notice her indisposition, but, when he spoke again, his voice told the tenderest love. ‘I will not presume,’ he added, ‘to intrude this subject longer upon your attention at this time, but I may, perhaps, be permitted to mention, that these parting moments would lose much of their bitterness if I might be allowed to hope the declaration I have made would not exclude me from your presence in future.’

Emily made another effort to overcome the confusion of her thoughts, and to speak. She feared to trust the preference her heart acknowledged towards Valancourt, and to give him any encouragement for hope, on so short an acquaintance. For though in this narrow period she had observed

much that was admirable in his taste and disposition, and though these observations had been sanctioned by the opinion of her father, they were not sufficient testimonies of his general worth to determine her upon a subject so infinitely important to her future happiness as that, which now solicited her attention. Yet, though the thought of dismissing Valancourt was so very painful to her, that she could scarcely endure to pause upon it, the consciousness of this made her fear the partiality of her judgment, and hesitate still more to encourage that suit, for which her own heart too tenderly pleaded. The family of Valancourt, if not his circumstances, had been known to her father, and known to be unexceptionable. Of his circumstances, Valancourt himself hinted as far as delicacy would permit, when he said he had at present little else to offer but an heart, that adored her. He had solicited only for a distant hope, and she could not resolve to forbid, though she scarcely dared to permit it; at length, she acquired courage to say, that she must think herself honoured by the good opinion of any person, whom her father had esteemed.

‘And was I, then, thought worthy of his esteem?’ said Valancourt, in a voice trembling with anxiety; then checking himself, he added, ‘But pardon the question; I scarcely know what I say. If I might dare to hope, that you think me not unworthy such honour, and might be permitted sometimes to enquire after your health, I should now leave you with comparative tranquillity.’

Emily, after a moment’s silence, said, ‘I will be ingenuous with you, for I know you will understand, and allow for my situation; you will consider it as a proof of my — my esteem that I am so. Though I live here in what was my father’s house, I live here alone. I have, alas! no longer a parent — a parent, whose presence might sanction your visits. It is unnecessary for me to point out the impropriety of my receiving them.’

‘Nor will I affect to be insensible of this,’ replied Valancourt, adding mournfully— ‘but what is to console me for my candour? I distress you, and would now leave the subject, if I might carry with me a hope of being some time permitted to renew it, of being allowed to make myself known to your family.’

Emily was again confused, and again hesitated what to reply; she felt most acutely the difficulty — the forlornness of her situation, which did not allow her a single relative, or friend, to whom she could turn for even a

look, that might support and guide her in the present embarrassing circumstances. Madame Cheron, who was her only relative, and ought to have been this friend, was either occupied by her own amusements, or so resentful of the reluctance her niece had shewn to quit La Vallee, that she seemed totally to have abandoned her.

‘Ah! I see,’ said Valancourt, after a long pause, during which Emily had begun, and left unfinished two or three sentences, ‘I see that I have nothing to hope; my fears were too just, you think me unworthy of your esteem. That fatal journey! which I considered as the happiest period of my life — those delightful days were to embitter all my future ones. How often I have looked back to them with hope and fear — yet never till this moment could I prevail with myself to regret their enchanting influence.’

His voice faltered, and he abruptly quitted his seat and walked on the terrace. There was an expression of despair on his countenance, that affected Emily. The pleadings of her heart overcame, in some degree, her extreme timidity, and, when he resumed his seat, she said, in an accent that betrayed her tenderness, ‘You do both yourself and me injustice when you say I think you unworthy of my esteem; I will acknowledge that you have long possessed it, and — and— ‘

Valancourt waited impatiently for the conclusion of the sentence, but the words died on her lips. Her eyes, however, reflected all the emotions of her heart. Valancourt passed, in an instant, from the impatience of despair, to that of joy and tenderness. ‘O Emily!’ he exclaimed, ‘my own Emily — teach me to sustain this moment! Let me seal it as the most sacred of my life!’

He pressed her hand to his lips, it was cold and trembling; and, raising her eyes, he saw the paleness of her countenance. Tears came to her relief, and Valancourt watched in anxious silence over her. In a few moments, she recovered herself, and smiling faintly through her tears, said, ‘Can you excuse this weakness? My spirits have not yet, I believe, recovered from the shock they lately received.’

‘I cannot excuse myself,’ said Valancourt, ‘but I will forbear to renew the subject, which may have contributed to agitate them, now that I can leave you with the sweet certainty of possessing your esteem.’

Then, forgetting his resolution, he again spoke of himself. ‘You know not,’ said he, ‘the many anxious hours I have passed near you lately, when

you believed me, if indeed you honoured me with a thought, far away. I have wandered, near the chateau, in the still hours of the night, when no eye could observe me. It was delightful to know I was so near you, and there was something particularly soothing in the thought, that I watched round your habitation, while you slept. These grounds are not entirely new to me. Once I ventured within the fence, and spent one of the happiest, and yet most melancholy hours of my life in walking under what I believed to be your window.'

Emily enquired how long Valancourt had been in the neighbourhood. 'Several days,' he replied. 'It was my design to avail myself of the permission M. St. Aubert had given me. I scarcely know how to account for it; but, though I anxiously wished to do this, my resolution always failed, when the moment approached, and I constantly deferred my visit. I lodged in a village at some distance, and wandered with my dogs, among the scenes of this charming country, wishing continually to meet you, yet not daring to visit you.'

Having thus continued to converse, without perceiving the flight of time, Valancourt, at length, seemed to recollect himself. 'I must go,' said he mournfully, 'but it is with the hope of seeing you again, of being permitted to pay my respects to your family; let me hear this hope confirmed by your voice.' 'My family will be happy to see any friend of my dear father,' said Emily. Valancourt kissed her hand, and still lingered, unable to depart, while Emily sat silently, with her eyes bent on the ground; and Valancourt, as he gazed on her, considered that it would soon be impossible for him to recall, even to his memory, the exact resemblance of the beautiful countenance he then beheld; at this moment an hasty footstep approached from behind the plane-tree, and, turning her eyes, Emily saw Madame Cheron. She felt a blush steal upon her cheek, and her frame trembled with the emotion of her mind; but she instantly rose to meet her visitor. 'So, niece!' said Madame Cheron, casting a look of surprise and enquiry on Valancourt, 'so niece, how do you do? But I need not ask, your looks tell me you have already recovered your loss.'

'My looks do me injustice then, Madame, my loss I know can never be recovered.'

'Well — well! I will not argue with you; I see you have exactly your father's disposition; and let me tell you it would have been much happier

for him, poor man! if it had been a different one.’

A look of dignified displeasure, with which Emily regarded Madame Cheron, while she spoke, would have touched almost any other heart; she made no other reply, but introduced Valancourt, who could scarcely stifle the resentment he felt, and whose bow Madame Cheron returned with a slight curtsy, and a look of supercilious examination. After a few moments he took leave of Emily, in a manner, that hastily expressed his pain both at his own departure, and at leaving her to the society of Madame Cheron.

‘Who is that young man?’ said her aunt, in an accent which equally implied inquisitiveness and censure. ‘Some idle admirer of yours I suppose; but I believed niece you had a greater sense of propriety, than to have received the visits of any young man in your present unfriended situation. Let me tell you the world will observe those things, and it will talk, aye and very freely too.’

Emily, extremely shocked at this coarse speech, attempted to interrupt it; but Madame Cheron would proceed, with all the self-importance of a person, to whom power is new.

‘It is very necessary you should be under the eye of some person more able to guide you than yourself. I, indeed, have not much leisure for such a task; however, since your poor father made it his last request, that I should overlook your conduct — I must even take you under my care. But this let me tell you niece, that, unless you will determine to be very conformable to my direction, I shall not trouble myself longer about you.’

Emily made no attempt to interrupt Madame Cheron a second time, grief and the pride of conscious innocence kept her silent, till her aunt said, ‘I am now come to take you with me to Tholouse; I am sorry to find, that your poor father died, after all, in such indifferent circumstances; however, I shall take you home with me. Ah! poor man, he was always more generous than provident, or he would not have left his daughter dependent on his relations.’

‘Nor has he done so, I hope, madam,’ said Emily calmly, ‘nor did his pecuniary misfortunes arise from that noble generosity, which always distinguished him. The affairs of M. de Motteville may, I trust, yet be settled without deeply injuring his creditors, and in the meantime I should be very happy to remain at La Vallee.’

‘No doubt you would,’ replied Madame Cheron, with a smile of irony, ‘and I shall no doubt consent to this, since I see how necessary tranquillity and retirement are to restore your spirits. I did not think you capable of so much duplicity, niece; when you pleaded this excuse for remaining here, I foolishly believed it to be a just one, nor expected to have found with you so agreeable a companion as this M. La Val — , I forget his name.’

Emily could no longer endure these cruel indignities. ‘It was a just one, madam,’ said she; ‘and now, indeed, I feel more than ever the value of the retirement I then solicited; and, if the purport of your visit is only to add insult to the sorrows of your brother’s child, she could well have spared it.’

‘I see that I have undertaken a very troublesome task,’ said Madame Cheron, colouring highly. ‘I am sure, madam,’ said Emily mildly, and endeavouring to restrain her tears, ‘I am sure my father did not mean it should be such. I have the happiness to reflect, that my conduct under his eye was such as he often delighted to approve. It would be very painful to me to disobey the sister of such a parent, and, if you believe the task will really be so troublesome, I must lament, that it is yours.’

‘Well! niece, fine speaking signifies little. I am willing, in consideration of my poor brother, to overlook the impropriety of your late conduct, and to try what your future will be.’

Emily interrupted her, to beg she would explain what was the impropriety she alluded to.

‘What impropriety! why that of receiving the visits of a lover unknown to your family,’ replied Madame Cheron, not considering the impropriety of which she had herself been guilty, in exposing her niece to the possibility of conduct so erroneous.

A faint blush passed over Emily’s countenance; pride and anxiety struggled in her breast; and, till she recollected, that appearances did, in some degree, justify her aunt’s suspicions, she could not resolve to humble herself so far as to enter into the defence of a conduct, which had been so innocent and undesigning on her part. She mentioned the manner of Valancourt’s introduction to her father; the circumstances of his receiving the pistol-shot, and of their afterwards travelling together; with the accidental way, in which she had met him, on the preceding evening. She

owned he had declared a partiality for her, and that he had asked permission to address her family.

‘And who is this young adventurer, pray?’ said Madame Cheron, ‘and what are his pretensions?’ ‘These he must himself explain, madam,’ replied Emily. ‘Of his family my father was not ignorant, and I believe it is unexceptionable.’ She then proceeded to mention what she knew concerning it.

‘Oh, then, this it seems is a younger brother,’ exclaimed her aunt, ‘and of course a beggar. A very fine tale indeed! And so my brother took a fancy to this young man after only a few days acquaintance! — but that was so like him! In his youth he was always taking these likes and dislikes, when no other person saw any reason for them at all; nay, indeed, I have often thought the people he disapproved were much more agreeable than those he admired; — but there is no accounting for tastes. He was always so much influenced by people’s countenances; now I, for my part, have no notion of this, it is all ridiculous enthusiasm. What has a man’s face to do with his character? Can a man of good character help having a disagreeable face?’ — which last sentence Madame Cheron delivered with the decisive air of a person who congratulates herself on having made a grand discovery, and believes the question to be unanswerably settled.

Emily, desirous of concluding the conversation, enquired if her aunt would accept some refreshment, and Madame Cheron accompanied her to the chateau, but without desisting from a topic, which she discussed with so much complacency to herself, and severity to her niece.

‘I am sorry to perceive, niece,’ said she, in allusion to somewhat that Emily had said, concerning physiognomy, ‘that you have a great many of your father’s prejudices, and among them those sudden predilections for people from their looks. I can perceive, that you imagine yourself to be violently in love with this young adventurer, after an acquaintance of only a few days. There was something, too, so charmingly romantic in the manner of your meeting!’

Emily checked the tears, that trembled in her eyes, while she said, ‘When my conduct shall deserve this severity, madam, you will do well to exercise it; till then justice, if not tenderness, should surely restrain it. I have never willingly offended you; now I have lost my parents, you are the only person to whom I can look for kindness. Let me not lament more than

ever the loss of such parents.’ The last words were almost stifled by her emotions, and she burst into tears. Remembering the delicacy and the tenderness of St. Aubert, the happy, happy days she had passed in these scenes, and contrasting them with the coarse and unfeeling behaviour of Madame Cheron, and from the future hours of mortification she must submit to in her presence — a degree of grief seized her, that almost reached despair. Madame Cheron, more offended by the reproof which Emily’s words conveyed, than touched by the sorrow they expressed, said nothing, that might soften her grief; but, notwithstanding an apparent reluctance to receive her niece, she desired her company. The love of sway was her ruling passion, and she knew it would be highly gratified by taking into her house a young orphan, who had no appeal from her decisions, and on whom she could exercise without controul the capricious humour of the moment.

On entering the chateau, Madame Cheron expressed a desire, that she would put up what she thought necessary to take to Tholouse, as she meant to set off immediately. Emily now tried to persuade her to defer the journey, at least till the next day, and, at length, with much difficulty, prevailed.

The day passed in the exercise of petty tyranny on the part of Madame Cheron, and in mournful regret and melancholy anticipation on that of Emily, who, when her aunt retired to her apartment for the night, went to take leave of every other room in this her dear native home, which she was now quitting for she knew not how long, and for a world, to which she was wholly a stranger. She could not conquer a presentiment, which frequently occurred to her, this night — that she should never more return to La Vallee. Having passed a considerable time in what had been her father’s study, having selected some of his favourite authors, to put up with her clothes, and shed many tears, as she wiped the dust from their covers, she seated herself in his chair before the reading desk, and sat lost in melancholy reflection, till Theresa opened the door to examine, as was her custom before she went to bed, if was all safe. She started, on observing her young lady, who bade her come in, and then gave her some directions for keeping the chateau in readiness for her reception at all times.

‘Alas-a-day! that you should leave it!’ said Theresa, ‘I think you would be happier here than where you are going, if one may judge.’ Emily made

no reply to this remark; the sorrow Theresa proceeded to express at her departure affected her, but she found some comfort in the simple affection of this poor old servant, to whom she gave such directions as might best conduce to her comfort during her own absence.

Having dismissed Theresa to bed, Emily wandered through every lonely apartment of the chateau, lingering long in what had been her father's bedroom, indulging melancholy, yet not unpleasing, emotions, and, having often returned within the door to take another look at it, she withdrew to her own chamber. From her window she gazed upon the garden below, shewn faintly by the moon, rising over the tops of the palm-trees, and, at length, the calm beauty of the night increased a desire of indulging the mournful sweetness of bidding farewel to the beloved shades of her childhood, till she was tempted to descend. Throwing over her the light veil, in which she usually walked, she silently passed into the garden, and, hastening towards the distant groves, was glad to breathe once more the air of liberty, and to sigh unobserved. The deep repose of the scene, the rich scents, that floated on the breeze, the grandeur of the wide horizon and of the clear blue arch, soothed and gradually elevated her mind to that sublime complacency, which renders the vexations of this world so insignificant and mean in our eyes, that we wonder they have had power for a moment to disturb us. Emily forgot Madame Cheron and all the circumstances of her conduct, while her thoughts ascended to the contemplation of those unnumbered worlds, that lie scattered in the depths of aether, thousands of them hid from human eyes, and almost beyond the flight of human fancy. As her imagination soared through the regions of space, and aspired to that Great First Cause, which pervades and governs all being, the idea of her father scarcely ever left her; but it was a pleasing idea, since she resigned him to God in the full confidence of a pure and holy faith. She pursued her way through the groves to the terrace, often pausing as memory awakened the pang of affection, and as reason anticipated the exile, into which she was going.

And now the moon was high over the woods, touching their summits with yellow light, and darting between the foliage long level beams; while on the rapid Garonne below the trembling radiance was faintly obscured by the lightest vapour. Emily long watched the playing lustre, listened to the soothing murmur of the current, and the yet lighter sounds of the air, as

it stirred, at intervals, the lofty palm-trees. ‘How delightful is the sweet breath of these groves,’ said she. ‘This lovely scene! — how often shall I remember and regret it, when I am far away. Alas! what events may occur before I see it again! O, peaceful, happy shades! — scenes of my infant delights, of parental tenderness now lost for ever! — why must I leave ye! — In your retreats I should still find safety and repose. Sweet hours of my childhood — I am now to leave even your last memorials! No objects, that would revive your impressions, will remain for me!’

Then drying her tears and looking up, her thoughts rose again to the sublime subject she had contemplated; the same divine complacency stole over her heart, and, hushing its throbs, inspired hope and confidence and resignation to the will of the Deity, whose works filled her mind with adoration.

Emily gazed long on the plane-tree, and then seated herself, for the last time, on the bench under its shade, where she had so often sat with her parents, and where, only a few hours before, she had conversed with Valancourt, at the remembrance of whom, thus revived, a mingled sensation of esteem, tenderness and anxiety rose in her breast. With this remembrance occurred a recollection of his late confession — that he had often wandered near her habitation in the night, having even passed the boundary of the garden, and it immediately occurred to her, that he might be at this moment in the grounds. The fear of meeting him, particularly after the declaration he had made, and of incurring a censure, which her aunt might so reasonably bestow, if it was known, that she was met by her lover, at this hour, made her instantly leave her beloved plane-tree, and walk towards the chateau. She cast an anxious eye around, and often stopped for a moment to examine the shadowy scene before she ventured to proceed, but she passed on without perceiving any person, till, having reached a clump of almond trees, not far from the house, she rested to take a retrospect of the garden, and to sigh forth another adieu. As her eyes wandered over the landscape she thought she perceived a person emerge from the groves, and pass slowly along a moonlight alley that led between them; but the distance, and the imperfect light would not suffer her to judge with any degree of certainty whether this was fancy or reality. She continued to gaze for some time on the spot, till on the dead stillness of the air she heard a sudden sound, and in the next instant fancied she

distinguished footsteps near her. Wasting not another moment in conjecture, she hurried to the chateau, and, having reached it, retired to her chamber, where, as she closed her window she looked upon the garden, and then again thought she distinguished a figure, gliding between the almond trees she had just left. She immediately withdrew from the casement, and, though much agitated, sought in sleep the refreshment of a short oblivion.

CHAPTER XI

I leave that flowery path for eye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all.

THE MINSTREL

At an early hour, the carriage, which was to take Emily and Madame Cheron to Tholouse, appeared at the door of the chateau, and Madame was already in the breakfast-room, when her niece entered it. The repast was silent and melancholy on the part of Emily; and Madame Cheron, whose vanity was piqued on observing her dejection, reproved her in a manner that did not contribute to remove it. It was with much reluctance, that Emily's request to take with her the dog, which had been a favourite of her father, was granted. Her aunt, impatient to be gone, ordered the carriage to draw up; and, while she passed to the hall door, Emily gave another look into the library, and another farewell glance over the garden, and then followed. Old Theresa stood at the door to take leave of her young lady. 'God for ever keep you, ma'amselle!' said she, while Emily gave her hand in silence, and could answer only with a pressure of her hand, and a forced smile.

At the gate, which led out of the grounds, several of her father's pensioners were assembled to bid her farewell, to whom she would have spoken, if her aunt would have suffered the driver to stop; and, having distributed to them almost all the money she had about her, she sunk back in the carriage, yielding to the melancholy of her heart. Soon after, she caught, between the steep banks of the road, another view of the chateau, peeping from among the high trees, and surrounded by green slopes and tufted groves, the Garonne winding its way beneath their shades, sometimes lost among the vineyards, and then rising in greater majesty in the distant pastures. The towering precipices of the Pyrenees, that rose to the south, gave Emily a thousand interesting recollections of her late journey; and these objects of her former enthusiastic admiration, now excited only sorrow and regret. Having gazed on the chateau and its lovely scenery, till the banks again closed upon them, her mind became too much occupied by mournful reflections, to permit her to attend to the conversation, which Madame Cheron had begun on some trivial topic, so that they soon travelled in profound silence.

Valancourt, mean while, was returned to Estuviere, his heart occupied with the image of Emily; sometimes indulging in reveries of future happiness, but more frequently shrinking with dread of the opposition he might encounter from her family. He was the younger son of an ancient family of Gascony; and, having lost his parents at an early period of his life, the care of his education and of his small portion had devolved to his brother, the Count de Duvarney, his senior by nearly twenty years. Valancourt had been educated in all the accomplishments of his age, and had an ardour of spirit, and a certain grandeur of mind, that gave him particular excellence in the exercises then thought heroic. His little fortune had been diminished by the necessary expences of his education; but M. La Valancourt, the elder, seemed to think that his genius and accomplishments would amply supply the deficiency of his inheritance. They offered flattering hopes of promotion in the military profession, in those times almost the only one in which a gentleman could engage without incurring a stain on his name; and La Valancourt was of course enrolled in the army. The general genius of his mind was but little understood by his brother. That ardour for whatever is great and good in the moral world, as well as in the natural one, displayed itself in his infant years; and the strong indignation, which he felt and expressed at a criminal, or a mean action, sometimes drew upon him the displeasure of his tutor; who reprobated it under the general term of violence of temper; and who, when haranguing on the virtues of mildness and moderation, seemed to forget the gentleness and compassion, which always appeared in his pupil towards objects of misfortune.

He had now obtained leave of absence from his regiment when he made the excursion into the Pyrenees, which was the means of introducing him to St. Aubert; and, as this permission was nearly expired, he was the more anxious to declare himself to Emily’s family, from whom he reasonably apprehended opposition, since his fortune, though, with a moderate addition from hers, it would be sufficient to support them, would not satisfy the views, either of vanity, or ambition. Valancourt was not without the latter, but he saw golden visions of promotion in the army; and believed, that with Emily he could, in the mean time, be delighted to live within the limits of his humble income. His thoughts were now occupied in considering the means of making himself known to her family, to

whom, however, he had yet no address, for he was entirely ignorant of Emily's precipitate departure from La Vallee, of whom he hoped to obtain it.

Meanwhile, the travellers pursued their journey; Emily making frequent efforts to appear cheerful, and too often relapsing into silence and dejection. Madame Cheron, attributing her melancholy solely to the circumstance of her being removed to a distance from her lover, and believing, that the sorrow, which her niece still expressed for the loss of St. Aubert, proceeded partly from an affectation of sensibility, endeavoured to make it appear ridiculous to her, that such deep regret should continue to be felt so long after the period usually allowed for grief.

At length, these unpleasant lectures were interrupted by the arrival of the travellers at Tholouse; and Emily, who had not been there for many years, and had only a very faint recollection of it, was surprised at the ostentatious style exhibited in her aunt's house and furniture; the more so, perhaps, because it was so totally different from the modest elegance, to which she had been accustomed. She followed Madame Cheron through a large hall, where several servants in rich liveries appeared, to a kind of saloon, fitted up with more shew than taste; and her aunt, complaining of fatigue, ordered supper immediately. 'I am glad to find myself in my own house again,' said she, throwing herself on a large settee, 'and to have my own people about me. I detest travelling; though, indeed, I ought to like it, for what I see abroad always makes me delighted to return to my own chateau. What makes you so silent, child? — What is it that disturbs you now?'

Emily suppressed a starting tear, and tried to smile away the expression of an oppressed heart; she was thinking of HER home, and felt too sensibly the arrogance and ostentatious vanity of Madame Cheron's conversation. 'Can this be my father's sister!' said she to herself; and then the conviction that she was so, warming her heart with something like kindness towards her, she felt anxious to soften the harsh impression her mind had received of her aunt's character, and to shew a willingness to oblige her. The effort did not entirely fail; she listened with apparent cheerfulness, while Madame Cheron expatiated on the splendour of her house, told of the numerous parties she entertained, and what she should

expect of Emily, whose diffidence assumed the air of a reserve, which her aunt, believing it to be that of pride and ignorance united, now took occasion to reprehend. She knew nothing of the conduct of a mind, that fears to trust its own powers; which, possessing a nice judgment, and inclining to believe, that every other person perceives still more critically, fears to commit itself to censure, and seeks shelter in the obscurity of silence. Emily had frequently blushed at the fearless manners, which she had seen admired, and the brilliant nothings, which she had heard applauded; yet this applause, so far from encouraging her to imitate the conduct that had won it, rather made her shrink into the reserve, that would protect her from such absurdity.

Madame Cheron looked on her niece's diffidence with a feeling very near to contempt, and endeavoured to overcome it by reproof, rather than to encourage it by gentleness.

The entrance of supper somewhat interrupted the complacent discourse of Madame Cheron and the painful considerations, which it had forced upon Emily. When the repast, which was rendered ostentatious by the attendance of a great number of servants, and by a profusion of plate, was over, Madame Cheron retired to her chamber, and a female servant came to shew Emily to hers. Having passed up a large staircase, and through several galleries, they came to a flight of back stairs, which led into a short passage in a remote part of the chateau, and there the servant opened the door of a small chamber, which she said was Ma'amselle Emily's, who, once more alone, indulged the tears she had long tried to restrain.

Those, who know, from experience, how much the heart becomes attached even to inanimate objects, to which it has been long accustomed, how unwillingly it resigns them; how with the sensations of an old friend it meets them, after temporary absence, will understand the forlornness of Emily's feelings, of Emily shut out from the only home she had known from her infancy, and thrown upon a scene, and among persons, disagreeable for more qualities than their novelty. Her father's favourite dog, now in the chamber, thus seemed to acquire the character and importance of a friend; and, as the animal fawned over her when she wept, and licked her hands, 'Ah, poor Manchon!' said she, 'I have nobody now to love me — but you!' and she wept the more. After some time, her thoughts returning to her father's injunctions, she remembered how often

he had blamed her for indulging useless sorrow; how often he had pointed out to her the necessity of fortitude and patience, assuring her, that the faculties of the mind strengthen by exertion, till they finally unnerve affliction, and triumph over it. These recollections dried her tears, gradually soothed her spirits, and inspired her with the sweet emulation of practising precepts, which her father had so frequently inculcated.

CHAPTER XII

Some pow’r impart the spear and shield,
At which the wizard passions fly,
By which the giant follies die.

COLLINS

Madame Cheron’s house stood at a little distance from the city of Tholouse, and was surrounded by extensive gardens, in which Emily, who had risen early, amused herself with wandering before breakfast. From a terrace, that extended along the highest part of them, was a wide view over Languedoc. On the distant horizon to the south, she discovered the wild summits of the Pyrenees, and her fancy immediately painted the green pastures of Gascony at their feet. Her heart pointed to her peaceful home — to the neighbourhood where Valancourt was — where St. Aubert had been; and her imagination, piercing the veil of distance, brought that home to her eyes in all its interesting and romantic beauty. She experienced an inexpressible pleasure in believing, that she beheld the country around it, though no feature could be distinguished, except the retiring chain of the Pyrenees; and, inattentive to the scene immediately before her, and to the flight of time, she continued to lean on the window of a pavilion, that terminated the terrace, with her eyes fixed on Gascony, and her mind occupied with the interesting ideas which the view of it awakened, till a servant came to tell her breakfast was ready. Her thoughts thus recalled to the surrounding objects, the straight walks, square parterres, and artificial fountains of the garden, could not fail, as she passed through it, to appear the worse, opposed to the negligent graces, and natural beauties of the grounds of La Vallee, upon which her recollection had been so intensely employed.

‘Whither have you been rambling so early?’ said Madame Cheron, as her niece entered the breakfast-room. ‘I don’t approve of these solitary walks;’ and Emily was surprised, when, having informed her aunt, that she had been no further than the gardens, she understood these to be included in the reproof. ‘I desire you will not walk there again at so early an hour unattended,’ said Madame Cheron; ‘my gardens are very extensive; and a young woman, who can make assignations by moonlight, at La Vallee, is not to be trusted to her own inclinations elsewhere.’

Emily, extremely surprised and shocked, had scarcely power to beg an explanation of these words, and, when she did, her aunt absolutely refused

to give it, though, by her severe looks, and half sentences, she appeared anxious to impress Emily with a belief, that she was well informed of some degrading circumstances of her conduct. Conscious innocence could not prevent a blush from stealing over Emily's cheek; she trembled, and looked confusedly under the bold eye of Madame Cheron, who blushed also; but hers was the blush of triumph, such as sometimes stains the countenance of a person, congratulating himself on the penetration which had taught him to suspect another, and who loses both pity for the supposed criminal, and indignation of his guilt, in the gratification of his own vanity.

Emily, not doubting that her aunt's mistake arose from the having observed her ramble in the garden on the night preceding her departure from La Vallee, now mentioned the motive of it, at which Madame Cheron smiled contemptuously, refusing either to accept this explanation, or to give her reasons for refusing it; and, soon after, she concluded the subject by saying, 'I never trust people's assertions, I always judge of them by their actions; but I am willing to try what will be your behaviour in future.'

Emily, less surprised by her aunt's moderation and mysterious silence, than by the accusation she had received, deeply considered the latter, and scarcely doubted, that it was Valancourt whom she had seen at night in the gardens of La Vallee, and that he had been observed there by Madame Cheron; who now passing from one painful topic only to revive another almost equally so, spoke of the situation of her niece's property, in the hands of M. Motteville. While she thus talked with ostentatious pity of Emily's misfortunes, she failed not to inculcate the duties of humility and gratitude, or to render Emily fully sensible of every cruel mortification, who soon perceived, that she was to be considered as a dependant, not only by her aunt, but by her aunt's servants.

She was now informed, that a large party were expected to dinner, on which account Madame Cheron repeated the lesson of the preceding night, concerning her conduct in company, and Emily wished, that she might have courage enough to practise it. Her aunt then proceeded to examine the simplicity of her dress, adding, that she expected to see her attired with gaiety and taste; after which she condescended to shew Emily the splendour of her chateau, and to point out the particular beauty, or

elegance, which she thought distinguished each of her numerous suites of apartments. She then withdrew to her toilet, the throne of her homage, and Emily to her chamber, to unpack her books, and to try to charm her mind by reading, till the hour of dressing.

When the company arrived, Emily entered the saloon with an air of timidity, which all her efforts could not overcome, and which was increased by the consciousness of Madame Cheron's severe observation. Her mourning dress, the mild dejection of her beautiful countenance, and the retiring diffidence of her manner, rendered her a very interesting object to many of the company; among whom she distinguished Signor Montoni, and his friend Cavigni, the late visitors at M. Quesnel's, who now seemed to converse with Madame Cheron with the familiarity of old acquaintance, and she to attend to them with particular pleasure.

This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit, and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield. The quickness of his perceptions was strikingly expressed on his countenance, yet that countenance could submit implicitly to occasion; and, more than once in this day, the triumph of art over nature might have been discerned in it. His visage was long, and rather narrow, yet he was called handsome; and it was, perhaps, the spirit and vigour of his soul, sparkling through his features, that triumphed for him. Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore.

Cavigni was gay and insinuating as formerly; and, though he paid almost incessant attention to Madame Cheron, he found some opportunities of conversing with Emily, to whom he directed, at first, the sallies of his wit, but now and then assumed an air of tenderness, which she observed, and shrunk from. Though she replied but little, the gentleness and sweetness of her manners encouraged him to talk, and she felt relieved when a young lady of the party, who spoke incessantly, obtruded herself on his notice. This lady, who possessed all the sprightliness of a Frenchwoman, with all her coquetry, affected to understand every subject, or rather there was no affectation in the case; for, never looking beyond the limits of her own ignorance, she believed she had nothing to learn. She attracted notice from all; amused some, disgusted others for a moment, and was then forgotten.

This day passed without any material occurrence; and Emily, though amused by the characters she had seen, was glad when she could retire to the recollections, which had acquired with her the character of duties.

A fortnight passed in a round of dissipation and company, and Emily, who attended Madame Cheron in all her visits, was sometimes entertained, but oftener wearied. She was struck by the apparent talents and knowledge displayed in the various conversations she listened to, and it was long before she discovered, that the talents were for the most part those of imposture, and the knowledge nothing more than was necessary to assist them. But what deceived her most, was the air of constant gaiety and good spirits, displayed by every visitor, and which she supposed to arise from content as constant, and from benevolence as ready. At length, from the over-acting of some, less accomplished than the others, she could perceive, that, though contentment and benevolence are the only sure sources of cheerfulness, the immoderate and feverish animation, usually exhibited in large parties, results partly from an insensibility to the cares, which benevolence must sometimes derive from the sufferings of others, and partly from a desire to display the appearance of that prosperity, which they know will command submission and attention to themselves.

Emily’s pleasantest hours were passed in the pavilion of the terrace, to which she retired, when she could steal from observation, with a book to overcome, or a lute to indulge, her melancholy. There, as she sat with her eyes fixed on the far-distant Pyrenees, and her thoughts on Valancourt and the beloved scenes of Gascony, she would play the sweet and melancholy songs of her native province — the popular songs she had listened to from her childhood.

One evening, having excused herself from accompanying her aunt abroad, she thus withdrew to the pavilion, with books and her lute. It was the mild and beautiful evening of a sultry day, and the windows, which fronted the west, opened upon all the glory of a setting sun. Its rays illuminated, with strong splendour, the cliffs of the Pyrenees, and touched their snowy tops with a roseate hue, that remained, long after the sun had sunk below the horizon, and the shades of twilight had stolen over the landscape. Emily touched her lute with that fine melancholy expression, which came from her heart. The pensive hour and the scene, the evening light on the Garonne, that flowed at no great distance, and whose waves, as

they passed towards La Vallee, she often viewed with a sigh, — these united circumstances disposed her mind to tenderness, and her thoughts were with Valancourt, of whom she had heard nothing since her arrival at Tholouse, and now that she was removed from him, and in uncertainty, she perceived all the interest he held in her heart. Before she saw Valancourt she had never met a mind and taste so accordant with her own, and, though Madame Cheron told her much of the arts of dissimulation, and that the elegance and propriety of thought, which she so much admired in her lover, were assumed for the purpose of pleasing her, she could scarcely doubt their truth. This possibility, however, faint as it was, was sufficient to harass her mind with anxiety, and she found, that few conditions are more painful than that of uncertainty, as to the merit of a beloved object; an uncertainty, which she would not have suffered, had her confidence in her own opinions been greater.

She was awakened from her musing by the sound of horses' feet along a road, that wound under the windows of the pavilion, and a gentleman passed on horseback, whose resemblance to Valancourt, in air and figure, for the twilight did not permit a view of his features, immediately struck her. She retired hastily from the lattice, fearing to be seen, yet wishing to observe further, while the stranger passed on without looking up, and, when she returned to the lattice, she saw him faintly through the twilight, winding under the high trees, that led to Tholouse. This little incident so much disturbed her spirits, that the temple and its scenery were no longer interesting to her, and, after walking awhile on the terrace, she returned to the chateau.

Madame Cheron, whether she had seen a rival admired, had lost at play, or had witnessed an entertainment more splendid than her own, was returned from her visit with a temper more than usually discomposed; and Emily was glad, when the hour arrived, in which she could retire to the solitude of her own apartment.

On the following morning, she was summoned to Madame Cheron, whose countenance was inflamed with resentment, and, as Emily advanced, she held out a letter to her.

'Do you know this hand?' said she, in a severe tone, and with a look that was intended to search her heart, while Emily examined the letter attentively, and assured her, that she did not.

‘Do not provoke me,’ said her aunt; ‘you do know it, confess the truth immediately. I insist upon your confessing the truth instantly.’

Emily was silent, and turned to leave the room, but Madame called her back. ‘O you are guilty, then,’ said she, ‘you do know the hand.’ ‘If you was before in doubt of this, madam,’ replied Emily calmly, ‘why did you accuse me of having told a falsehood.’ Madame Cheron did not blush; but her niece did, a moment after, when she heard the name of Valancourt. It was not, however, with the consciousness of deserving reproof, for, if she ever had seen his handwriting, the present characters did not bring it to her recollection.

‘It is useless to deny it,’ said Madame Cheron, ‘I see in your countenance, that you are no stranger to this letter; and, I dare say, you have received many such from this impertinent young man, without my knowledge, in my own house.’

Emily, shocked at the indelicacy of this accusation, still more than by the vulgarity of the former, instantly forgot the pride, that had imposed silence, and endeavoured to vindicate herself from the aspersion, but Madame Cheron was not to be convinced.

‘I cannot suppose,’ she resumed, ‘that this young man would have taken the liberty of writing to me, if you had not encouraged him to do so, and I must now’— ‘You will allow me to remind you, madam,’ said Emily timidly, ‘of some particulars of a conversation we had at La Vallee. I then told you truly, that I had only not forbade Monsieur Valancourt from addressing my family.’

‘I will not be interrupted,’ said Madame Cheron, interrupting her niece, ‘I was going to say — I — I-have forgot what I was going to say. But how happened it that you did not forbid him?’ Emily was silent. ‘How happened it that you encouraged him to trouble me with this letter? — A young man that nobody knows; — an utter stranger in the place, — a young adventurer, no doubt, who is looking out for a good fortune. However, on that point he has mistaken his aim.’

‘His family was known to my father,’ said Emily modestly, and without appearing to be sensible of the last sentence.

‘O! that is no recommendation at all,’ replied her aunt, with her usual readiness upon this topic; ‘he took such strange fancies to people! He was always judging persons by their countenances, and was continually

deceived.’ ‘Yet it was but now, madam, that you judged me guilty by my countenance,’ said Emily, with a design of reproving Madame Cheron, to which she was induced by this disrespectful mention of her father.

‘I called you here,’ resumed her aunt, colouring, ‘to tell you, that I will not be disturbed in my own house by any letters, or visits from young men, who may take a fancy to flatter you. This M. de Valantine — I think you call him, has the impertinence to beg I will permit him to pay his respects to me! I shall send him a proper answer. And for you, Emily, I repeat it once for all — if you are not contented to conform to my directions, and to my way of live, I shall give up the task of overlooking your conduct — I shall no longer trouble myself with your education, but shall send you to board in a convent.’

‘Dear madam,’ said Emily, bursting into tears, and overcome by the rude suspicions her aunt had expressed, ‘how have I deserved these reproofs?’ She could say no more; and so very fearful was she of acting with any degree of impropriety in the affair itself, that, at the present moment, Madame Cheron might perhaps have prevailed with her to bind herself by a promise to renounce Valancourt for ever. Her mind, weakened by her terrors, would no longer suffer her to view him as she had formerly done; she feared the error of her own judgment, not that of Madame Cheron, and feared also, that, in her former conversation with him, at La Vallee, she had not conducted herself with sufficient reserve. She knew, that she did not deserve the coarse suspicions, which her aunt had thrown out, but a thousand scruples rose to torment her, such as would never have disturbed the peace of Madame Cheron. Thus rendered anxious to avoid every opportunity of erring, and willing to submit to any restrictions, that her aunt should think proper, she expressed an obedience, to which Madame Cheron did not give much confidence, and which she seemed to consider as the consequence of either fear, or artifice.

‘Well, then,’ said she, ‘promise me that you will neither see this young man, nor write to him without my consent.’ ‘Dear madam,’ replied Emily, ‘can you suppose I would do either, unknown to you!’ ‘I don’t know what to suppose; there is no knowing how young women will act. It is difficult to place any confidence in them, for they have seldom sense enough to wish for the respect of the world.’

‘Alas, madam!’ said Emily, ‘I am anxious for my own respect; my father taught me the value of that; he said if I deserved my own esteem, that the world would follow of course.’

‘My brother was a good kind of a man,’ replied Madame Cheron, ‘but he did not know the world. I am sure I have always felt a proper respect for myself, yet— ‘ she stopped, but she might have added, that the world had not always shewn respect to her, and this without impeaching its judgment.

‘Well!’ resumed Madame Cheron, ‘you have not give me the promise, though, that I demand.’ Emily readily gave it, and, being then suffered to withdraw, she walked in the garden; tried to compose her spirits, and, at length, arrived at her favourite pavilion at the end of the terrace, where, seating herself at one of the embowered windows, that opened upon a balcony, the stillness and seclusion of the scene allowed her to recollect her thoughts, and to arrange them so as to form a clearer judgment of her former conduct. She endeavoured to review with exactness all the particulars of her conversation with Valancourt at La Vallee, had the satisfaction to observe nothing, that could alarm her delicate pride, and thus to be confirmed in the self-esteem, which was so necessary to her peace. Her mind then became tranquil, and she saw Valancourt amiable and intelligent, as he had formerly appeared, and Madame Cheron neither the one, or the other. The remembrance of her lover, however, brought with it many very painful emotions, for it by no means reconciled her to the thought of resigning him; and, Madame Cheron having already shewn how highly she disapproved of the attachment, she foresaw much suffering from the opposition of interests; yet with all this was mingled a degree of delight, which, in spite of reason, partook of hope. She determined, however, that no consideration should induce her to permit a clandestine correspondence, and to observe in her conversation with Valancourt, should they ever meet again, the same nicety of reserve, which had hitherto marked her conduct. As she repeated the words— ‘should we ever meet again!’ she shrunk as if this was a circumstance, which had never before occurred to her, and tears came to her eyes, which she hastily dried, for she heard footsteps approaching, and then the door of the pavilion open, and, on turning, she saw — Valancourt. An emotion of mingled pleasure, surprise and apprehension pressed so suddenly upon her heart as

almost to overcome her spirits; the colour left her cheeks, then returned brighter than before, and she was for a moment unable to speak, or to rise from her chair. His countenance was the mirror, in which she saw her own emotions reflected, and it roused her to self-command. The joy, which had animated his features, when he entered the pavilion, was suddenly repressed, as, approaching, he perceived her agitation, and, in a tremulous voice, enquired after her health. Recovered from her first surprise, she answered him with a tempered smile; but a variety of opposite emotions still assailed her heart, and struggled to subdue the mild dignity of her manner. It was difficult to tell which predominated — the joy of seeing Valancourt, or the terror of her aunt's displeasure, when she should hear of this meeting. After some short and embarrassed conversation, she led him into the gardens, and enquired if he had seen Madame Cheron. 'No,' said he, 'I have not yet seen her, for they told me she was engaged, and as soon as I learned that you were in the gardens, I came hither.' He paused a moment, in great agitation, and then added, 'May I venture to tell you the purport of my visit, without incurring your displeasure, and to hope, that you will not accuse me of precipitation in now availing myself of the permission you once gave me of addressing your family?' Emily, who knew not what to reply, was spared from further perplexity, and was sensible only of fear, when on raising her eyes, she saw Madame Cheron turn into the avenue. As the consciousness of innocence returned, this fear was so far dissipated as to permit her to appear tranquil, and, instead of avoiding her aunt, she advanced with Valancourt to meet her. The look of haughty and impatient displeasure, with which Madame Cheron regarded them, made Emily shrink, who understood from a single glance, that this meeting was believed to have been more than accidental: having mentioned Valancourt's name, she became again too much agitated to remain with them, and returned into the chateau; where she awaited long, in a state of trembling anxiety, the conclusion of the conference. She knew not how to account for Valancourt's visit to her aunt, before he had received the permission he solicited, since she was ignorant of a circumstance, which would have rendered the request useless, even if Madame Cheron had been inclined to grant it. Valancourt, in the agitation of his spirits, had forgotten to date his letter, so that it was impossible for Madame Cheron to return an answer; and, when he recollected this

circumstance, he was, perhaps, not so sorry for the omission as glad of the excuse it allowed him for waiting on her before she could send a refusal.

Madame Cheron had a long conversation with Valancourt, and, when she returned to the chateau, her countenance expressed ill-humour, but not the degree of severity, which Emily had apprehended. ‘I have dismissed this young man, at last,’ said she, ‘and I hope my house will never again be disturbed with similar visits. He assures me, that your interview was not preconcerted.’

‘Dear madam!’ said Emily in extreme emotion, ‘you surely did not ask him the question!’ ‘Most certainly I did; you could not suppose I should be so imprudent as to neglect it.’

‘Good God!’ exclaimed Emily, ‘what an opinion must he form of me, since you, Madam, could express a suspicion of such ill conduct!’

‘It is of very little consequence what opinion he may form of you,’ replied her aunt, ‘for I have put an end to the affair; but I believe he will not form a worse opinion of me for my prudent conduct. I let him see, that I was not to be trifled with, and that I had more delicacy, than to permit any clandestine correspondence to be carried on in my house.’

Emily had frequently heard Madame Cheron use the word delicacy, but she was now more than usually perplexed to understand how she meant to apply it in this instance, in which her whole conduct appeared to merit the very reverse of the term.

‘It was very inconsiderate of my brother,’ resumed Madame Cheron, ‘to leave the trouble of overlooking your conduct to me; I wish you was well settled in life. But if I find, that I am to be further troubled with such visitors as this M. Valancourt, I shall place you in a convent at once; — so remember the alternative. This young man has the impertinence to own to me, — he owns it! that his fortune is very small, and that he is chiefly dependent on an elder brother and on the profession he has chosen! He should have concealed these circumstances, at least, if he expected to succeed with me. Had he the presumption to suppose I would marry my niece to a person such as he describes himself!’

Emily dried her tears when she heard of the candid confession of Valancourt; and, though the circumstances it discovered were afflicting to

her hopes, his artless conduct gave her a degree of pleasure, that overcame every other emotion. But she was compelled, even thus early in life, to observe, that good sense and noble integrity are not always sufficient to cope with folly and narrow cunning; and her heart was pure enough to allow her, even at this trying moment, to look with more pride on the defeat of the former, than with mortification on the conquests of the latter.

Madame Cheron pursued her triumph. ‘He has also thought proper to tell me, that he will receive his dismission from no person but yourself; this favour, however, I have absolutely refused him. He shall learn, that it is quite sufficient, that I disapprove him. And I take this opportunity of repeating, — that if you concert any means of interview unknown to me, you shall leave my house immediately.’

‘How little do you know me, madam, that you should think such an injunction necessary!’ said Emily, trying to suppress her emotion, ‘how little of the dear parents, who educated me!’

Madame Cheron now went to dress for an engagement, which she had made for the evening; and Emily, who would gladly have been excused from attending her aunt, did not ask to remain at home lest her request should be attributed to an improper motive. When she retired to her own room, the little fortitude, which had supported her in the presence of her relation, forsook her; she remembered only that Valancourt, whose character appeared more amiable from every circumstance, that unfolded it, was banished from her presence, perhaps, for ever, and she passed the time in weeping, which, according to her aunt’s direction, she ought to have employed in dressing. This important duty was, however, quickly dispatched; though, when she joined Madame Cheron at table, her eyes betrayed, that she had been in tears, and drew upon her a severe reproof.

Her efforts to appear cheerful did not entirely fail when she joined the company at the house of Madame Clairval, an elderly widow lady, who had lately come to reside at Tholouse, on an estate of her late husband. She had lived many years at Paris in a splendid style; had naturally a gay temper, and, since her residence at Tholouse, had given some of the most magnificent entertainments, that had been seen in that neighbourhood.

These excited not only the envy, but the trifling ambition of Madame Cheron, who, since she could not rival the splendour of her festivities, was desirous of being ranked in the number of her most intimate friends. For

this purpose she paid her the most obsequious attention, and made a point of being disengaged, whenever she received an invitation from Madame Clairval, of whom she talked, wherever she went, and derived much self-consequence from impressing a belief on her general acquaintance, that they were on the most familiar footing.

The entertainments of this evening consisted of a ball and supper; it was a fancy ball, and the company danced in groups in the gardens, which were very extensive. The high and luxuriant trees, under which the groups assembled, were illuminated with a profusion of lamps, disposed with taste and fancy. The gay and various dresses of the company, some of whom were seated on the turf, conversing at their ease, observing the cotillons, taking refreshments, and sometimes touching sportively a guitar; the gallant manners of the gentlemen, the exquisitely capricious air of the ladies; the light fantastic steps of their dances; the musicians, with the lute, the hautboy, and the tabor, seated at the foot of an elm, and the sylvan scenery of woods around were circumstances, that unitedly formed a characteristic and striking picture of French festivity. Emily surveyed the gaiety of the scene with a melancholy kind of pleasure, and her emotion may be imagined when, as she stood with her aunt, looking at one of the groups, she perceived Valancourt; saw him dancing with a young and beautiful lady, saw him conversing with her with a mixture of attention and familiarity, such as she had seldom observed in his manner. She turned hastily from the scene, and attempted to draw away Madame Cheron, who was conversing with Signor Cavigni, and neither perceived Valancourt, or was willing to be interrupted. A faintness suddenly came over Emily, and, unable to support herself, she sat down on a turf bank beneath the trees, where several other persons were seated. One of these, observing the extreme paleness of her countenance, enquired if she was ill, and begged she would allow him to fetch her a glass of water, for which politeness she thanked him, but did not accept it. Her apprehension lest Valancourt should observe her emotion made her anxious to overcome it, and she succeeded so far as to re-compose her countenance. Madame Cheron was still conversing with Cavigni; and the Count Bauvillers, who had addressed Emily, made some observations upon the scene, to which she answered almost unconsciously, for her mind was still occupied with the idea of Valancourt, to whom it was with extreme uneasiness that she

remained so near. Some remarks, however, which the Count made upon the dance obliged her to turn her eyes towards it, and, at that moment, Valancourt's met hers. Her colour faded again, she felt, that she was relapsing into faintness, and instantly averted her looks, but not before she had observed the altered countenance of Valancourt, on perceiving her. She would have left the spot immediately, had she not been conscious, that this conduct would have shewn him more obviously the interest he held in her heart; and, having tried to attend to the Count's conversation, and to join in it, she, at length, recovered her spirits. But, when he made some observation on Valancourt's partner, the fear of shewing that she was interested in the remark, would have betrayed it to him, had not the Count, while he spoke, looked towards the person of whom he was speaking. 'The lady,' said he, 'dancing with that young Chevalier, who appears to be accomplished in every thing, but in dancing, is ranked among the beauties of Tholouse. She is handsome, and her fortune will be very large. I hope she will make a better choice in a partner for life than she has done in a partner for the dance, for I observe he has just put the set into great confusion; he does nothing but commit blunders. I am surprised, that, with his air and figure, he has not taken more care to accomplish himself in dancing.'

Emily, whose heart trembled at every word, that was now uttered, endeavoured to turn the conversation from Valancourt, by enquiring the name of the lady, with whom he danced; but, before the Count could reply, the dance concluded, and Emily, perceiving that Valancourt was coming towards her, rose and joined Madame Cheron.

'Here is the Chevalier Valancourt, madam,' said she in a whisper, 'pray let us go.' Her aunt immediately moved on, but not before Valancourt had reached them, who bowed lowly to Madame Cheron, and with an earnest and dejected look to Emily, with whom, notwithstanding all her effort, an air of more than common reserve prevailed. The presence of Madame Cheron prevented Valancourt from remaining, and he passed on with a countenance, whose melancholy reproached her for having increased it. Emily was called from the musing fit, into which she had fallen, by the Count Bauvillers, who was known to her aunt.

'I have your pardon to beg, ma'amselle,' said he, 'for a rudeness, which you will readily believe was quite unintentional. I did not know, that the

Chevalier was your acquaintance, when I so freely criticised his dancing.’ Emily blushed and smiled, and Madame Cheron spared her the difficulty of replying. ‘If you mean the person, who has just passed us,’ said she, ‘I can assure you he is no acquaintance of either mine, or ma’amselle St. Aubert’s: I know nothing of him.’

‘O! that is the Chevalier Valancourt,’ said Cavigni carelessly, and looking back. ‘You know him then?’ said Madame Cheron. ‘I am not acquainted with him,’ replied Cavigni. ‘You don’t know, then, the reason I have to call him impertinent; — he has had the presumption to admire my niece!’

‘If every man deserves the title of impertinent, who admires ma’amselle St. Aubert,’ replied Cavigni, ‘I fear there are a great many impertinents, and I am willing to acknowledge myself one of the number.’

‘O Signor!’ said Madame Cheron, with an affected smile, ‘I perceive you have learnt the art of complimenting, since you came into France. But it is cruel to compliment children, since they mistake flattery for truth.’

Cavigni turned away his face for a moment, and then said with a studied air, ‘Whom then are we to compliment, madam? for it would be absurd to compliment a woman of refined understanding; SHE is above all praise.’ As he finished the sentence he gave Emily a sly look, and the smile, that had lurked in his eye, stole forth. She perfectly understood it, and blushed for Madame Cheron, who replied, ‘You are perfectly right, signor, no woman of understanding can endure compliment.’

‘I have heard Signor Montoni say,’ rejoined Cavigni, ‘that he never knew but one woman who deserved it.’

‘Well!’ exclaimed Madame Cheron, with a short laugh, and a smile of unutterable complacency, ‘and who could she be?’

‘O!’ replied Cavigni, ‘it is impossible to mistake her, for certainly there is not more than one woman in the world, who has both the merit to deserve compliment and the wit to refuse it. Most women reverse the case entirely.’ He looked again at Emily, who blushed deeper than before for her aunt, and turned from him with displeasure.

‘Well, signor!’ said Madame Cheron, ‘I protest you are a Frenchman; I never heard a foreigner say any thing half so gallant as that!’

‘True, madam,’ said the Count, who had been some time silent, and with a low bow, ‘but the gallantry of the compliment had been utterly lost, but

for the ingenuity that discovered the application.’

Madame Cheron did not perceive the meaning of this too satirical sentence, and she, therefore, escaped the pain, which Emily felt on her account. ‘O! here comes Signor Montoni himself,’ said her aunt, ‘I protest I will tell him all the fine things you have been saying to me.’ The Signor, however, passed at this moment into another walk. ‘Pray, who is it, that has so much engaged your friend this evening?’ asked Madame Cheron, with an air of chagrin, ‘I have not seen him once.’

‘He had a very particular engagement with the Marquis La Riviere,’ replied Cavigni, ‘which has detained him, I perceive, till this moment, or he would have done himself the honour of paying his respects to you, madam, sooner, as he commissioned me to say. But, I know not how it is — your conversation is so fascinating — that it can charm even memory, I think, or I should certainly have delivered my friend’s apology before.’

‘The apology, sir, would have been more satisfactory from himself,’ said Madame Cheron, whose vanity was more mortified by Montoni’s neglect, than flattered by Cavigni’s compliment. Her manner, at this moment, and Cavigni’s late conversation, now awakened a suspicion in Emily’s mind, which, notwithstanding that some recollections served to confirm it, appeared preposterous. She thought she perceived, that Montoni was paying serious addresses to her aunt, and that she not only accepted them, but was jealously watchful of any appearance of neglect on his part. — That Madame Cheron at her years should elect a second husband was ridiculous, though her vanity made it not impossible; but that Montoni, with his discernment, his figure, and pretensions, should make a choice of Madame Cheron — appeared most wonderful. Her thoughts, however, did not dwell long on the subject; nearer interests pressed upon them; Valancourt, rejected of her aunt, and Valancourt dancing with a gay and beautiful partner, alternately tormented her mind. As she passed along the gardens she looked timidly forward, half fearing and half hoping that he might appear in the crowd; and the disappointment she felt on not seeing him, told her, that she had hoped more than she had feared.

Montoni soon after joined the party. He muttered over some short speech about regret for having been so long detained elsewhere, when he knew he should have the pleasure of seeing Madame Cheron here; and she, receiving the apology with the air of a pettish girl, addressed herself

entirely to Cavigni, who looked archly at Montoni, as if he would have said, ‘I will not triumph over you too much; I will have the goodness to bear my honours meekly; but look sharp, Signor, or I shall certainly run away with your prize.’

The supper was served in different pavilions in the gardens, as well as in one large saloon of the chateau, and with more of taste, than either of splendour, or even of plenty. Madame Cheron and her party supped with Madame Clairval in the saloon, and Emily, with difficulty, disguised her emotion, when she saw Valancourt placed at the same table with herself. There, Madame Cheron having surveyed him with high displeasure, said to some person who sat next to her, ‘Pray, who IS that young man?’ ‘It is the Chevalier Valancourt,’ was the answer. ‘Yes, I am not ignorant of his name, but who is this Chevalier Valancourt that thus intrudes himself at this table?’ The attention of the person, who whom she spoke, was called off before she received a second reply. The table, at which they sat, was very long, and, Valancourt being seated, with his partner, near the bottom, and Emily near the top, the distance between them may account for his not immediately perceiving her. She avoided looking to that end of the table, but whenever her eyes happened to glance towards it, she observed him conversing with his beautiful companion, and the observation did not contribute to restore her peace, any more than the accounts she heard of the fortune and accomplishments of this same lady.

Madame Cheron, to whom these remarks were sometimes addressed, because they supported topics for trivial conversation, seemed indefatigable in her attempts to depreciate Valancourt, towards whom she felt all the petty resentment of a narrow pride. ‘I admire the lady,’ said she, ‘but I must condemn her choice of a partner.’ ‘Oh, the Chevalier Valancourt is one of the most accomplished young men we have,’ replied the lady, to whom this remark was addressed: ‘it is whispered, that Mademoiselle D’Emery, and her large fortune, are to be his.’

‘Impossible!’ exclaimed Madame Cheron, reddening with vexation, ‘it is impossible that she can be so destitute of taste; he has so little the air of a person of condition, that, if I did not see him at the table of Madame Clairval, I should never have suspected him to be one. I have besides particular reasons for believing the report to be erroneous.’

‘I cannot doubt the truth of it,’ replied the lady gravely, disgusted by the abrupt contradiction she had received, concerning her opinion of Valancourt’s merit. ‘You will, perhaps, doubt it,’ said Madame Cheron, ‘when I assure you, that it was only this morning that I rejected his suit.’ This was said without any intention of imposing the meaning it conveyed, but simply from a habit of considering herself to be the most important person in every affair that concerned her niece, and because literally she had rejected Valancourt. ‘Your reasons are indeed such as cannot be doubted,’ replied the lady, with an ironical smile. ‘Any more than the discernment of the Chevalier Valancourt,’ added Cavigni, who stood by the chair of Madame Cheron, and had heard her arrogate to herself, as he thought, a distinction which had been paid to her niece. ‘His discernment MAY be justly questioned, Signor,’ said Madame Cheron, who was not flattered by what she understood to be an encomium on Emily.

‘Alas!’ exclaimed Cavigni, surveying Madame Cheron with affected ecstasy, ‘how vain is that assertion, while that face — that shape — that air — combine to refute it! Unhappy Valancourt! his discernment has been his destruction.’

Emily looked surprised and embarrassed; the lady, who had lately spoke, astonished, and Madame Cheron, who, though she did not perfectly understand this speech, was very ready to believe herself complimented by it, said smilingly, ‘O Signor! you are very gallant; but those, who hear you vindicate the Chevalier’s discernment, will suppose that I am the object of it.’

‘They cannot doubt it,’ replied Cavigni, bowing low.

‘And would not that be very mortifying, Signor?’

‘Unquestionably it would,’ said Cavigni.

‘I cannot endure the thought,’ said Madame Cheron.

‘It is not to be endured,’ replied Cavigni.

‘What can be done to prevent so humiliating a mistake?’ rejoined Madame Cheron.

‘Alas! I cannot assist you,’ replied Cavigni, with a deliberating air. ‘Your only chance of refuting the calumny, and of making people understand what you wish them to believe, is to persist in your first assertion; for, when they are told of the Chevalier’s want of discernment, it is possible they may suppose he never presumed to distress you with his

admiration. — But then again — that diffidence, which renders you so insensible to your own perfections — they will consider this, and Valancourt's taste will not be doubted, though you arraign it. In short, they will, in spite of your endeavours, continue to believe, what might very naturally have occurred to them without any hint of mine — that the Chevalier has taste enough to admire a beautiful woman.'

'All this is very distressing!' said Madame Cheron, with a profound sigh.

'May I be allowed to ask what is so distressing?' said Madame Clairval, who was struck with the rueful countenance and doleful accent, with which this was delivered.

'It is a delicate subject,' replied Madame Cheron, 'a very mortifying one to me.' 'I am concerned to hear it,' said Madame Clairval, 'I hope nothing has occurred, this evening, particularly to distress you?' 'Alas, yes! within this half hour; and I know not where the report may end; — my pride was never so shocked before, but I assure you the report is totally void of foundation.' 'Good God!' exclaimed Madame Clairval,' what can be done? Can you point out any way, by which I can assist, or console you?'

'The only way, by which you can do either,' replied Madame Cheron, 'is to contradict the report wherever you go.'

'Well! but pray inform me what I am to contradict.'

'It is so very humiliating, that I know not how to mention it,' continued Madame Cheron, 'but you shall judge. Do you observe that young man seated near the bottom of the table, who is conversing with Mademoiselle D'Emery?' 'Yes, I perceive whom you mean.' 'You observe how little he has the air of a person of condition; I was saying just now, that I should not have thought him a gentleman, if I had not seen him at this table.' 'Well! but the report,' said Madame Clairval, 'let me understand the subject of your distress.' 'Ah! the subject of my distress,' replied Madame Cheron; 'this person, whom nobody knows — (I beg pardon, madam, I did not consider what I said) — this impertinent young man, having had the presumption to address my niece, has, I fear, given rise to a report, that he had declared himself my admirer. Now only consider how very mortifying such a report must be! You, I know, will feel for my situation. A woman of

my condition! — think how degrading even the rumour of such an alliance must be.'

'Degrading indeed, my poor friend!' said Madame Clairval. 'You may rely upon it I will contradict the report wherever I go;' as she said which, she turned her attention upon another part of the company; and Cavigni, who had hitherto appeared a grave spectator of the scene, now fearing he should be unable to smother the laugh, that convulsed him, walked abruptly away.

'I perceive you do not know,' said the lady who sat near Madame Cheron, 'that the gentleman you have been speaking of is Madame Clairval's nephew!' 'Impossible!' exclaimed Madame Cheron, who now began to perceive, that she had been totally mistaken in her judgment of Valancourt, and to praise him aloud with as much servility, as she had before censured him with frivolous malignity.

Emily, who, during the greater part of this conversation, had been so absorbed in thought as to be spared the pain of hearing it, was now extremely surprised by her aunt's praise of Valancourt, with whose relationship to Madame Clairval she was unacquainted; but she was not sorry when Madame Cheron, who, though she now tried to appear unconcerned, was really much embarrassed, prepared to withdraw immediately after supper. Montoni then came to hand Madame Cheron to her carriage, and Cavigni, with an arch solemnity of countenance, followed with Emily, who, as she wished them good night, and drew up the glass, saw Valancourt among the crowd at the gates. Before the carriage drove off, he disappeared. Madame Cheron forbore to mention him to Emily, and, as soon as they reached the chateau, they separated for the night.

On the following morning, as Emily sat at breakfast with her aunt, a letter was brought to her, of which she knew the handwriting upon the cover; and, as she received it with a trembling hand, Madame Cheron hastily enquired from whom it came. Emily, with her leave, broke the seal, and, observing the signature of Valancourt, gave it unread to her aunt, who received it with impatience; and, as she looked it over, Emily endeavoured to read on her countenance its contents. Having returned the letter to her niece, whose eyes asked if she might examine it, 'Yes, read it, child,' said Madame Cheron, in a manner less severe than she had expected, and

Emily had, perhaps, never before so willingly obeyed her aunt. In this letter Valancourt said little of the interview of the preceding day, but concluded with declaring, that he would accept his dismission from Emily only, and with entreating, that she would allow him to wait upon her, on the approaching evening. When she read this, she was astonished at the moderation of Madame Cheron, and looked at her with timid expectation, as she said sorrowfully— 'What am I to say, madam?'

'Why — we must see the young man, I believe,' replied her aunt, 'and hear what he has further to say for himself. You may tell him he may come.' Emily dared scarcely credit what she heard. 'Yet, stay,' added Madame Cheron, 'I will tell him so myself.' She called for pen and ink; Emily still not daring to trust the emotions she felt, and almost sinking beneath them. Her surprise would have been less had she overheard, on the preceding evening, what Madame Cheron had not forgotten — that Valancourt was the nephew of Madame Clairval.

What were the particulars of her aunt's note Emily did not learn, but the result was a visit from Valancourt in the evening, whom Madame Cheron received alone, and they had a long conversation before Emily was called down. When she entered the room, her aunt was conversing with complacency, and she saw the eyes of Valancourt, as he impatiently rose, animated with hope.

'We have been talking over this affair,' said Madame Cheron, 'the chevalier has been telling me, that the late Monsieur Clairval was the brother of the Countess de Duvarney, his mother. I only wish he had mentioned his relationship to Madame Clairval before; I certainly should have considered that circumstance as a sufficient introduction to my house.' Valancourt bowed, and was going to address Emily, but her aunt prevented him. 'I have, therefore, consented that you shall receive his visits; and, though I will not bind myself by any promise, or say, that I shall consider him as my nephew, yet I shall permit the intercourse, and shall look forward to any further connection as an event, which may possibly take place in a course of years, provided the chevalier rises in his profession, or any circumstance occurs, which may make it prudent for him to take a wife. But *Mons.* Valancourt will observe, and you too, Emily, that, till that happens, I positively forbid any thoughts of marrying.'

Emily’s countenance, during this coarse speech, varied every instant, and, towards its conclusion, her distress had so much increased, that she was on the point of leaving the room. Valancourt, meanwhile, scarcely less embarrassed, did not dare to look at her, for whom he was thus distressed; but, when Madame Cheron was silent, he said, ‘Flattering, madam, as your approbation is to me — highly as I am honoured by it — I have yet so much to fear, that I scarcely dare to hope.’ ‘Pray, sir, explain yourself,’ said Madame Cheron; an unexpected requisition, which embarrassed Valancourt again, and almost overcame him with confusion, at circumstances, on which, had he been only a spectator of the scene, he would have smiled.

‘Till I receive Mademoiselle St. Aubert’s permission to accept your indulgence,’ said he, falteringly— ‘till she allows me to hope— ‘

‘O! is that all?’ interrupted Madame Cheron. ‘Well, I will take upon me to answer for her. But at the same time, sir, give me leave to observe to you, that I am her guardian, and that I expect, in every instance, that my will is hers.’

As she said this, she rose and quitted the room, leaving Emily and Valancourt in a state of mutual embarrassment; and, when Valancourt’s hopes enabled him to overcome his fears, and to address her with the zeal and sincerity so natural to him, it was a considerable time before she was sufficiently recovered to hear with distinctness his solicitations and inquiries.

The conduct of Madame Cheron in this affair had been entirely governed by selfish vanity. Valancourt, in his first interview, had with great candour laid open to her the true state of his present circumstances, and his future expectancies, and she, with more prudence than humanity, had absolutely and abruptly rejected his suit. She wished her niece to marry ambitiously, not because she desired to see her in possession of the happiness, which rank and wealth are usually believed to bestow, but because she desired to partake the importance, which such an alliance would give. When, therefore, she discovered that Valancourt was the nephew of a person of so much consequence as Madame Clairval, she became anxious for the connection, since the prospect it afforded of future fortune and distinction for Emily, promised the exaltation she coveted for herself. Her calculations concerning fortune in this alliance were guided

rather by her wishes, than by any hint of Valancourt, or strong appearance of probability; and, when she rested her expectation on the wealth of Madame Clairval, she seemed totally to have forgotten, that the latter had a daughter. Valancourt, however, had not forgotten this circumstance, and the consideration of it had made him so modest in his expectations from Madame Clairval, that he had not even named the relationship in his first conversation with Madame Cheron. But, whatever might be the future fortune of Emily, the present distinction, which the connection would afford for herself, was certain, since the splendour of Madame Clairval's establishment was such as to excite the general envy and partial imitation of the neighbourhood. Thus had she consented to involve her niece in an engagement, to which she saw only a distant and uncertain conclusion, with as little consideration of her happiness, as when she had so precipitately forbade it: for though she herself possessed the means of rendering this union not only certain, but prudent, yet to do so was no part of her present intention.

From this period Valancourt made frequent visits to Madame Cheron, and Emily passed in his society the happiest hours she had known since the death of her father. They were both too much engaged by the present moments to give serious consideration to the future. They loved and were beloved, and saw not, that the very attachment, which formed the delight of their present days, might possibly occasion the sufferings of years. Meanwhile, Madame Cheron's intercourse with Madame Clairval became more frequent than before, and her vanity was already gratified by the opportunity of proclaiming, wherever she went, the attachment that subsisted between their nephew and niece.

Montoni was now also become a daily guest at the chateau, and Emily was compelled to observe, that he really was a suitor, and a favoured suitor, to her aunt.

Thus passed the winter months, not only in peace, but in happiness, to Valancourt and Emily; the station of his regiment being so near Tholouse, as to allow this frequent intercourse. The pavilion on the terrace was the favourite scene of their interviews, and there Emily, with Madame Cheron, would work, while Valancourt read aloud works of genius and taste, listened to her enthusiasm, expressed his own, and caught new opportunities of observing, that their minds were formed to constitute the

happiness of each other, the same taste, the same noble and benevolent sentiments animating each.

CHAPTER XIII

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
To stand embodied to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phoebus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro,
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE

Madame Cheron’s avarice at length yielded to her vanity. Some very splendid entertainments, which Madame Clairval had given, and the general adulation, which was paid her, made the former more anxious than before to secure an alliance, that would so much exalt her in her own opinion and in that of the world. She proposed terms for the immediate marriage of her niece, and offered to give Emily a dower, provided Madame Clairval observed equal terms, on the part of her nephew. Madame Clairval listened to the proposal, and, considering that Emily was the apparent heiress of her aunt’s wealth, accepted it. Meanwhile, Emily knew nothing of the transaction, till Madame Cheron informed her, that she must make preparation for the nuptials, which would be celebrated without further delay; then, astonished and wholly unable to account for this sudden conclusion, which Valancourt had not solicited (for he was ignorant of what had passed between the elder ladies, and had not dared to hope such good fortune), she decisively objected to it. Madame Cheron, however, quite as jealous of contradiction now, as she had been formerly, contended for a speedy marriage with as much vehemence as she had formerly opposed whatever had the most remote possibility of leading to it; and Emily’s scruples disappeared, when she again saw Valancourt, who was now informed of the happiness, designed for him, and came to claim a promise of it from herself.

While preparations were making for these nuptials, Montoni became the acknowledged lover of Madame Cheron; and, though Madame Clairval was much displeased, when she heard of the approaching connection, and was willing to prevent that of Valancourt with Emily, her conscience told her, that she had no right thus to trifle with their peace, and Madame Clairval, though a woman of fashion, was far less advanced than her friend in the art of deriving satisfaction from distinction and admiration, rather than from conscience.

Emily observed with concern the ascendancy, which Montoni had acquired over Madame Cheron, as well as the increasing frequency of his visits; and her own opinion of this Italian was confirmed by that of

Valancourt, who had always expressed a dislike of him. As she was, one morning, sitting at work in the pavilion, enjoying the pleasant freshness of spring, whose colours were now spread upon the landscape, and listening to Valancourt, who was reading, but who often laid aside the book to converse, she received a summons to attend Madame Cheron immediately, and had scarcely entered the dressing-room, when she observed with surprise the dejection of her aunt's countenance, and the contrasted gaiety of her dress. 'So, niece!' — said Madame, and she stopped under some degree of embarrassment.— 'I sent for you — I — I wished to see you; I have news to tell you. From this hour you must consider the Signor Montoni as your uncle — we were married this morning.'

Astonished — not so much at the marriage, as at the secrecy with which it had been concluded, and the agitation with which it was announced, Emily, at length, attributed the privacy to the wish of Montoni, rather than of her aunt. His wife, however, intended, that the contrary should be believed, and therefore added, 'you see I wished to avoid a bustle; but now the ceremony is over I shall do so no longer; and I wish to announce to my servants that they must receive the Signor Montoni for their master.' Emily made a feeble attempt to congratulate her on these apparently imprudent nuptials. 'I shall now celebrate my marriage with some splendour,' continued Madame Montoni, 'and to save time I shall avail myself of the preparation that has been made for yours, which will, of course, be delayed a little while. Such of your wedding clothes as are ready I shall expect you will appear in, to do honour to this festival. I also wish you to inform Monsieur Valancourt, that I have changed my name, and he will acquaint Madame Clairval. In a few days I shall give a grand entertainment, at which I shall request their presence.'

Emily was so lost in surprise and various thought, that she made Madame Montoni scarcely any reply, but, at her desire, she returned to inform Valancourt of what had passed. Surprise was not his predominant emotion on hearing of these hasty nuptials; and, when he learned, that they were to be the means of delaying his own, and that the very ornaments of the chateau, which had been prepared to grace the nuptial day of his Emily, were to be degraded to the celebration of Madame Montoni's, grief and indignation agitated him alternately. He could conceal neither from the observation of Emily, whose efforts to abstract him from these serious

emotions, and to laugh at the apprehensive considerations, that assailed him, were ineffectual; and, when, at length, he took leave, there was an earnest tenderness in his manner, that extremely affected her; she even shed tears, when he disappeared at the end of the terrace, yet knew not exactly why she should do so.

Montoni now took possession of the chateau, and the command of its inhabitants, with the ease of a man, who had long considered it to be his own. His friend Cavigni, who had been extremely serviceable, in having paid Madame Cheron the attention and flattery, which she required, but from which Montoni too often revolted, had apartments assigned to him, and received from the domestics an equal degree of obedience with the master of the mansion.

Within a few days, Madame Montoni, as she had promised, gave a magnificent entertainment to a very numerous company, among whom was Valancourt; but at which Madame Clairval excused herself from attending. There was a concert, ball and supper. Valancourt was, of course, Emily's partner, and though, when he gave a look to the decorations of the apartments, he could not but remember, that they were designed for other festivities, than those they now contributed to celebrate, he endeavoured to check his concern by considering, that a little while only would elapse before they would be given to their original destination. During this evening, Madame Montoni danced, laughed and talked incessantly; while Montoni, silent, reserved and somewhat haughty, seemed weary of the parade, and of the frivolous company it had drawn together.

This was the first and the last entertainment, given in celebration of their nuptials. Montoni, though the severity of his temper and the gloominess of his pride prevented him from enjoying such festivities, was extremely willing to promote them. It was seldom, that he could meet in any company a man of more address, and still seldomer one of more understanding, than himself; the balance of advantage in such parties, or in the connections, which might arise from them, must, therefore, be on his side; and, knowing, as he did, the selfish purposes, for which they are generally frequented, he had no objection to measure his talents of dissimulation with those of any other competitor for distinction and plunder. But his wife, who, when her own interest was immediately concerned, had sometimes more discernment than vanity, acquired a

consciousness of her inferiority to other women, in personal attractions, which, uniting with the jealousy natural to the discovery, counteracted his readiness for mingling with all the parties Tholouse could afford. Till she had, as she supposed, the affections of an husband to lose, she had no motive for discovering the unwelcome truth, and it had never obtruded itself upon her; but, now that it influenced her policy, she opposed her husband's inclination for company, with the more eagerness, because she believed him to be really as well received in the female society of the place, as, during his addresses to her, he had affected to be.

A few weeks only had elapsed, since the marriage, when Madame Montoni informed Emily, that the Signor intended to return to Italy, as soon as the necessary preparation could be made for so long a journey. 'We shall go to Venice,' said she, 'where the Signor has a fine mansion, and from thence to his estate in Tuscany. Why do you look so grave, child? — You, who are so fond of a romantic country and fine views, will doubtless be delighted with this journey.'

'Am I then to be of the party, madam?' said Emily, with extreme surprise and emotion. 'Most certainly,' replied her aunt, 'how could you imagine we should leave you behind? But I see you are thinking of the Chevalier; he is not yet, I believe, informed of the journey, but he very soon will be so. Signor Montoni is gone to acquaint Madame Clairval of our journey, and to say, that the proposed connection between the families must from this time be thought of no more.'

The unfeeling manner, in which Madame Montoni thus informed her niece, that she must be separated, perhaps for ever, from the man, with whom she was on the point of being united for life, added to the dismay, which she must otherwise have suffered at such intelligence. When she could speak, she asked the cause of the sudden change in Madame's sentiments towards Valancourt, but the only reply she could obtain was, that the Signor had forbade the connection, considering it to be greatly inferior to what Emily might reasonably expect.

'I now leave the affair entirely to the Signor,' added Madame Montoni, 'but I must say, that M. Valancourt never was a favourite with me, and I was overpersuaded, or I should not have given my consent to the connection. I was weak enough — I am so foolish sometimes! — to suffer other people's uneasiness to affect me, and so my better judgment yielded

to your affliction. But the Signor has very properly pointed out the folly of this, and he shall not have to reprove me a second time. I am determined, that you shall submit to those, who know how to guide you better than yourself — I am determined, that you shall be conformable.'

Emily would have been astonished at the assertions of this eloquent speech, had not her mind been so overwhelmed by the sudden shock it had received, that she scarcely heard a word of what was latterly addressed to her. Whatever were the weaknesses of Madame Montoni, she might have avoided to accuse herself with those of compassion and tenderness to the feelings of others, and especially to those of Emily. It was the same ambition, that lately prevailed upon her to solicit an alliance with Madame Clairval's family, which induced her to withdraw from it, now that her marriage with Montoni had exalted her self-consequence, and, with it, her views for her niece.

Emily was, at this time, too much affected to employ either remonstrance, or entreaty on this topic; and when, at length, she attempted the latter, her emotion overcame her speech, and she retired to her apartment, to think, if in the present state of her mind to think was possible, upon this sudden and overwhelming subject. It was very long, before her spirits were sufficiently composed to permit the reflection, which, when it came, was dark and even terrible. She saw, that Montoni sought to aggrandise himself in his disposal of her, and it occurred, that his friend Cavigni was the person, for whom he was interested. The prospect of going to Italy was still rendered darker, when she considered the tumultuous situation of that country, then torn by civil commotion, where every petty state was at war with its neighbour, and even every castle liable to the attack of an invader. She considered the person, to whose immediate guidance she would be committed, and the vast distance, that was to separate her from Valancourt, and, at the recollection of him, every other image vanished from her mind, and every thought was again obscured by grief.

In this perturbed state she passed some hours, and, when she was summoned to dinner, she entreated permission to remain in her own apartment; but Madame Montoni was alone, and the request was refused. Emily and her aunt said little during the repast; the one occupied by her griefs, the other engrossed by the disappointment, which the unexpected

absence of Montoni occasioned; for not only was her vanity piqued by the neglect, but her jealousy alarmed by what she considered as a mysterious engagement. When the cloth was drawn and they were alone, Emily renewed the mention of Valancourt; but her aunt, neither softened to pity, or awakened to remorse, became enraged, that her will should be opposed, and the authority of Montoni questioned, though this was done by Emily with her usual gentleness, who, after a long, and torturing conversation, retired in tears.

As she crossed the hall, a person entered it by the great door, whom, as her eyes hastily glanced that way, she imagined to be Montoni, and she was passing on with quicker steps, when she heard the wellknown voice of Valancourt.

‘Emily, O! my Emily!’ cried he in a tone faltering with impatience, while she turned, and, as he advanced, was alarmed at the expression of his countenance and the eager desperation of his air. ‘In tears, Emily! I would speak with you,’ said he, ‘I have much to say; conduct me to where we may converse. But you tremble — you are ill! Let me lead you to a seat.’

He observed the open door of an apartment, and hastily took her hand to lead her thither; but she attempted to withdraw it, and said, with a languid smile, ‘I am better already; if you wish to see my aunt she is in the dining-parlour.’ ‘I must speak with YOU, my Emily,’ replied Valancourt, ‘Good God! is it already come to this? Are you indeed so willing to resign me?’ But this is an improper place — I am overheard. Let me entreat your attention, if only for a few minutes.’— ‘When you have seen my aunt,’ said Emily. ‘I was wretched enough when I came hither,’ exclaimed Valancourt, ‘do not increase my misery by this coldness — this cruel refusal.’

The despondency, with which he spoke this, affected her almost to tears, but she persisted in refusing to hear him, till he had conversed with Madame Montoni. ‘Where is her husband, where, then, is Montoni?’ said Valancourt, in an altered tone: ‘it is he, to whom I must speak.’

Emily, terrified for the consequence of the indignation, that flashed in his eyes, tremblingly assured him, that Montoni was not at home, and entreated he would endeavour to moderate his resentment. At the tremulous accents of her voice, his eyes softened instantly from wildness

into tenderness. ‘You are ill, Emily,’ said he, ‘they will destroy us both! Forgive me, that I dared to doubt your affection.’

Emily no longer opposed him, as he led her into an adjoining parlour; the manner, in which he had named Montoni, had so much alarmed her for his own safety, that she was now only anxious to prevent the consequences of his just resentment. He listened to her entreaties, with attention, but replied to them only with looks of despondency and tenderness, concealing, as much as possible, the sentiments he felt towards Montoni, that he might soothe the apprehensions, which distressed her. But she saw the veil he had spread over his resentment, and, his assumed tranquillity only alarming her more, she urged, at length, the impolicy of forcing an interview with Montoni, and of taking any measure, which might render their separation irremediable. Valancourt yielded to these remonstrances, and her affecting entreaties drew from him a promise, that, however Montoni might persist in his design of disuniting them, he would not seek to redress his wrongs by violence. ‘For my sake,’ said Emily, ‘let the consideration of what I should suffer deter you from such a mode of revenge!’ ‘For your sake, Emily,’ replied Valancourt, his eyes filling with tears of tenderness and grief, while he gazed upon her. ‘Yes — yes — I shall subdue myself. But, though I have given you my solemn promise to do this, do not expect, that I can tamely submit to the authority of Montoni; if I could, I should be unworthy of you. Yet, O Emily! how long may he condemn me to live without you, — how long may it be before you return to France!’

Emily endeavoured to sooth him with assurances of her unalterable affection, and by representing, that, in little more than a year, she should be her own mistress, as far as related to her aunt, from whose guardianship her age would then release her; assurances, which gave little consolation to Valancourt, who considered, that she would then be in Italy and in the power of those, whose dominion over her would not cease with their rights; but he affected to be consoled by them. Emily, comforted by the promise she had obtained, and by his apparent composure, was about to leave him, when her aunt entered the room. She threw a glance of sharp reproof upon her niece, who immediately withdrew, and of haughty displeasure upon Valancourt.

‘This is not the conduct I should have expected from you, sir;’ said she, ‘I did not expect to see you in my house, after you had been informed, that your visits were no longer agreeable, much less, that you would seek a clandestine interview with my niece, and that she would grant one.’

Valancourt, perceiving it necessary to vindicate Emily from such a design, explained, that the purpose of his own visit had been to request an interview with Montoni, and he then entered upon the subject of it, with the tempered spirit which the sex, rather than the respectability, of Madame Montoni, demanded.

His expostulations were answered with severe rebuke; she lamented again, that her prudence had ever yielded to what she termed compassion, and added, that she was so sensible of the folly of her former consent, that, to prevent the possibility of a repetition, she had committed the affair entirely to the conduct of Signor Montoni.

The feeling eloquence of Valancourt, however, at length, made her sensible in some measure of her unworthy conduct, and she became susceptible to shame, but not remorse: she hated Valancourt, who awakened her to this painful sensation, and, in proportion as she grew dissatisfied with herself, her abhorrence of him increased. This was also the more inveterate, because his tempered words and manner were such as, without accusing her, compelled her to accuse herself, and neither left her a hope, that the odious portrait was the caricature of his prejudice, or afforded her an excuse for expressing the violent resentment, with which she contemplated it. At length, her anger rose to such an height, that Valancourt was compelled to leave the house abruptly, lest he should forfeit his own esteem by an intemperate reply. He was then convinced, that from Madame Montoni he had nothing to hope, for what of either pity, or justice could be expected from a person, who could feel the pain of guilt, without the humility of repentance?

To Montoni he looked with equal despondency, since it was nearly evident, that this plan of separation originated with him, and it was not probable, that he would relinquish his own views to entreaties, or remonstrances, which he must have foreseen and have been prepared to resist. Yet, remembering his promise to Emily, and more solicitous, concerning his love, than jealous of his consequence, Valancourt was careful to do nothing that might unnecessarily irritate Montoni, he wrote

to him, therefore, not to demand an interview, but to solicit one, and, having done this, he endeavoured to wait with calmness his reply.

Madame Clairval was passive in the affair. When she gave her approbation to Valancourt's marriage, it was in the belief, that Emily would be the heiress of Madame Montoni's fortune; and, though, upon the nuptials of the latter, when she perceived the fallacy of this expectation, her conscience had withheld her from adopting any measure to prevent the union, her benevolence was not sufficiently active to impel her towards any step, that might now promote it. She was, on the contrary, secretly pleased, that Valancourt was released from an engagement, which she considered to be as inferior, in point of fortune, to his merit, as his alliance was thought by Montoni to be humiliating to the beauty of Emily; and, though her pride was wounded by this rejection of a member of her family, she disdained to shew resentment otherwise, than by silence.

Montoni, in his reply to Valancourt, said, that as an interview could neither remove the objections of the one, or overcome the wishes of the other, it would serve only to produce useless altercation between them. He, therefore, thought proper to refuse it.

In consideration of the policy, suggested by Emily, and of his promise to her, Valancourt restrained the impulse, that urged him to the house of Montoni, to demand what had been denied to his entreaties. He only repeated his solicitations to see him; seconding them with all the arguments his situation could suggest. Thus several days passed, in remonstrance, on one side, and inflexible denial, on the other; for, whether it was fear, or shame, or the hatred, which results from both, that made Montoni shun the man he had injured, he was peremptory in his refusal, and was neither softened to pity by the agony, which Valancourt's letters pourtrayed, or awakened to a repentance of his own injustice by the strong remonstrances he employed. At length, Valancourt's letters were returned unopened, and then, in the first moments of passionate despair, he forgot every promise to Emily, except the solemn one, which bound him to avoid violence, and hastened to Montoni's chateau, determined to see him by whatever other means might be necessary. Montoni was denied, and Valancourt, when he afterwards enquired for Madame, and Ma'amselle St. Aubert, was absolutely refused admittance by the servants. Not choosing to submit himself to a contest with these, he, at length, departed, and,

returning home in a state of mind approaching to frenzy, wrote to Emily of what had passed, expressed without restraint all the agony of his heart, and entreated, that, since he must not otherwise hope to see her immediately, she would allow him an interview unknown to Montoni. Soon after he had dispatched this, his passions becoming more temperate, he was sensible of the error he had committed in having given Emily a new subject of distress in the strong mention of his own suffering, and would have given half the world, had it been his, to recover the letter. Emily, however, was spared the pain she must have received from it by the suspicious policy of Madame Montoni, who had ordered, that all letters, addressed to her niece, should be delivered to herself, and who, after having perused this and indulged the expressions of resentment, which Valancourt's mention of Montoni provoked, had consigned it to the flames.

Montoni, meanwhile, every day more impatient to leave France, gave repeated orders for dispatch to the servants employed in preparations for the journey, and to the persons, with whom he was transacting some particular business. He preserved a steady silence to the letters in which Valancourt, despairing of greater good, and having subdued the passion, that had transgressed against his policy, solicited only the indulgence of being allowed to bid Emily farewell. But, when the latter [Valancourt] learned, that she was really to set out in a very few days, and that it was designed he should see her no more, forgetting every consideration of prudence, he dared, in a second letter to Emily, to propose a clandestine marriage. This also was transmitted to Madame Montoni, and the last day of Emily's stay at Tholouse arrived, without affording Valancourt even a line to sooth his sufferings, or a hope, that he should be allowed a parting interview.

During this period of torturing suspense to Valancourt, Emily was sunk into that kind of stupor, with which sudden and irremediable misfortune sometimes overwhelms the mind. Loving him with the tenderest affection, and having long been accustomed to consider him as the friend and companion of all her future days, she had no ideas of happiness, that were not connected with him. What, then, must have been her suffering, when thus suddenly they were to be separated, perhaps, for ever, certainly to be thrown into distant parts of the world, where they could scarcely hear of each other's existence; and all this in obedience to the will of a stranger,

for such as Montoni, and of a person, who had but lately been anxious to hasten their nuptials! It was in vain, that she endeavoured to subdue her grief, and resign herself to an event, which she could not avoid. The silence of Valancourt afflicted more than it surprised her, since she attributed it to its just occasion; but, when the day, preceding that, on which she was to quit Tholouse, arrived, and she had heard no mention of his being permitted to take leave of her, grief overcame every consideration, that had made her reluctant to speak of him, and she enquired of Madame Montoni, whether this consolation had been refused. Her aunt informed her that it had, adding, that, after the provocation she had herself received from Valancourt, in their last interview, and the persecution, which the Signor had suffered from his letters, no entreaties should avail to procure it.

‘If the Chevalier expected this favour from us,’ said she, ‘he should have conducted himself in a very different manner; he should have waited patiently, till he knew whether we were disposed to grant it, and not have come and reproved me, because I did not think proper to bestow my niece upon him, — and then have persisted in troubling the Signor, because he did not think proper to enter into any dispute about so childish an affair. His behaviour throughout has been extremely presumptuous and impertinent, and I desire, that I may never hear his name repeated, and that you will get the better of those foolish sorrows and whims, and look like other people, and not appear with that dismal countenance, as if you were ready to cry. For, though you say nothing, you cannot conceal your grief from my penetration. I can see you are ready to cry at this moment, though I am reproving you for it; aye, even now, in spite of my commands.’

Emily, having turned away to hide her tears, quitted the room to indulge them, and the day was passed in an intensity of anguish, such as she had, perhaps, never known before. When she withdrew to her chamber for the night, she remained in the chair where she had placed herself, on entering the room, absorbed in her grief, till long after every member of the family, except herself, was retired to rest. She could not divest herself of a belief, that she had parted with Valancourt to meet no more; a belief, which did not arise merely from foreseen circumstances, for, though the length of the journey she was about to commence, the uncertainty as to the period of her return, together with the prohibitions she had received, seemed to justify

it, she yielded also to an impression, which she mistook for a presentiment, that she was going from Valancourt for ever. How dreadful to her imagination, too, was the distance that would separate them — the Alps, those tremendous barriers! would rise, and whole countries extend between the regions where each must exist! To live in adjoining provinces, to live even in the same country, though without seeing him, was comparative happiness to the conviction of this dreadful length of distance.

Her mind was, at length, so much agitated by the consideration of her state, and the belief, that she had seen Valancourt for the last time, that she suddenly became very faint, and, looking round the chamber for something, that might revive her, she observed the casements, and had just strength to throw one open, near which she seated herself. The air recalled her spirits, and the still moonlight, that fell upon the elms of a long avenue, fronting the window, somewhat soothed them, and determined her to try whether exercise and the open air would not relieve the intense pain that bound her temples. In the chateau all was still; and, passing down the great staircase into the hall, from whence a passage led immediately to the garden, she softly and unheard, as she thought, unlocked the door, and entered the avenue. Emily passed on with steps now hurried, and now faltering, as, deceived by the shadows among the trees, she fancied she saw some person move in the distant perspective, and feared, that it was a spy of Madame Montoni. Her desire, however, to revisit the pavilion, where she had passed so many happy hours with Valancourt, and had admired with him the extensive prospect over Languedoc and her native Gascony, overcame her apprehension of being observed, and she moved on towards the terrace, which, running along the upper garden, commanded the whole of the lower one, and communicated with it by a flight of marble steps, that terminated the avenue.

Having reached these steps, she paused a moment to look round, for her distance from the chateau now increased the fear, which the stillness and obscurity of the hour had awakened. But, perceiving nothing that could justify it, she ascended to the terrace, where the moonlight shewed the long broad walk, with the pavilion at its extremity, while the rays silvered the foliage of the high trees and shrubs, that bordered it on the right, and the tufted summits of those, that rose to a level with the balustrade on the

left, from the garden below. Her distance from the chateau again alarming her, she paused to listen; the night was so calm, that no sound could have escaped her, but she heard only the plaintive sweetness of the nightingale, with the light shiver of the leaves, and she pursued her way towards the pavilion, having reached which, its obscurity did not prevent the emotion, that a fuller view of its wellknown scene would have excited. The lattices were thrown back, and shewed beyond their embowered arch the moonlight landscape, shadowy and soft; its groves, and plains extending gradually and indistinctly to the eye, its distant mountains catching a stronger gleam, and the nearer river reflecting the moon, and trembling to her rays.

Emily, as she approached the lattice, was sensible of the features of this scene only as they served to bring Valancourt more immediately to her fancy. ‘Ah!’ said she, with a heavy sigh, as she threw herself into a chair by the window, ‘how often have we sat together in this spot — often have looked upon that landscape! Never, never more shall we view it together — never — never more, perhaps, shall we look upon each other!’

Her tears were suddenly stopped by terror — a voice spoke near her in the pavilion; she shrieked — it spoke again, and she distinguished the wellknown tones of Valancourt. It was indeed Valancourt who supported her in his arms! For some moments their emotion would not suffer either to speak. ‘Emily,’ said Valancourt at length, as he pressed her hand in his. ‘Emily!’ and he was again silent, but the accent, in which he had pronounced her name, expressed all his tenderness and sorrow.

‘O my Emily!’ he resumed, after a long pause, ‘I do then see you once again, and hear again the sound of that voice! I have haunted this place — these gardens, for many — many nights, with a faint, very faint hope of seeing you. This was the only chance that remained to me, and thank heaven! it has at length succeeded — I am not condemned to absolute despair!’

Emily said something, she scarcely knew what, expressive of her unalterable affection, and endeavoured to calm the agitation of his mind; but Valancourt could for some time only utter incoherent expressions of his emotions; and, when he was somewhat more composed, he said, ‘I came hither, soon after sun-set, and have been watching in the gardens, and in this pavilion ever since; for, though I had now given up all hope of

seeing you, I could not resolve to tear myself from a place so near to you, and should probably have lingered about the chateau till morning dawned. O how heavily the moments have passed, yet with what various emotion have they been marked, as I sometimes thought I heard footsteps, and fancied you were approaching, and then again — perceived only a dead and dreary silence! But, when you opened the door of the pavilion, and the darkness prevented my distinguishing with certainty, whether it was my love — my heart beat so strongly with hopes and fears, that I could not speak. The instant I heard the plaintive accents of your voice, my doubts vanished, but not my fears, till you spoke of me; then, losing the apprehension of alarming you in the excess of my emotion, I could no longer be silent. O Emily! these are moments, in which joy and grief struggle so powerfully for preeminence, that the heart can scarcely support the contest!'

Emily's heart acknowledged the truth of this assertion, but the joy she felt on thus meeting Valancourt, at the very moment when she was lamenting, that they must probably meet no more, soon melted into grief, as reflection stole over her thoughts, and imagination prompted visions of the future. She struggled to recover the calm dignity of mind, which was necessary to support her through this last interview, and which Valancourt found it utterly impossible to attain, for the transports of his joy changed abruptly into those of suffering, and he expressed in the most impassioned language his horror of this separation, and his despair of their ever meeting again. Emily wept silently as she listened to him, and then, trying to command her own distress, and to sooth his, she suggested every circumstance that could lead to hope. But the energy of his fears led him instantly to detect the friendly fallacies, which she endeavoured to impose on herself and him, and also to conjure up illusions too powerful for his reason.

'You are going from me,' said he, 'to a distant country, O how distant! — to new society, new friends, new admirers, with people too, who will try to make you forget me, and to promote new connections! How can I know this, and not know, that you will never return for me — never can be mine.' His voice was stifled by sighs.

'You believe, then,' said Emily, 'that the pangs I suffer proceed from a trivial and temporary interest; you believe— '

‘Suffer!’ interrupted Valancourt, ‘suffer for me! O Emily — how sweet — how bitter are those words; what comfort, what anguish do they give! I ought not to doubt the steadiness of your affection, yet such is the inconsistency of real love, that it is always awake to suspicion, however unreasonable; always requiring new assurances from the object of its interest, and thus it is, that I always feel revived, as by a new conviction, when your words tell me I am dear to you; and, wanting these, I relapse into doubt, and too often into despondency.’ Then seeming to recollect himself, he exclaimed, ‘But what a wretch am I, thus to torture you, and in these moments, too! I, who ought to support and comfort you!’

This reflection overcame Valancourt with tenderness, but, relapsing into despondency, he again felt only for himself, and lamented again this cruel separation, in a voice and words so impassioned, that Emily could no longer struggle to repress her own grief, or to sooth his. Valancourt, between these emotions of love and pity, lost the power, and almost the wish, of repressing his agitation; and, in the intervals of convulsive sobs, he, at one moment, kissed away her tears, then told her cruelly, that possibly she might never again weep for him, and then tried to speak more calmly, but only exclaimed, ‘O Emily — my heart will break! — I cannot — cannot leave you! Now — I gaze upon that countenance, now I hold you in my arms! a little while, and all this will appear a dream. I shall look, and cannot see you; shall try to recollect your features — and the impression will be fled from my imagination; — to hear the tones of your voice, and even memory will be silent! — I cannot, cannot leave you! why should we confide the happiness of our whole lives to the will of people, who have no right to interrupt, and, except in giving you to me, have no power to promote it? O Emily! venture to trust your own heart, venture to be mine for ever!’ His voice trembled, and he was silent; Emily continued to weep, and was silent also, when Valancourt proceeded to propose an immediate marriage, and that at an early hour on the following morning, she should quit Madame Montoni’s house, and be conducted by him to the church of the Augustines, where a friar should await to unite them.

The silence, with which she listened to a proposal, dictated by love and despair, and enforced at a moment, when it seemed scarcely possible for her to oppose it; — when her heart was softened by the sorrows of a separation, that might be eternal, and her reason obscured by the illusions

of love and terror, encouraged him to hope, that it would not be rejected. ‘Speak, my Emily!’ said Valancourt eagerly, ‘let me hear your voice, let me hear you confirm my fate.’ she spoke not; her cheek was cold, and her senses seemed to fail her, but she did not faint. To Valancourt’s terrified imagination she appeared to be dying; he called upon her name, rose to go to the chateau for assistance, and then, recollecting her situation, feared to go, or to leave her for a moment.

After a few minutes, she drew a deep sigh, and began to revive. The conflict she had suffered, between love and the duty she at present owed to her father’s sister; her repugnance to a clandestine marriage, her fear of emerging on the world with embarrassments, such as might ultimately involve the object of her affection in misery and repentance; — all this various interest was too powerful for a mind, already enervated by sorrow, and her reason had suffered a transient suspension. But duty, and good sense, however hard the conflict, at length, triumphed over affection and mournful presentiment; above all, she dreaded to involve Valancourt in obscurity and vain regret, which she saw, or thought she saw, must be the too certain consequence of a marriage in their present circumstances; and she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude, when she resolved to endure a present, rather than provoke a distant misfortune.

With a candour, that proved how truly she esteemed and loved him, and which endeared her to him, if possible, more than ever, she told Valancourt all her reasons for rejecting his proposals. Those, which influenced her concerning his future welfare, he instantly refuted, or rather contradicted; but they awakened tender considerations for her, which the frenzy of passion and despair had concealed before, and love, which had but lately prompted him to propose a clandestine and immediate marriage, now induced him to renounce it. The triumph was almost too much for his heart; for Emily’s sake, he endeavoured to stifle his grief, but the swelling anguish would not be restrained. ‘O Emily!’ said he, ‘I must leave you — I MUST leave you, and I know it is for ever!’

Convulsive sobs again interrupted his words, and they wept together in silence, till Emily, recollecting the danger of being discovered, and the impropriety of prolonging an interview, which might subject her to censure, summoned all her fortitude to utter a last farewell.

‘Stay!’ said Valancourt, ‘I conjure you stay, for I have much to tell you. The agitation of my mind has hitherto suffered me to speak only on the subject that occupied it; — I have forborne to mention a doubt of much importance, partly, lest it should appear as if I told it with an ungenerous view of alarming you into a compliance with my late proposal.’

Emily, much agitated, did not leave Valancourt, but she led him from the pavilion, and, as they walked upon the terrace, he proceeded as follows:

‘This Montoni: I have heard some strange hints concerning him. Are you certain he is of Madame Quesnel’s family, and that his fortune is what it appears to be?’

‘I have no reason to doubt either,’ replied Emily, in a voice of alarm. ‘Of the first, indeed, I cannot doubt, but I have no certain means of judging of the latter, and I entreat you will tell me all you have heard.’

‘That I certainly will, but it is very imperfect, and unsatisfactory information. I gathered it by accident from an Italian, who was speaking to another person of this Montoni. They were talking of his marriage; the Italian said, that if he was the person he meant, he was not likely to make Madame Cheron happy. He proceeded to speak of him in general terms of dislike, and then gave some particular hints, concerning his character, that excited my curiosity, and I ventured to ask him a few questions. He was reserved in his replies, but, after hesitating for some time, he owned, that he had understood abroad, that Montoni was a man of desperate fortune and character. He said something of a castle of Montoni’s, situated among the Apennines, and of some strange circumstances, that might be mentioned, as to his former mode of life. I pressed him to inform me further, but I believe the strong interest I felt was visible in my manner, and alarmed him; for no entreaties could prevail with him to give any explanation of the circumstances he had alluded to, or to mention any thing further concerning Montoni. I observed to him, that, if Montoni was possessed of a castle in the Apennines, it appeared from such a circumstance, that he was of some family, and also seemed to contradict the report, that he was a man of entirely broken fortunes. He shook his head, and looked as if he could have said a great deal, but made no reply.

‘A hope of learning something more satisfactory, or more positive, detained me in his company a considerable time, and I renewed the subject repeatedly, but the Italian wrapped himself up in reserve, said — that what

he had mentioned he had caught only from a floating report, and that reports frequently arose from personal malice, and were very little to be depended upon. I forbore to press the subject farther, since it was obvious that he was alarmed for the consequence of what he had already said, and I was compelled to remain in uncertainty on a point where suspense is almost intolerable. Think, Emily, what I must suffer to see you depart for a foreign country, committed to the power of a man of such doubtful character as is this Montoni! But I will not alarm you unnecessarily; — it is possible, as the Italian said, at first, that this is not the Montoni he alluded to. Yet, Emily, consider well before you resolve to commit yourself to him. O! I must not trust myself to speak — or I shall renounce all the motives, which so lately influenced me to resign the hope of your becoming mine immediately.'

Valancourt walked upon the terrace with hurried steps, while Emily remained leaning on the balustrade in deep thought. The information she had just received excited, perhaps, more alarm than it could justify, and raised once more the conflict of contrasted interests. She had never liked Montoni. The fire and keenness of his eye, its proud exultation, its bold fierceness, its sullen watchfulness, as occasion, and even slight occasion, had called forth the latent soul, she had often observed with emotion; while from the usual expression of his countenance she had always shrunk. From such observations she was the more inclined to believe, that it was this Montoni, of whom the Italian had uttered his suspicious hints. The thought of being solely in his power, in a foreign land, was terrifying to her, but it was not by terror alone that she was urged to an immediate marriage with Valancourt. The tenderest love had already pleaded his cause, but had been unable to overcome her opinion, as to her duty, her disinterested considerations for Valancourt, and the delicacy, which made her revolt from a clandestine union. It was not to be expected, that a vague terror would be more powerful, than the united influence of love and grief. But it recalled all their energy, and rendered a second conquest necessary.

With Valancourt, whose imagination was now awake to the suggestion of every passion; whose apprehensions for Emily had acquired strength by the mere mention of them, and became every instant more powerful, as his mind brooded over them — with Valancourt no second conquest was attainable. He thought he saw in the clearest light, and love assisted the

fear, that this journey to Italy would involve Emily in misery; he determined, therefore, to persevere in opposing it, and in conjuring her to bestow upon him the title of her lawful protector.

‘Emily!’ said he, with solemn earnestness, ‘this is no time for scrupulous distinctions, for weighing the dubious and comparatively trifling circumstances, that may affect our future comfort. I now see, much more clearly than before, the train of serious dangers you are going to encounter with a man of Montoni’s character. Those dark hints of the Italian spoke much, but not more than the idea I have of Montoni’s disposition, as exhibited even in his countenance. I think I see at this moment all that could have been hinted, written there. He is the Italian, whom I fear, and I conjure you for your own sake, as well as for mine, to prevent the evils I shudder to foresee. O Emily! let my tenderness, my arms withhold you from them — give me the right to defend you!’

Emily only sighed, while Valancourt proceeded to remonstrate and to entreat with all the energy that love and apprehension could inspire. But, as his imagination magnified to her the possible evils she was going to meet, the mists of her own fancy began to dissipate, and allowed her to distinguish the exaggerated images, which imposed on his reason. She considered, that there was no proof of Montoni being the person, whom the stranger had meant; that, even if he was so, the Italian had noticed his character and broken fortunes merely from report; and that, though the countenance of Montoni seemed to give probability to a part of the rumour, it was not by such circumstances that an implicit belief of it could be justified. These considerations would probably not have arisen so distinctly to her mind, at this time, had not the terrors of Valancourt presented to her such obvious exaggerations of her danger, as incited her to distrust the fallacies of passion. But, while she endeavoured in the gentlest manner to convince him of his error, she plunged him into a new one. His voice and countenance changed to an expression of dark despair. ‘Emily!’ said he, ‘this, this moment is the bitterest that is yet come to me. You do not — cannot love me! — It would be impossible for you to reason thus coolly, thus deliberately, if you did. I, *I* am torn with anguish at the prospect of our separation, and of the evils that may await you in consequence of it; I would encounter any hazards to prevent it — to save you. No! Emily, no! — you cannot love me.’

‘We have now little time to waste in exclamation, or assertion,’ said Emily, endeavouring to conceal her emotion: ‘if you are yet to learn how dear you are, and ever must be, to my heart, no assurances of mine can give you conviction.’

The last words faltered on her lips, and her tears flowed fast. These words and tears brought, once more, and with instantaneous force, conviction of her love to Valancourt. He could only exclaim, ‘Emily! Emily!’ and weep over the hand he pressed to his lips; but she, after some moments, again roused herself from the indulgence of sorrow, and said, ‘I must leave you; it is late, and my absence from the chateau may be discovered. Think of me — love me — when I am far away; the belief of this will be my comfort!’

‘Think of you! — love you!’ exclaimed Valancourt.

‘Try to moderate these transports,’ said Emily, ‘for my sake, try.’

‘For your sake!’

‘Yes, for my sake,’ replied Emily, in a tremulous voice, ‘I cannot leave you thus!’

‘Then do not leave me!’ said Valancourt, with quickness. ‘Why should we part, or part for longer than till tomorrow?’

‘I am, indeed I am, unequal to these moments,’ replied Emily, ‘you tear my heart, but I never can consent to this hasty, imprudent proposal!’

‘If we could command our time, my Emily, it should not be thus hasty; we must submit to circumstances.’

‘We must indeed! I have already told you all my heart — my spirits are gone. You allowed the force of my objections, till your tenderness called up vague terrors, which have given us both unnecessary anguish. Spare me! do not oblige me to repeat the reasons I have already urged.’

‘Spare you!’ cried Valancourt, ‘I am a wretch — a very wretch, that have felt only for myself! — I! who ought to have shewn the fortitude of a man, who ought to have supported you, I! have increased your sufferings by the conduct of a child! Forgive me, Emily! think of the distraction of my mind now that I am about to part with all that is dear to me — and forgive me! When you are gone, I shall recollect with bitter remorse what I have made you suffer, and shall wish in vain that I could see you, if only for a moment, that I might sooth your grief.’

Tears again interrupted his voice, and Emily wept with him. ‘I will shew myself more worthy of your love,’ said Valancourt, at length; ‘I will not prolong these moments. My Emily — my own Emily! never forget me! God knows when we shall meet again! I resign you to his care. — O God! — O God! — protect and bless her!’

He pressed her hand to his heart. Emily sunk almost lifeless on his bosom, and neither wept, nor spoke. Valancourt, now commanding his own distress, tried to comfort and reassure her, but she appeared totally unaffected by what he said, and a sigh, which she uttered, now and then, was all that proved she had not fainted.

He supported her slowly towards the chateau, weeping and speaking to her; but she answered only in sighs, till, having reached the gate, that terminated the avenue, she seemed to have recovered her consciousness, and, looking round, perceived how near they were to the chateau. ‘We must part here,’ said she, stopping, ‘Why prolong these moments? Teach me the fortitude I have forgot.’

Valancourt struggled to assume a composed air. ‘Farewell, my love!’ said he, in a voice of solemn tenderness— ‘trust me we shall meet again — meet for each other — meet to part no more!’ His voice faltered, but, recovering it, he proceeded in a firmer tone. ‘You know not what I shall suffer, till I hear from you; I shall omit no opportunity of conveying to you my letters, yet I tremble to think how few may occur. And trust me, love, for your dear sake, I will try to bear this absence with fortitude. O how little I have shewn to-night!’

‘Farewell!’ said Emily faintly. ‘When you are gone, I shall think of many things I would have said to you.’ ‘And I of many — many!’ said Valancourt; ‘I never left you yet, that I did not immediately remember some question, or some entreaty, or some circumstance, concerning my love, that I earnestly wished to mention, and feel wretched because I could not. O Emily! this countenance, on which I now gaze — will, in a moment, be gone from my eyes, and not all the efforts of fancy will be able to recall it with exactness. O! what an infinite difference between this moment and the next! NOW, I am in your presence, can behold you! THEN, all will be a dreary blank — and I shall be a wanderer, exiled from my only home!’

Valancourt again pressed her to his heart, and held her there in silence, weeping. Tears once again calmed her oppressed mind. They again bade

each other farewell, lingered a moment, and then parted. Valancourt seemed to force himself from the spot; he passed hastily up the avenue, and Emily, as she moved slowly towards the chateau, heard his distant steps. She listened to the sounds, as they sunk fainter and fainter, till the melancholy stillness of night alone remained; and then hurried to her chamber, to seek repose, which, alas! was fled from her wretchedness.

VOLUME 2

CHAPTER I

Where’er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart untravell’d still shall turn to thee.

GOLDSMITH

The carriages were at the gates at an early hour; the bustle of the domestics, passing to and fro in the galleries, awakened Emily from harassing slumbers: her unquiet mind had, during the night, presented her with terrific images and obscure circumstances, concerning her affection and her future life. She now endeavoured to chase away the impressions they had left on her fancy; but from imaginary evils she awoke to the consciousness of real ones. Recollecting that she had parted with Valancourt, perhaps for ever, her heart sickened as memory revived. But she tried to dismiss the dismal forebodings that crowded on her mind, and to restrain the sorrow which she could not subdue; efforts which diffused over the settled melancholy of her countenance an expression of tempered resignation, as a thin veil, thrown over the features of beauty, renders them more interesting by a partial concealment. But Madame Montoni observed nothing in this countenance except its usual paleness, which attracted her censure. She told her niece, that she had been indulging in fanciful sorrows, and begged she would have more regard for decorum, than to let the world see that she could not renounce an improper attachment; at which Emily's pale cheek became flushed with crimson, but it was the blush of pride, and she made no answer. Soon after, Montoni entered the breakfast room, spoke little, and seemed impatient to be gone.

The windows of this room opened upon the garden. As Emily passed them, she saw the spot where she had parted with Valancourt on the preceding night: the remembrance pressed heavily on her heart, and she turned hastily away from the object that had awakened it.

The baggage being at length adjusted, the travellers entered their carriages, and Emily would have left the chateau without one sigh of regret, had it not been situated in the neighbourhood of Valancourt's residence.

From a little eminence she looked back upon Tholouse, and the far-seen plains of Gascony, beyond which the broken summits of the Pyrenees appeared on the distant horizon, lighted up by a morning sun. 'Dear pleasant mountains!' said she to herself, 'how long may it be ere I see ye

again, and how much may happen to make me miserable in the interval! Oh, could I now be certain, that I should ever return to ye, and find that Valancourt still lived for me, I should go in peace! He will still gaze on ye, gaze when I am far away!'

The trees, that impended over the high banks of the road and formed a line of perspective with the distant country, now threatened to exclude the view of them; but the blueish mountains still appeared beyond the dark foliage, and Emily continued to lean from the coach window, till at length the closing branches shut them from her sight.

Another object soon caught her attention. She had scarcely looked at a person who walked along the bank, with his hat, in which was the military feather, drawn over his eyes, before, at the sound of wheels, he suddenly turned, and she perceived that it was Valancourt himself, who waved his hand, sprung into the road, and through the window of the carriage put a letter into her hand. He endeavoured to smile through the despair that overspread his countenance as she passed on. The remembrance of that smile seemed impressed on Emily's mind for ever. She leaned from the window, and saw him on a knoll of the broken bank, leaning against the high trees that waved over him, and pursuing the carriage with his eyes. He waved his hand, and she continued to gaze till distance confused his figure, and at length another turn of the road entirely separated him from her sight.

Having stopped to take up Signor Cavigni at a chateau on the road, the travellers, of whom Emily was disrespectfully seated with Madame Montoni's woman in a second carriage, pursued their way over the plains of Languedoc. The presence of this servant restrained Emily from reading Valancourt's letter, for she did not choose to expose the emotions it might occasion to the observation of any person. Yet such was her wish to read this his last communication, that her trembling hand was every moment on the point of breaking the seal.

At length they reached the village, where they staid only to change horses, without alighting, and it was not till they stopped to dine, that Emily had an opportunity of reading the letter. Though she had never doubted the sincerity of Valancourt's affection, the fresh assurances she now received of it revived her spirits; she wept over his letter in tenderness, laid it by to be referred to when they should be particularly

depressed, and then thought of him with much less anguish than she had done since they parted. Among some other requests, which were interesting to her, because expressive of his tenderness, and because a compliance with them seemed to annihilate for a while the pain of absence, he entreated she would always think of him at sunset. ‘You will then meet me in thought,’ said he; ‘I shall constantly watch the sun-set, and I shall be happy in the belief, that your eyes are fixed upon the same object with mine, and that our minds are conversing. You know not, Emily, the comfort I promise myself from these moments; but I trust you will experience it.’

It is unnecessary to say with what emotion Emily, on this evening, watched the declining sun, over a long extent of plains, on which she saw it set without interruption, and sink towards the province which Valancourt inhabited. After this hour her mind became far more tranquil and resigned, than it had been since the marriage of Montoni and her aunt.

During several days the travellers journeyed over the plains of Languedoc; and then entering Dauphiny, and winding for some time among the mountains of that romantic province, they quitted their carriages and began to ascend the Alps. And here such scenes of sublimity opened upon them as no colours of language must dare to paint! Emily’s mind was even so much engaged with new and wonderful images, that they sometimes banished the idea of Valancourt, though they more frequently revived it. These brought to her recollection the prospects among the Pyrenees, which they had admired together, and had believed nothing could excel in grandeur. How often did she wish to express to him the new emotions which this astonishing scenery awakened, and that he could partake of them! Sometimes too she endeavoured to anticipate his remarks, and almost imagined him present. She seemed to have arisen into another world, and to have left every trifling thought, every trifling sentiment, in that below; those only of grandeur and sublimity now dilated her mind, and elevated the affections of her heart.

With what emotions of sublimity, softened by tenderness, did she meet Valancourt in thought, at the customary hour of sun-set, when, wandering among the Alps, she watched the glorious orb sink amid their summits, his last tints die away on their snowy points, and a solemn obscurity steal over the scene! And when the last gleam had faded, she turned her eyes from

the west with somewhat of the melancholy regret that is experienced after the departure of a beloved friend; while these lonely feelings were heightened by the spreading gloom, and by the low sounds, heard only when darkness confines attention, which make the general stillness more impressive — leaves shook by the air, the last sigh of the breeze that lingers after sun-set, or the murmur of distant streams.

During the first days of this journey among the Alps, the scenery exhibited a wonderful mixture of solitude and inhabitation, of cultivation and barrenness. On the edge of tremendous precipices, and within the hollow of the cliffs, below which the clouds often floated, were seen villages, spires, and convent towers; while green pastures and vineyards spread their hues at the feet of perpendicular rocks of marble, or of granite, whose points, tufted with alpine shrubs, or exhibiting only massy crags, rose above each other, till they terminated in the snow-topt mountain, whence the torrent fell, that thundered along the valley.

The snow was not yet melted on the summit of Mount Cenis, over which the travellers passed; but Emily, as she looked upon its clear lake and extended plain, surrounded by broken cliffs, saw, in imagination, the verdant beauty it would exhibit when the snows should be gone, and the shepherds, leading up the midsummer flocks from Piedmont, to pasture on its flowery summit, should add Arcadian figures to Arcadian landscape.

As she descended on the Italian side, the precipices became still more tremendous, and the prospects still more wild and majestic, over which the shifting lights threw all the pomp of colouring. Emily delighted to observe the snowy tops of the mountains under the passing influence of the day, blushing with morning, glowing with the brightness of noon, or just tinted with the purple evening. The haunt of man could now only be discovered by the simple hut of the shepherd and the hunter, or by the rough pine bridge thrown across the torrent, to assist the latter in his chase of the chamois over crags where, but for this vestige of man, it would have been believed only the chamois or the wolf dared to venture. As Emily gazed upon one of these perilous bridges, with the cataract foaming beneath it, some images came to her mind, which she afterwards combined in the following

STORIED SONNET

The weary traveller, who, all night long,
Has climb’d among the Alps’ tremendous steeps,
Skirting the pathless precipice, where throng
Wild forms of danger; as he onward creeps
If, chance, his anxious eye at distance sees
The mountain-shepherd’s solitary home,
Peeping from forth the moon-illumin’d trees,
What sudden transports to his bosom come!
But, if between some hideous chasm yawn,
Where the cleft pine a doubtful bridge displays,
In dreadful silence, on the brink, forlorn
He stands, and views in the faint rays
Far, far below, the torrent’s rising surge,
And listens to the wild impetuous roar;
Still eyes the depth, still shudders on the verge,
Fears to return, nor dares to venture o’er.
Desperate, at length the tottering plank he tries,
His weak steps slide, he shrieks, he sinks — he dies!

Emily, often as she travelled among the clouds, watched in silent awe their billowy surges rolling below; sometimes, wholly closing upon the scene, they appeared like a world of chaos, and, at others, spreading thinly, they opened and admitted partial catches of the landscape — the torrent, whose astounding roar had never failed, tumbling down the rocky chasm, huge cliffs white with snow, or the dark summits of the pine forests, that stretched mid-way down the mountains. But who may describe her rapture, when, having passed through a sea of vapour, she caught a first view of Italy; when, from the ridge of one of those tremendous precipices that hang upon Mount Cenis and guard the entrance of that enchanting country, she looked down through the lower clouds, and, as they floated away, saw the grassy vales of Piedmont at her feet, and, beyond, the plains of

Lombardy extending to the farthest distance, at which appeared, on the faint horizon, the doubtful towers of Turin?

The solitary grandeur of the objects that immediately surrounded her, the mountain-region towering above, the deep precipices that fell beneath, the waving blackness of the forests of pine and oak, which skirted their feet, or hung within their recesses, the headlong torrents that, dashing among their cliffs, sometimes appeared like a cloud of mist, at others like a sheet of ice — these were features which received a higher character of sublimity from the reposing beauty of the Italian landscape below, stretching to the wide horizon, where the same melting blue tint seemed to unite earth and sky.

Madame Montoni only shuddered as she looked down precipices near whose edge the chairmen trotted lightly and swiftly, almost, as the chamois bounded, and from which Emily too recoiled; but with her fears were mingled such various emotions of delight, such admiration, astonishment, and awe, as she had never experienced before.

Meanwhile the carriers, having come to a landing-place, stopped to rest, and the travellers being seated on the point of a cliff, Montoni and Cavigni renewed a dispute concerning Hannibal’s passage over the Alps, Montoni contending that he entered Italy by way of Mount Cenis, and Cavigni, that he passed over Mount St. Bernard. The subject brought to Emily’s imagination the disasters he had suffered in this bold and perilous adventure. She saw his vast armies winding among the defiles, and over the tremendous cliffs of the mountains, which at night were lighted up by his fires, or by the torches which he caused to be carried when he pursued his indefatigable march. In the eye of fancy, she perceived the gleam of arms through the duskiness of night, the glitter of spears and helmets, and the banners floating dimly on the twilight; while now and then the blast of a distant trumpet echoed along the defile, and the signal was answered by a momentary clash of arms. She looked with horror upon the mountaineers, perched on the higher cliffs, assailing the troops below with broken fragments of the mountain; on soldiers and elephants tumbling headlong down the lower precipices; and, as she listened to the rebounding rocks, that followed their fall, the terrors of fancy yielded to those of reality, and she shuddered to behold herself on the dizzy height, whence she had pictured the descent of others.

Madame Montoni, meantime, as she looked upon Italy, was contemplating in imagination the splendour of palaces and the grandeur of castles, such as she believed she was going to be mistress of at Venice and in the Apennine, and she became, in idea, little less than a princess. Being no longer under the alarms which had deterred her from giving entertainments to the beauties of Tholouse, whom Montoni had mentioned with more eclat to his own vanity than credit to their discretion, or regard to truth, she determined to give concerts, though she had neither ear nor taste for music; conversazioni, though she had no talents for conversation; and to outvie, if possible, in the gaieties of her parties and the magnificence of her liveries, all the noblesse of Venice. This blissful reverie was somewhat obscured, when she recollected the Signor, her husband, who, though he was not averse to the profit which sometimes results from such parties, had always shewn a contempt of the frivolous parade that sometimes attends them; till she considered that his pride might be gratified by displaying, among his own friends, in his native city, the wealth which he had neglected in France; and she courted again the splendid illusions that had charmed her before.

The travellers, as they descended, gradually, exchanged the region of winter for the genial warmth and beauty of spring. The sky began to assume that serene and beautiful tint peculiar to the climate of Italy; patches of young verdure, fragrant shrubs and flowers looked gaily among the rocks, often fringing their rugged brows, or hanging in tufts from their broken sides; and the buds of the oak and mountain ash were expanding into foliage. Descending lower, the orange and the myrtle, every now and then, appeared in some sunny nook, with their yellow blossoms peeping from among the dark green of their leaves, and mingling with the scarlet flowers of the pomegranate and the paler ones of the arbutus, that ran mantling to the crags above; while, lower still, spread the pastures of Piedmont, where early flocks were cropping the luxuriant herbage of spring.

The river Doria, which, rising on the summit of Mount Cenis, had dashed for many leagues over the precipices that bordered the road, now began to assume a less impetuous, though scarcely less romantic character, as it approached the green vallies of Piedmont, into which the travellers descended with the evening sun; and Emily found herself once more amid

the tranquil beauty of pastoral scenery; among flocks and herds, and slopes tufted with woods of lively verdure and with beautiful shrubs, such as she had often seen waving luxuriantly over the alps above. The verdure of the pasturage, now varied with the hues of early flowers, among which were yellow ranunculuses and pansey violets of delicious fragrance, she had never seen excelled. — Emily almost wished to become a peasant of Piedmont, to inhabit one of the pleasant embowered cottages which she saw peeping beneath the cliffs, and to pass her careless hours among these romantic landscapes. To the hours, the months, she was to pass under the dominion of Montoni, she looked with apprehension; while those which were departed she remembered with regret and sorrow.

In the present scenes her fancy often gave her the figure of Valancourt, whom she saw on a point of the cliffs, gazing with awe and admiration on the imagery around him; or wandering pensively along the vale below, frequently pausing to look back upon the scenery, and then, his countenance glowing with the poet’s fire, pursuing his way to some overhanging heights. When she again considered the time and the distance that were to separate them, that every step she now took lengthened this distance, her heart sunk, and the surrounding landscape charmed her no more.

The travellers, passing Novalesa, reached, after the evening had closed, the small and antient town of Susa, which had formerly guarded this pass of the Alps into Piedmont. The heights which command it had, since the invention of artillery, rendered its fortifications useless; but these romantic heights, seen by moonlight, with the town below, surrounded by its walls and watchtowers, and partially illumined, exhibited an interesting picture to Emily. Here they rested for the night at an inn, which had little accommodation to boast of; but the travellers brought with them the hunger that gives delicious flavour to the coarsest viands, and the weariness that ensures repose; and here Emily first caught a strain of Italian music, on Italian ground. As she sat after supper at a little window, that opened upon the country, observing an effect of the moonlight on the broken surface of the mountains, and remembering that on such a night as this she once had sat with her father and Valancourt, resting upon a cliff of the Pyrenees, she heard from below the long-drawn notes of a violin, of such tone and delicacy of expression, as harmonized exactly with the

tender emotions she was indulging, and both charmed and surprised her. Cavigni, who approached the window, smiled at her surprise. ‘This is nothing extraordinary,’ said he, ‘you will hear the same, perhaps, at every inn on our way. It is one of our landlord’s family who plays, I doubt not,’ Emily, as she listened, thought he could be scarcely less than a professor of music whom she heard; and the sweet and plaintive strains soon lulled her into a reverie, from which she was very unwillingly roused by the raillery of Cavigni, and by the voice of Montoni, who gave orders to a servant to have the carriages ready at an early hour on the following morning; and added, that he meant to dine at Turin.

Madame Montoni was exceedingly rejoiced to be once more on level ground; and, after giving a long detail of the various terrors she had suffered, which she forgot that she was describing to the companions of her dangers, she added a hope, that she should soon be beyond the view of these horrid mountains, ‘which all the world,’ said she, ‘should not tempt me to cross again.’ Complaining of fatigue she soon retired to rest, and Emily withdrew to her own room, when she understood from Annette, her aunt’s woman, that Cavigni was nearly right in his conjecture concerning the musician, who had awakened the violin with so much taste, for that he was the son of a peasant inhabiting the neighbouring valley. ‘He is going to the Carnival at Venice,’ added Annette, ‘for they say he has a fine hand at playing, and will get a world of money; and the Carnival is just going to begin: but for my part, I should like to live among these pleasant woods and hills, better than in a town; and they say Ma’moiselle, we shall see no woods, or hills, or fields, at Venice, for that it is built in the very middle of the sea.’

Emily agreed with the talkative Annette, that this young man was making a change for the worse, and could not forbear silently lamenting, that he should be drawn from the innocence and beauty of these scenes, to the corrupt ones of that voluptuous city.

When she was alone, unable to sleep, the landscapes of her native home, with Valancourt, and the circumstances of her departure, haunted her fancy; she drew pictures of social happiness amidst the grand simplicity of nature, such as she feared she had bade farewel to for ever; and then, the idea of this young Piedmontese, thus ignorantly sporting with his happiness, returned to her thoughts, and, glad to escape awhile from the

pressure of nearer interests, she indulged her fancy in composing the following lines.

THE PIEDMONTESE

Ah, merry swain, who laugh’d along the vales,
And with your gay pipe made the mountains ring,
Why leave your cot, your woods, and thymy gales,
And friends belov’d, for aught that wealth can bring?
He goes to wake o’er moonlight seas the string,
Venetian gold his untaught fancy hails!
Yet oft of home his simple carols sing,
And his steps pause, as the last Alp he scales.
Once more he turns to view his native scene —
Far, far below, as roll the clouds away,
He spies his cabin ‘mid the pine-tops green,
The wellknown woods, clear brook, and pastures gay;
And thinks of friends and parents left behind,
Of sylvan revels, dance, and festive song;
And hears the faint reed swelling in the wind;
And his sad sighs the distant notes prolong!
Thus went the swain, till mountain-shadows fell,
And dimm’d the landscape to his aching sight;
And must he leave the vales he loves so well!
Can foreign wealth, and shows, his heart delight?
No, happy vales! your wild rocks still shall hear
His pipe, light sounding on the morning breeze;
Still shall he lead the flocks to streamlet clear,
And watch at eve beneath the western trees.
Away, Venetian gold — your charm is o’er!
And now his swift step seeks the lowland bow’rs,
Where, through the leaves, his cottage light ONCE MORE
Guides him to happy friends, and jocund hours.
Ah, merry swain! that laugh along the vales,
And with your gay pipe make the mountains ring,
Your cot, your woods, your thymy-scented gales —
And friends belov’d — more joy than wealth can bring!

CHAPTER II

TITANIA. If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

Early on the following morning, the travellers set out for Turin. The luxuriant plain, that extends from the feet of the Alps to that magnificent city, was not then, as now, shaded by an avenue of trees nine miles in length; but plantations of olives, mulberry and palms, festooned with vines, mingled with the pastoral scenery, through with the rapid Po, after its descent from the mountains, wandered to meet the humble Doria at Turin. As they advanced towards this city, the Alps, seen at some distance, began to appear in all their awful sublimity; chain rising over chain in long succession, their higher points darkened by the hovering clouds, sometimes hid, and at others seen shooting up far above them; while their lower steeps, broken into fantastic forms, were touched with blue and purplish tints, which, as they changed in light and shade, seemed to open new scenes to the eye. To the east stretched the plains of Lombardy, with the towers of Turin rising at a distance; and beyond, the Apennines, bounding the horizon.

The general magnificence of that city, with its vistas of churches and palaces, branching from the grand square, each opening to a landscape of the distant Alps or Apennines, was not only such as Emily had never seen in France, but such as she had never imagined.

Montoni, who had been often at Turin, and cared little about views of any kind, did not comply with his wife’s request, that they might survey some of the palaces; but staying only till the necessary refreshments could be obtained, they set forward for Venice with all possible rapidity. Montoni’s manner, during this journey, was grave, and even haughty; and towards Madame Montoni he was more especially reserved; but it was not the reserve of respect so much as of pride and discontent. Of Emily he took little notice. With Cavigni his conversations were commonly on political or military topics, such as the convulsed state of their country rendered at this time particularly interesting, Emily observed, that, at the mention of any daring exploit, Montoni’s eyes lost their sullenness, and seemed instantaneously to gleam with fire; yet they still retained

somewhat of a lurking cunning, and she sometimes thought that their fire partook more of the glare of malice than the brightness of valour, though the latter would well have harmonized with the high chivalric air of his figure, in which Cavigni, with all his gay and gallant manners, was his inferior.

On entering the Milanese, the gentlemen exchanged their French hats for the Italian cap of scarlet cloth, embroidered; and Emily was somewhat surprised to observe, that Montoni added to his the military plume, while Cavigni retained only the feather: which was usually worn with such caps: but she at length concluded, that Montoni assumed this ensign of a soldier for convenience, as a means of passing with more safety through a country overrun with parties of the military.

Over the beautiful plains of this country the devastations of war were frequently visible. Where the lands had not been suffered to lie uncultivated, they were often tracked with the steps of the spoiler; the vines were torn down from the branches that had supported them, the olives trampled upon the ground, and even the groves of mulberry trees had been hewn by the enemy to light fires that destroyed the hamlets and villages of their owners. Emily turned her eyes with a sigh from these painful vestiges of contention, to the Alps of the Grison, that overlooked them to the north, whose awful solitudes seemed to offer to persecuted man a secure asylum.

The travellers frequently distinguished troops of soldiers moving at a distance; and they experienced, at the little inns on the road, the scarcity of provision and other inconveniences, which are a part of the consequence of intestine war; but they had never reason to be much alarmed for their immediate safety, and they passed on to Milan with little interruption of any kind, where they staid not to survey the grandeur of the city, or even to view its vast cathedral, which was then building.

Beyond Milan, the country wore the aspect of a ruder devastation; and though every thing seemed now quiet, the repose was like that of death, spread over features, which retain the impression of the last convulsions.

It was not till they had passed the eastern limits of the Milanese, that the travellers saw any troops since they had left Milan, when, as the evening was drawing to a close, they descried what appeared to be an army winding onward along the distant plains, whose spears and other arms

caught the last rays of the sun. As the column advanced through a part of the road, contracted between two hillocks, some of the commanders, on horseback, were distinguished on a small eminence, pointing and making signals for the march; while several of the officers were riding along the line directing its progress, according to the signs communicated by those above; and others, separating from the vanguard, which had emerged from the pass, were riding carelessly along the plains at some distance to the right of the army.

As they drew nearer, Montoni, distinguishing the feathers that waved in their caps, and the banners and liveries of the bands that followed them, thought he knew this to be the small army commanded by the famous captain Utaldo, with whom, as well as with some of the other chiefs, he was personally acquainted. He, therefore, gave orders that the carriages should draw up by the side of the road, to await their arrival, and give them the pass. A faint strain of martial music now stole by, and, gradually strengthening as the troops approached, Emily distinguished the drums and trumpets, with the clash of cymbals and of arms, that were struck by a small party, in time to the march.

Montoni being now certain that these were the bands of the victorious Utaldo, leaned from the carriage window, and hailed their general by waving his cap in the air; which compliment the chief returned by raising his spear, and then letting it down again suddenly, while some of his officers, who were riding at a distance from the troops, came up to the carriage, and saluted Montoni as an old acquaintance. The captain himself soon after arriving, his bands halted while he conversed with Montoni, whom he appeared much rejoiced to see; and from what he said, Emily understood that this was a victorious army, returning into their own principality; while the numerous waggons, that accompanied them, contained the rich spoils of the enemy, their own wounded soldiers, and the prisoners they had taken in battle, who were to be ransomed when the peace, then negociating between the neighbouring states, should be ratified. The chiefs on the following day were to separate, and each, taking his share of the spoil, was to return with his own band to his castle. This was therefore to be an evening of uncommon and general festivity, in commemoration of the victory they had accomplished together, and of the farewell which the commanders were about to take of each other.

Emily, as these officers conversed with Montoni, observed with admiration, tinctured with awe, their high martial air, mingled with the haughtiness of the nobless of those days, and heightened by the gallantry of their dress, by the plumes towering on their caps, the armorial coat, Persian sash, and ancient Spanish cloak. Utaldo, telling Montoni that his army were going to encamp for the night near a village at only a few miles distance, invited him to turn back and partake of their festivity, assuring the ladies also, that they should be pleasantly accommodated; but Montoni excused himself, adding, that it was his design to reach Verona that evening; and, after some conversation concerning the state of the country towards that city, they parted.

The travellers proceeded without any interruption; but it was some hours after sun-set before they arrived at Verona, whose beautiful environs were therefore not seen by Emily till the following morning; when, leaving that pleasant town at an early hour, they set off for Padua, where they embarked on the Brenta for Venice. Here the scene was entirely changed; no vestiges of war, such as had deformed the plains of the Milanese, appeared; on the contrary, all was peace and elegance. The verdant banks of the Brenta exhibited a continued landscape of beauty, gaiety, and splendour. Emily gazed with admiration on the villas of the Venetian noblesse, with their cool porticos and colonnades, overhung with poplars and cypresses of majestic height and lively verdure; on their rich orangeries, whose blossoms perfumed the air, and on the luxuriant willows, that dipped their light leaves in the wave, and sheltered from the sun the gay parties whose music came at intervals on the breeze. The Carnival did, indeed, appear to extend from Venice along the whole line of these enchanting shores; the river was gay with boats passing to that city, exhibiting the fantastic diversity of a masquerade in the dresses of the people within them; and, towards evening, groups of dancers frequently were seen beneath the trees.

Cavigni, meanwhile, informed her of the names of the noblemen to whom the several villas they passed belonged, adding light sketches of their characters, such as served to amuse rather than to inform, exhibiting his own wit instead of the delineation of truth. Emily was sometimes diverted by his conversation; but his gaiety did not entertain Madame

Montoni, as it had formerly done; she was frequently grave, and Montoni retained his usual reserve.

Nothing could exceed Emily's admiration on her first view of Venice, with its islets, palaces, and towers rising out of the sea, whose clear surface reflected the tremulous picture in all its colours. The sun, sinking in the west, tinted the waves and the lofty mountains of Friuli, which skirt the northern shores of the Adriatic, with a saffron glow, while on the marble porticos and colonnades of St. Mark were thrown the rich lights and shades of evening. As they glided on, the grander features of this city appeared more distinctly: its terraces, crowned with airy yet majestic fabrics, touched, as they now were, with the splendour of the setting sun, appeared as if they had been called up from the ocean by the wand of an enchanter, rather than reared by mortal hands.

The sun, soon after, sinking to the lower world, the shadow of the earth stole gradually over the waves, and then up the towering sides of the mountains of Friuli, till it extinguished even the last upward beams that had lingered on their summits, and the melancholy purple of evening drew over them, like a thin veil. How deep, how beautiful was the tranquillity that wrapped the scene! All nature seemed to repose; the finest emotions of the soul were alone awake. Emily's eyes filled with tears of admiration and sublime devotion, as she raised them over the sleeping world to the vast heavens, and heard the notes of solemn music, that stole over the waters from a distance. She listened in still rapture, and no person of the party broke the charm by an enquiry. The sounds seemed to grow on the air; for so smoothly did the barge glide along, that its motion was not perceivable, and the fairy city appeared approaching to welcome the strangers. They now distinguished a female voice, accompanied by a few instruments, singing a soft and mournful air; and its fine expression, as sometimes it seemed pleading with the impassioned tenderness of love, and then languishing into the cadence of hopeless grief, declared, that it flowed from no feigned sensibility. Ah! thought Emily, as she sighed and remembered Valancourt, those strains come from the heart!

She looked round, with anxious enquiry; the deep twilight, that had fallen over the scene, admitted only imperfect images to the eye, but, at some distance on the sea, she thought she perceived a gondola: a chorus of voices and instruments now swelled on the air — so sweet, so solemn! it

seemed like the hymn of angels descending through the silence of night! Now it died away, and fancy almost beheld the holy choir reascending towards heaven; then again it swelled with the breeze, trembled awhile, and again died into silence. It brought to Emily's recollection some lines of her late father, and she repeated in a low voice,

Oft I hear,
Upon the silence of the midnight air,
Celestial voices swell in holy chorus
That bears the soul to heaven!

The deep stillness, that succeeded, was as expressive as the strain that had just ceased. It was uninterrupted for several minutes, till a general sigh seemed to release the company from their enchantment. Emily, however, long indulged the pleasing sadness, that had stolen upon her spirits; but the gay and busy scene that appeared, as the barge approached St. Mark's Place, at length roused her attention. The rising moon, which threw a shadowy light upon the terraces, and illumined the porticos and magnificent arcades that crowned them, discovered the various company, whose light steps, soft guitars, and softer voices, echoed through the colonnades.

The music they heard before now passed Montoni's barge, in one of the gondolas, of which several were seen skimming along the moonlight sea, full of gay parties, catching the cool breeze. Most of these had music, made sweeter by the waves over which it floated, and by the measured sound of oars, as they dashed the sparkling tide. Emily gazed, and listened, and thought herself in a fairy scene; even Madame Montoni was pleased; Montoni congratulated himself on his return to Venice, which he called the first city in the world, and Cavigni was more gay and animated than ever.

The barge passed on to the grand canal, where Montoni's mansion was situated. And here, other forms of beauty and of grandeur, such as her imagination had never painted, were unfolded to Emily in the palaces of

Sansovino and Palladio, as she glided along the waves. The air bore no sounds, but those of sweetness, echoing along each margin of the canal, and from gondolas on its surface, while groups of masks were seen dancing on the moonlight terraces, and seemed almost to realize the romance of fairyland.

The barge stopped before the portico of a large house, from whence a servant of Montoni crossed the terrace, and immediately the party disembarked. From the portico they passed a noble hall to a staircase of marble, which led to a saloon, fitted up in a style of magnificence that surprised Emily. The walls and ceilings were adorned with historical and allegorical paintings, in fresco; silver tripods, depending from chains of the same metal, illumined the apartment, the floor of which was covered with Indian mats painted in a variety of colours and devices; the couches and drapery of the lattices were of pale green silk, embroidered and fringed with green and gold. Balcony lattices opened upon the grand canal, whence rose a confusion of voices and of musical instruments, and the breeze that gave freshness to the apartment. Emily, considering the gloomy temper of Montoni, looked upon the splendid furniture of this house with surprise, and remembered the report of his being a man of broken fortune, with astonishment. ‘Ah!’ said she to herself, ‘if Valancourt could but see this mansion, what peace would it give him! He would then be convinced that the report was groundless.’

Madame Montoni seemed to assume the air of a princess; but Montoni was restless and discontented, and did not even observe the civility of bidding her welcome to her home.

Soon after his arrival, he ordered his gondola, and, with Cavigni, went out to mingle in the scenes of the evening. Madame then became serious and thoughtful. Emily, who was charmed with every thing she saw, endeavoured to enliven her; but reflection had not, with Madame Montoni, subdued caprice and ill-humour, and her answers discovered so much of both, that Emily gave up the attempt of diverting her, and withdrew to a lattice, to amuse herself with the scene without, so new and so enchanting.

The first object that attracted her notice was a group of dancers on the terrace below, led by a guitar and some other instruments. The girl, who struck the guitar, and another, who flourished a tambourine, passed on in a dancing step, and with a light grace and gaiety of heart, that would have

subdued the goddess of spleen in her worst humour. After these came a group of fantastic figures, some dressed as gondolieri, others as minstrels, while others seemed to defy all description. They sung in parts, their voices accompanied by a few soft instruments. At a little distance from the portico they stopped, and Emily distinguished the verses of Ariosto. They sung of the wars of the Moors against Charlemagne, and then of the woes of Orlando: afterwards the measure changed, and the melancholy sweetness of Petrarch succeeded. The magic of his grief was assisted by all that Italian music and Italian expression, heightened by the enchantments of Venetian moonlight, could give.

Emily, as she listened, caught the pensive enthusiasm; her tears flowed silently, while her fancy bore her far away to France and to Valancourt. Each succeeding sonnet, more full of charming sadness than the last, seemed to bind the spell of melancholy: with extreme regret she saw the musicians move on, and her attention followed the strain till the last faint warble died in air. She then remained sunk in that pensive tranquillity which soft music leaves on the mind — a state like that produced by the view of a beautiful landscape by moonlight, or by the recollection of scenes marked with the tenderness of friends lost for ever, and with sorrows, which time has mellowed into mild regret. Such scenes are indeed, to the mind, like ‘those faint traces which the memory bears of music that is past’.

Other sounds soon awakened her attention: it was the solemn harmony of horns, that swelled from a distance; and, observing the gondolas arrange themselves along the margin of the terraces, she threw on her veil, and, stepping into the balcony, discerned, in the distant perspective of the canal, something like a procession, floating on the light surface of the water: as it approached, the horns and other instruments mingled sweetly, and soon after the fabled deities of the city seemed to have arisen from the ocean; for Neptune, with Venice personified as his queen, came on the undulating waves, surrounded by tritons and sea-nymphs. The fantastic splendour of this spectacle, together with the grandeur of the surrounding palaces, appeared like the vision of a poet suddenly embodied, and the fanciful images, which it awakened in Emily’s mind, lingered there long after the procession had passed away. She indulged herself in imagining what might be the manners and delights of a sea-nymph, till she almost wished to

throw off the habit of mortality, and plunge into the green wave to participate them.

‘How delightful,’ said she, ‘to live amidst the coral bowers and crystal caverns of the ocean, with my sister nymphs, and listen to the sounding waters above, and to the soft shells of the tritons! and then, after sun-set, to skim on the surface of the waves round wild rocks and along sequestered shores, where, perhaps, some pensive wanderer comes to weep! Then would I soothe his sorrows with my sweet music, and offer him from a shell some of the delicious fruit that hangs round Neptune’s palace.’

She was recalled from her reverie to a mere mortal supper, and could not forbear smiling at the fancies she had been indulging, and at her conviction of the serious displeasure, which Madame Montoni would have expressed, could she have been made acquainted with them.

After supper, her aunt sat late, but Montoni did not return, and she at length retired to rest. If Emily had admired the magnificence of the saloon, she was not less surprised, on observing the half-furnished and forlorn appearance of the apartments she passed in the way to her chamber, whither she went through long suites of noble rooms, that seemed, from their desolate aspect, to have been unoccupied for many years. On the walls of some were the faded remains of tapestry; from others, painted in fresco, the damps had almost withdrawn both colours and design. At length she reached her own chamber, spacious, desolate, and lofty, like the rest, with high lattices that opened towards the Adriatic. It brought gloomy images to her mind, but the view of the Adriatic soon gave her others more airy, among which was that of the sea-nymph, whose delights she had before amused herself with picturing; and, anxious to escape from serious reflections, she now endeavoured to throw her fanciful ideas into a train, and concluded the hour with composing the following lines:

THE SEA-NYMPH

Down, down a thousand fathom deep,
Among the sounding seas I go;
Play round the foot of ev’ry steep
Whose cliffs above the ocean grow.

There, within their secret cares,
I hear the mighty rivers roar;
And guide their streams through Neptune’s waves
To bless the green earth’s inmost shore:

And bid the freshen’d waters glide,
For fern-crown’d nymphs of lake, or brook,
Through winding woods and pastures wide,
And many a wild, romantic nook.

For this the nymphs, at fall of eave,
Oft dance upon the flow’ry banks,
And sing my name, and garlands weave
To bear beneath the wave their thanks.

In coral bow’rs I love to lie,
And hear the surges roll above,
And through the waters view on high
The proud ships sail, and gay clouds move.

And oft at midnight’s stillest hour,
When summer seas the vessel lave,
I love to prove my charmful pow’r
While floating on the moonlight wave.

And when deep sleep the crew has bound,
And the sad lover musing leans
O’er the ship’s side, I breathe around
Such strains as speak no mortal means!

O’er the dim waves his searching eye
Sees but the vessel’s lengthen’d shade;
Above — the moon and azure sky;
Entranc’d he hears, and half afraid!

Sometimes, a single note I swell,
That, softly sweet, at distance dies;
Then wake the magic of my shell,
And choral voices round me rise!

The trembling youth, charm’d by my strain,
Calls up the crew, who, silent, bend
O’er the high deck, but list in vain;
My song is hush’d, my wonders end!

Within the mountain’s woody bay,
Where the tall bark at anchor rides,
At twilight hour, with tritons gay,
I dance upon the lapsing tides:

And with my sister-nymphs I sport,
Till the broad sun looks o’er the floods;
Then, swift we seek our crystal court,
Deep in the wave, ‘mid Neptune’s woods.

In cool arcades and glassy halls
We pass the sultry hours of noon,
Beyond wherever sunbeam falls,

Weaving sea-flowers in gay festoon.

The while we chant our ditties sweet
To some soft shell that warbles near;
Join’d by the murmuring currents, fleet,
That glide along our halls so clear.

There, the pale pearl and sapphire blue,
And ruby red, and em’rald green,
Dart from the domes a changing hue,
And sparry columns deck the scene.

When the dark storm scowls o’er the deep,
And long, long peals of thunder sound,
On some high cliff my watch I keep
O’er all the restless seas around:

Till on the ridgy wave afar
Comes the lone vessel, labouring slow,
Spreading the white foam in the air,
With sail and top-mast bending low.

Then, plunge I ‘mid the ocean’s roar,
My way by quiv’ring lightnings shewn,
To guide the bark to peaceful shore,
And hush the sailor’s fearful groan.

And if too late I reach its side
To save it from the ‘whelming surge,
I call my dolphins o’er the tide,
To bear the crew where isles emerge.

Their mournful spirits soon I cheer,
While round the desert coast I go,

With warbled songs they faintly hear,
Oft as the stormy gust sinks low.

My music leads to lofty groves,
That wild upon the sea-bank wave;
Where sweet fruits bloom, and fresh spring roves,
And closing boughs the tempest brave.

Then, from the air spirits obey
My potent voice they love so well,
And, on the clouds, paint visions gay,
While strains more sweet at distance swell.

And thus the lonely hours I cheat,
Soothing the shipwreck’d sailor’s heart,
Till from the waves the storms retreat,
And o’er the east the day-beams dart.

Neptune for this oft binds me fast
To rocks below, with coral chain,
Till all the tempest’s over-past,
And drowning seamen cry in vain.

Whoe’er ye are that love my lay,
Come, when red sun-set tints the wave,
To the still sands, where fairies play;
There, in cool seas, I love to lave.

CHAPTER III

He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock’d himself, and scorn’d his spirit
that could be mov’d to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart’s ease,
While they behold a greater than themselves.

JULIUS CAESAR

Montoni and his companion did not return home, till many hours after the dawn had blushed upon the Adriatic. The airy groups, which had danced all night along the colonnade of St. Mark, dispersed before the morning, like so many spirits. Montoni had been otherwise engaged; his soul was little susceptible of light pleasures. He delighted in the energies of the passions; the difficulties and tempests of life, which wreck the happiness of others, roused and strengthened all the powers of his mind, and afforded him the highest enjoyments, of which his nature was capable. Without some object of strong interest, life was to him little more than a sleep; and, when pursuits of real interest failed, he substituted artificial ones, till habit changed their nature, and they ceased to be unreal. Of this kind was the habit of gaming, which he had adopted, first, for the purpose of relieving him from the languor of inaction, but had since pursued with the ardour of passion. In this occupation he had passed the night with Cavigni and a party of young men, who had more money than rank, and more vice than either. Montoni despised the greater part of these for the inferiority of their talents, rather than for their vicious inclinations, and associated with them only to make them the instruments of his purposes. Among these, however, were some of superior abilities, and a few whom Montoni admitted to his intimacy, but even towards these he still preserved a decisive and haughty air, which, while it imposed submission on weak and timid minds, roused the fierce hatred of strong ones. He had, of course, many and bitter enemies; but the rancour of their hatred proved the degree of his power; and, as power was his chief aim, he gloried more in such hatred, than it was possible he could in being esteemed. A feeling so tempered as that of esteem, he despised, and would have despised himself also had he thought himself capable of being flattered by it.

Among the few whom he distinguished, were the Signors Bertolini, Orsino, and Verezzi. The first was a man of gay temper, strong passions, dissipated, and of unbounded extravagance, but generous, brave, and unsuspicious. Orsino was reserved, and haughty; loving power more than ostentation; of a cruel and suspicious temper; quick to feel an injury, and

relentless in avenging it; cunning and unsearchable in contrivance, patient and indefatigable in the execution of his schemes. He had a perfect command of feature and of his passions, of which he had scarcely any, but pride, revenge and avarice; and, in the gratification of these, few considerations had power to restrain him, few obstacles to withstand the depth of his stratagems. This man was the chief favourite of Montoni. Verezzi was a man of some talent, of fiery imagination, and the slave of alternate passions. He was gay, voluptuous, and daring; yet had neither perseverance or true courage, and was meanly selfish in all his aims. Quick to form schemes, and sanguine in his hope of success, he was the first to undertake, and to abandon, not only his own plans, but those adopted from other persons. Proud and impetuous, he revolted against all subordination; yet those who were acquainted with his character, and watched the turn of his passions, could lead him like a child.

Such were the friends whom Montoni introduced to his family and his table, on the day after his arrival at Venice. There were also of the party a Venetian nobleman, Count Morano, and a Signora Livona, whom Montoni had introduced to his wife, as a lady of distinguished merit, and who, having called in the morning to welcome her to Venice, had been requested to be of the dinner party.

Madame Montoni received with a very ill grace, the compliments of the Signors. She disliked them, because they were the friends of her husband; hated them, because she believed they had contributed to detain him abroad till so late an hour of the preceding morning; and envied them, since, conscious of her own want of influence, she was convinced, that he preferred their society to her own. The rank of Count Morano procured him that distinction which she refused to the rest of the company. The haughty sullenness of her countenance and manner, and the ostentatious extravagance of her dress, for she had not yet adopted the Venetian habit, were strikingly contrasted by the beauty, modesty, sweetness and simplicity of Emily, who observed, with more attention than pleasure, the party around her. The beauty and fascinating manners of Signora Livona, however, won her involuntary regard; while the sweetness of her accents and her air of gentle kindness awakened with Emily those pleasing affections, which so long had slumbered.

In the cool of the evening the party embarked in Montoni’s gondola, and rowed out upon the sea. The red glow of sun-set still touched the waves, and lingered in the west, where the melancholy gleam seemed slowly expiring, while the dark blue of the upper aether began to twinkle with stars. Emily sat, given up to pensive and sweet emotions. The smoothness of the water, over which she glided, its reflected images — a new heaven and trembling stars below the waves, with shadowy outlines of towers and porticos, conspired with the stillness of the hour, interrupted only by the passing wave, or the notes of distant music, to raise those emotions to enthusiasm. As she listened to the measured sound of the oars, and to the remote warblings that came in the breeze, her softened mind returned to the memory of St. Aubert and to Valancourt, and tears stole to her eyes. The rays of the moon, strengthening as the shadows deepened, soon after threw a silvery gleam upon her countenance, which was partly shaded by a thin black veil, and touched it with inimitable softness. Hers was the CONTOUR of a Madona, with the sensibility of a Magdalen; and the pensive uplifted eye, with the tear that glittered on her cheek, confirmed the expression of the character.

The last strain of distant music now died in air, for the gondola was far upon the waves, and the party determined to have music of their own. The Count Morano, who sat next to Emily, and who had been observing her for some time in silence, snatched up a lute, and struck the chords with the finger of harmony herself, while his voice, a fine tenor, accompanied them in a rondeau full of tender sadness. To him, indeed, might have been applied that beautiful exhortation of an English poet, had it then existed:

Strike up, my master,
But touch the strings with a religious softness!
Teach sounds to languish through the night’s dull ear
Till Melancholy starts from off her couch,
And Carelessness grows concert to attention!

With such powers of expression the Count sung the following

RONDEAU

Soft as yon silver ray, that sleeps
Upon the ocean’s trembling tide;
Soft as the air, that lightly sweeps
Yon sad, that swells in stately pride:

Soft as the surge’s stealing note,
That dies along the distant shores,
Or warbled strain, that sinks remote —
So soft the sigh my bosom pours!

True as the wave to Cynthia’s ray,
True as the vessel to the breeze,
True as the soul to music’s sway,
Or music to Venetian seas:

Soft as yon silver beams, that sleep
Upon the ocean’s trembling breast;
So soft, so true, fond Love shall weep,
So soft, so true, with THEE shall rest.

The cadence with which he returned from the last stanza to a repetition of the first; the fine modulation in which his voice stole upon the first line, and the pathetic energy with which it pronounced the last, were such as only exquisite taste could give. When he had concluded, he gave the lute with a sigh to Emily, who, to avoid any appearance of affectation, immediately began to play. She sung a melancholy little air, one of the popular songs of her native province, with a simplicity and pathos that made it enchanting. But its wellknown melody brought so forcibly to her fancy the scenes and the persons, among which she had often heard it, that her spirits were overcome, her voice trembled and ceased — and the strings of the lute were struck with a disordered hand; till, ashamed of the emotion she had betrayed, she suddenly passed on to a song so gay and

airy, that the steps of the dance seemed almost to echo to the notes. BRAVISSIMO! burst instantly from the lips of her delighted auditors, and she was compelled to repeat the air. Among the compliments that followed, those of the Count were not the least audible, and they had not concluded, when Emily gave the instrument to Signora Livona, whose voice accompanied it with true Italian taste.

Afterwards, the Count, Emily, Cavigni, and the Signora, sung canzonettes, accompanied by a couple of lutes and a few other instruments. Sometimes the instruments suddenly ceased, and the voices dropped from the full swell of harmony into a low chant; then, after a deep pause, they rose by degrees, the instruments one by one striking up, till the loud and full chorus soared again to heaven!

Meanwhile, Montoni, who was weary of this harmony, was considering how he might disengage himself from his party, or withdraw with such of it as would be willing to play, to a Casino. In a pause of the music, he proposed returning to shore, a proposal which Orsino eagerly seconded, but which the Count and the other gentlemen as warmly opposed.

Montoni still meditated how he might excuse himself from longer attendance upon the Count, for to him only he thought excuse necessary, and how he might get to land, till the gondolieri of an empty boat, returning to Venice, hailed his people. Without troubling himself longer about an excuse, he seized this opportunity of going thither, and, committing the ladies to the care of his friends, departed with Orsino, while Emily, for the first time, saw him go with regret; for she considered his presence a protection, though she knew not what she should fear. He landed at St. Mark’s, and, hurrying to a Casino, was soon lost amidst a crowd of gamesters.

Meanwhile, the Count having secretly dispatched a servant in Montoni’s boat, for his own gondola and musicians, Emily heard, without knowing his project, the gay song of gondolieri approaching, as they sat on the stern of the boat, and saw the tremulous gleam of the moonlight wave, which their oars disturbed. Presently she heard the sound of instruments, and then a full symphony swelled on the air, and, the boats meeting, the gondolieri hailed each other. The count then explaining himself, the party removed into his gondola, which was embellished with all that taste could bestow.

While they partook of a collation of fruits and ice, the whole band, following at a distance in the other boat, played the most sweet and enchanting strains, and the Count, who had again seated himself by Emily, paid her unremitted attention, and sometimes, in a low but impassioned voice, uttered compliments which she could not misunderstand. To avoid them she conversed with Signora Livona, and her manner to the Count assumed a mild reserve, which, though dignified, was too gentle to repress his assiduities: he could see, hear, speak to no person, but Emily while Cavigni observed him now and then, with a look of displeasure, and Emily, with one of uneasiness. She now wished for nothing so much as to return to Venice, but it was near midnight before the gondolas approached St. Mark's Place, where the voice of gaiety and song was loud. The busy hum of mingling sounds was heard at a considerable distance on the water, and, had not a bright moonlight discovered the city, with its terraces and towers, a stranger would almost have credited the fabled wonders of Neptune's court, and believed, that the tumult arose from beneath the waves.

They landed at St. Mark's, where the gaiety of the colonnades and the beauty of the night, made Madame Montoni willingly submit to the Count's solicitations to join the promenade, and afterwards to take a supper with the rest of the party, at his Casino. If any thing could have dissipated Emily's uneasiness, it would have been the grandeur, gaiety, and novelty of the surrounding scene, adorned with Palladio's palaces, and busy with parties of masqueraders.

At length they withdrew to the Casino, which was fitted up with infinite taste, and where a splendid banquet was prepared; but here Emily's reserve made the Count perceive, that it was necessary for his interest to win the favour of Madame Montoni, which, from the condescension she had already shewn to him, appeared to be an achievement of no great difficulty. He transferred, therefore, part of his attention from Emily to her aunt, who felt too much flattered by the distinction even to disguise her emotion; and before the party broke up, he had entirely engaged the esteem of Madame Montoni. Whenever he addressed her, her ungracious countenance relaxed into smiles, and to whatever he proposed she

assented. He invited her, with the rest of the party, to take coffee, in his box at the opera, on the following evening, and Emily heard the invitation accepted, with strong anxiety, concerning the means of excusing herself from attending Madame Montoni thither.

It was very late before their gondola was ordered, and Emily's surprise was extreme, when, on quitting the Casino, she beheld the broad sun rising out of the Adriatic, while St. Mark's Place was yet crowded with company. Sleep had long weighed heavily on her eyes, but now the fresh sea-breeze revived her, and she would have quitted the scene with regret, had not the Count been present, performing the duty, which he had imposed upon himself, of escorting them home. There they heard that Montoni was not yet returned; and his wife, retiring in displeasure to her apartment, at length released Emily from the fatigue of further attendance.

Montoni came home late in the morning, in a very ill humour, having lost considerably at play, and, before he withdrew to rest, had a private conference with Cavigni, whose manner, on the following day, seemed to tell, that the subject of it had not been pleasing to him.

In the evening, Madame Montoni, who, during the day, had observed a sullen silence towards her husband, received visits from some Venetian ladies, with whose sweet manners Emily was particularly charmed. They had an air of ease and kindness towards the strangers, as if they had been their familiar friends for years; and their conversation was by turns tender, sentimental and gay. Madame, though she had no taste for such conversation, and whose coarseness and selfishness sometimes exhibited a ludicrous contrast to their excessive refinement, could not remain wholly insensible to the captivations of their manner.

In a pause of conversation, a lady who was called Signora Herminia took up a lute, and began to play and sing, with as much easy gaiety, as if she had been alone. Her voice was uncommonly rich in tone, and various in expression; yet she appeared to be entirely unconscious of its powers, and meant nothing less than to display them. She sung from the gaiety of her heart, as she sat with her veil half thrown back, holding gracefully the lute, under the spreading foliage and flowers of some plants, that rose from baskets, and interlaced one of the lattices of the saloon. Emily, retiring a little from the company, sketched her figure, with the miniature scenery around her, and drew a very interesting picture, which, though it

would not, perhaps, have borne criticism, had spirit and taste enough to awaken both the fancy and the heart. When she had finished it, she presented it to the beautiful original, who was delighted with the offering, as well as the sentiment it conveyed, and assured Emily, with a smile of captivating sweetness, that she should preserve it as a pledge of her friendship.

In the evening Cavigni joined the ladies, but Montoni had other engagements; and they embarked in the gondola for St. Mark's, where the same gay company seemed to flutter as on the preceding night. The cool breeze, the glassy sea, the gentle sound of its waves, and the sweeter murmur of distant music; the lofty porticos and arcades, and the happy groups that sauntered beneath them; these, with every feature and circumstance of the scene, united to charm Emily, no longer teased by the officious attentions of Count Morano. But, as she looked upon the moonlight sea, undulating along the walls of St. Mark, and, lingering for a moment over those walls, caught the sweet and melancholy song of some gondolier as he sat in his boat below, waiting for his master, her softened mind returned to the memory of her home, of her friends, and of all that was dear in her native country.

After walking some time, they sat down at the door of a Casino, and, while Cavigni was accommodating them with coffee and ice, were joined by Count Morano. He sought Emily with a look of impatient delight, who, remembering all the attention he had shewn her on the preceding evening, was compelled, as before, to shrink from his assiduities into a timid reserve, except when she conversed with Signora Herminia and the other ladies of her party.

It was near midnight before they withdrew to the opera, where Emily was not so charmed but that, when she remembered the scene she had just quitted, she felt how infinitely inferior all the splendour of art is to the sublimity of nature. Her heart was not now affected, tears of admiration did not start to her eyes, as when she viewed the vast expanse of ocean, the grandeur of the heavens, and listened to the rolling waters, and to the faint music that, at intervals, mingled with their roar. Remembering these, the scene before her faded into insignificance.

Of the evening, which passed on without any particular incident, she wished the conclusion, that she might escape from the attentions of the

Count; and, as opposite qualities frequently attract each other in our thoughts, thus Emily, when she looked on Count Morano, remembered Valancourt, and a sigh sometimes followed the recollection.

Several weeks passed in the course of customary visits, during which nothing remarkable occurred. Emily was amused by the manners and scenes that surrounded her, so different from those of France, but where Count Morano, too frequently for her comfort, contrived to introduce himself. His manner, figure and accomplishments, which were generally admired, Emily would, perhaps, have admired also, had her heart been disengaged from Valancourt, and had the Count forborne to persecute her with officious attentions, during which she observed some traits in his character, that prejudiced her against whatever might otherwise be good in it.

Soon after his arrival at Venice, Montoni received a packet from M. Quesnel, in which the latter mentioned the death of his wife's uncle, at his villa on the Brenta; and that, in consequence of this event, he should hasten to take possession of that estate and of other effects bequeathed to him. This uncle was the brother of Madame Quesnel's late mother; Montoni was related to her by the father's side, and though he could have had neither claim nor expectation concerning these possessions, he could scarcely conceal the envy which M. Quesnel's letter excited.

Emily had observed with concern, that, since they left France, Montoni had not even affected kindness towards her aunt, and that, after treating her, at first, with neglect, he now met her with uniform ill-humour and reserve. She had never supposed, that her aunt's foibles could have escaped the discernment of Montoni, or that her mind or figure were of a kind to deserve his attention. Her surprise, therefore, at this match, had been extreme; but since he had made the choice, she did not suspect that he would so openly have discovered his contempt of it. But Montoni, who had been allured by the seeming wealth of Madame Cheron, was now severely disappointed by her comparative poverty, and highly exasperated by the deceit she had employed to conceal it, till concealment was no longer necessary. He had been deceived in an affair, wherein he meant to be the deceiver; outwitted by the superior cunning of a woman, whose understanding he despised, and to whom he had sacrificed his pride and his liberty, without saving himself from the ruin, which had impended over

his head. Madame Montoni had contrived to have the greatest part of what she really did possess, settled upon herself: what remained, though it was totally inadequate both to her husband's expectations, and to his necessities, he had converted into money, and brought with him to Venice, that he might a little longer delude society, and make a last effort to regain the fortunes he had lost.

The hints which had been thrown out to Valancourt, concerning Montoni's character and condition, were too true; but it was now left to time and occasion, to unfold the circumstances, both of what had, and of what had not been hinted, and to time and occasion we commit them.

Madame Montoni was not of a nature to bear injuries with meekness, or to resent them with dignity: her exasperated pride displayed itself in all the violence and acrimony of a little, or at least of an ill-regulated mind. She would not acknowledge, even to herself, that she had in any degree provoked contempt by her duplicity, but weakly persisted in believing, that she alone was to be pitied, and Montoni alone to be censured; for, as her mind had naturally little perception of moral obligation, she seldom understood its force but when it happened to be violated towards herself: her vanity had already been severely shocked by a discovery of Montoni's contempt; it remained to be farther reproved by a discovery of his circumstances. His mansion at Venice, though its furniture discovered a part of the truth to unprejudiced persons, told nothing to those who were blinded by a resolution to believe whatever they wished. Madame Montoni still thought herself little less than a princess, possessing a palace at Venice, and a castle among the Apennines. To the castle di Udolpho, indeed, Montoni sometimes talked of going for a few weeks to examine into its condition, and to receive some rents; for it appeared that he had not been there for two years, and that, during this period, it had been inhabited only by an old servant, whom he called his steward.

Emily listened to the mention of this journey with pleasure, for she not only expected from it new ideas, but a release from the persevering assiduities of Count Morano. In the country, too, she would have leisure to think of Valancourt, and to indulge the melancholy, which his image, and a recollection of the scenes of La Vallee, always blessed with the memory of her parents, awakened. The ideal scenes were dearer, and more soothing to her heart, than all the splendour of gay assemblies; they were a kind of

talisman that expelled the poison of temporary evils, and supported her hopes of happy days: they appeared like a beautiful landscape, lighted up by a gleam of sunshine, and seen through a perspective of dark and rugged rocks.

But Count Morano did not long confine himself to silent assiduities; he declared his passion to Emily, and made proposals to Montoni, who encouraged, though Emily rejected, him: with Montoni for his friend, and an abundance of vanity to delude him, he did not despair of success. Emily was astonished and highly disgusted at his perseverance, after she had explained her sentiments with a frankness that would not allow him to misunderstand them.

He now passed the greater part of his time at Montoni's, dining there almost daily, and attending Madame and Emily wherever they went; and all this, notwithstanding the uniform reserve of Emily, whose aunt seemed as anxious as Montoni to promote this marriage; and would never dispense with her attendance at any assembly where the Count proposed to be present.

Montoni now said nothing of his intended journey, of which Emily waited impatiently to hear; and he was seldom at home but when the Count, or Signor Orsino, was there, for between himself and Cavigni a coolness seemed to subsist, though the latter remained in his house. With Orsino, Montoni was frequently closeted for hours together, and, whatever might be the business, upon which they consulted, it appeared to be of consequence, since Montoni often sacrificed to it his favourite passion for play, and remained at home the whole night. There was somewhat of privacy, too, in the manner of Orsino's visits, which had never before occurred, and which excited not only surprise, but some degree of alarm in Emily's mind, who had unwillingly discovered much of his character when he had most endeavoured to disguise it. After these visits, Montoni was often more thoughtful than usual; sometimes the deep workings of his mind entirely abstracted him from surrounding objects, and threw a gloom over his visage that rendered it terrible; at others, his eyes seemed almost to flash fire, and all the energies of his soul appeared to be roused for some great enterprise. Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts with deep interest, and not without some degree of awe, when she considered that she was entirely in his power; but forbore even to hint her

fears, or her observations, to Madame Montoni, who discerned nothing in her husband, at these times, but his usual sternness.

A second letter from M. Quesnel announced the arrival of himself and his lady at the Villa Miarenti; stated several circumstances of his good fortune, respecting the affair that had brought him into Italy; and concluded with an earnest request to see Montoni, his wife and niece, at his new estate.

Emily received, about the same period, a much more interesting letter, and which soothed for a while every anxiety of her heart. Valancourt, hoping she might be still at Venice, had trusted a letter to the ordinary post, that told her of his health, and of his unceasing and anxious affection. He had lingered at Tholouse for some time after her departure, that he might indulge the melancholy pleasure of wandering through the scenes where he had been accustomed to behold her, and had thence gone to his brother's chateau, which was in the neighbourhood of La Vallee. Having mentioned this, he added, 'If the duty of attending my regiment did not require my departure, I know not when I should have resolution enough to quit the neighbourhood of a place which is endeared by the remembrance of you. The vicinity to La Vallee has alone detained me thus long at Estuviere: I frequently ride thither early in the morning, that I may wander, at leisure, through the day, among scenes, which were once your home, where I have been accustomed to see you, and to hear you converse. I have renewed my acquaintance with the good old Theresa, who rejoiced to see me, that she might talk of you: I need not say how much this circumstance attached me to her, or how eagerly I listened to her upon her favourite subject. You will guess the motive that first induced me to make myself known to Theresa: it was, indeed, no other than that of gaining admittance into the chateau and gardens, which my Emily had so lately inhabited: here, then, I wander, and meet your image under every shade: but chiefly I love to sit beneath the spreading branches of your favourite plane, where once, Emily, we sat together; where I first ventured to tell you, that I loved. O Emily! the remembrance of those moments overcomes me — I sit lost in reverie — I endeavour to see you dimly through my tears, in all the heaven of peace and innocence, such as you then appeared to me; to hear again the accents of that voice, which then thrilled my heart with tenderness and hope. I lean on the wall of the terrace, where we

together watched the rapid current of the Garonne below, while I described the wild scenery about its source, but thought only of you. O Emily! are these moments passed for ever — will they never more return?'

In another part of his letter he wrote thus. 'You see my letter is dated on many different days, and, if you look back to the first, you will perceive, that I began to write soon after your departure from France. To write was, indeed, the only employment that withdrew me from my own melancholy, and rendered your absence supportable, or rather, it seemed to destroy absence; for, when I was conversing with you on paper, and telling you every sentiment and affection of my heart, you almost appeared to be present. This employment has been from time to time my chief consolation, and I have deferred sending off my packet, merely for the comfort of prolonging it, though it was certain, that what I had written, was written to no purpose till you received it. Whenever my mind has been more than usually depressed I have come to pour forth its sorrows to you, and have always found consolation; and, when any little occurrence has interested my heart, and given a gleam of joy to my spirits, I have hastened to communicate it to you, and have received reflected satisfaction. Thus, my letter is a kind of picture of my life and of my thoughts for the last month, and thus, though it has been deeply interesting to me, while I wrote it, and I dare hope will, for the same reason, be not indifferent to you, yet to other readers it would seem to abound only in frivolities. Thus it is always, when we attempt to describe the finer movements of the heart, for they are too fine to be discerned, they can only be experienced, and are therefore passed over by the indifferent observer, while the interested one feels, that all description is imperfect and unnecessary, except as it may prove the sincerity of the writer, and sooth his own sufferings. You will pardon all this egotism — for I am a lover.'

'I have just heard of a circumstance, which entirely destroys all my fairy paradise of ideal delight, and which will reconcile me to the necessity of returning to my regiment, for I must no longer wander beneath the beloved shades, where I have been accustomed to meet you in thought. — La Vallee is let! I have reason to believe this is without your knowledge, from what Theresa told me this morning, and, therefore, I mention the circumstance. She shed tears, while she related, that she was

going to leave the service of her dear mistress, and the chateau where she had lived so many happy years; and all this, added she, without even a letter from Mademoiselle to soften the news; but it is all *Mons.* Quesnel's doings, and I dare say she does not even know what is going forward.'

'Theresa added, That she had received a letter from him, informing her the chateau was let, and that, as her services would no longer be required, she must quit the place, on that day week, when the new tenant would arrive.'

'Theresa had been surprised by a visit from M. Quesnel, some time before the receipt of this letter, who was accompanied by a stranger that viewed the premises with much curiosity.'

Towards the conclusion of his letter, which is dated a week after this sentence, Valancourt adds, 'I have received a summons from my regiment, and I join it without regret, since I am shut out from the scenes that are so interesting to my heart. I rode to La Vallee this morning, and heard that the new tenant was arrived, and that Theresa was gone. I should not treat the subject thus familiarly if I did not believe you to be uninformed of this disposal of your house; for your satisfaction I have endeavoured to learn something of the character and fortune of your tenant, but without success. He is a gentleman, they say, and this is all I can hear. The place, as I wandered round the boundaries, appeared more melancholy to my imagination, than I had ever seen it. I wished earnestly to have got admittance, that I might have taken another leave of your favourite plane-tree, and thought of you once more beneath its shade: but I forbore to tempt the curiosity of strangers: the fishing-house in the woods, however, was still open to me; thither I went, and passed an hour, which I cannot even look back upon without emotion. O Emily! surely we are not separated for ever — surely we shall live for each other!'

This letter brought many tears to Emily's eyes; tears of tenderness and satisfaction on learning that Valancourt was well, and that time and absence had in no degree effaced her image from his heart. There were passages in this letter which particularly affected her, such as those describing his visits to La Vallee, and the sentiments of delicate affection that its scenes had awakened. It was a considerable time before her mind was sufficiently abstracted from Valancourt to feel the force of his intelligence concerning La Vallee. That *Mons.* Quesnel should let it,

without even consulting her on the measure, both surprised and shocked her, particularly as it proved the absolute authority he thought himself entitled to exercise in her affairs. It is true, he had proposed, before she left France, that the chateau should be let, during her absence, and to the oeconomical prudence of this she had nothing to object; but the committing what had been her father's villa to the power and caprice of strangers, and the depriving herself of a sure home, should any unhappy circumstances make her look back to her home as an asylum, were considerations that made her, even then, strongly oppose the measure. Her father, too, in his last hour, had received from her a solemn promise never to dispose of La Vallee; and this she considered as in some degree violated if she suffered the place to be let. But it was now evident with how little respect M. Quesnel had regarded these objections, and how insignificant he considered every obstacle to pecuniary advantage. It appeared, also, that he had not even condescended to inform Montoni of the step he had taken, since no motive was evident for Montoni's concealing the circumstance from her, if it had been made known to him: this both displeased and surprised her; but the chief subjects of her uneasiness were — the temporary disposal of La Vallee, and the dismission of her father's old and faithful servant.— 'Poor Theresa,' said Emily, 'thou hadst not saved much in thy servitude, for thou wast always tender towards the poor, and believd'st thou shouldst die in the family, where thy best years had been spent. Poor Theresa! — now thou art turned out in thy old age to seek thy bread!'

Emily wept bitterly as these thoughts passed over her mind, and she determined to consider what could be done for Theresa, and to talk very explicitly to M. Quesnel on the subject; but she much feared that his cold heart could feel only for itself. She determined also to enquire whether he had made any mention of her affairs, in his letter to Montoni, who soon gave her the opportunity she sought, by desiring that she would attend him in his study. She had little doubt, that the interview was intended for the purpose of communicating to her a part of M. Quesnel's letter concerning the transactions at La Vallee, and she obeyed him immediately. Montoni was alone.

'I have just been writing to *Mons*. Quesnel,' said he when Emily appeared, 'in reply to the letter I received from him a few days ago, and I

wished to talk to you upon a subject that occupied part of it.'

'I also wished to speak with you on this topic, sir,' said Emily.

'It is a subject of some interest to you, undoubtedly,' rejoined Montoni, 'and I think you must see it in the light that I do; indeed it will not bear any other. I trust you will agree with me, that any objection founded on sentiment, as they call it, ought to yield to circumstances of solid advantage.'

'Granting this, sir,' replied Emily, modestly, 'those of humanity ought surely to be attended to. But I fear it is now too late to deliberate upon this plan, and I must regret, that it is no longer in my power to reject it.'

'It is too late,' said Montoni; 'but since it is so, I am pleased to observe, that you submit to reason and necessity without indulging useless complaint. I applaud this conduct exceedingly, the more, perhaps, since it discovers a strength of mind seldom observable in your sex. When you are older you will look back with gratitude to the friends who assisted in rescuing you from the romantic illusions of sentiment, and will perceive, that they are only the snares of childhood, and should be vanquished the moment you escape from the nursery. I have not closed my letter, and you may add a few lines to inform your uncle of your acquiescence. You will soon see him, for it is my intention to take you, with Madame Montoni, in a few days to Miarenti, and you can then talk over the affair.'

Emily wrote on the opposite page of the paper as follows:

'It is now useless, sir, for me to remonstrate upon the circumstances of which Signor Montoni informs me that he has written. I could have wished, at least, that the affair had been concluded with less precipitation, that I might have taught myself to subdue some prejudices, as the Signor calls them, which still linger in my heart. As it is, I submit. In point of prudence nothing certainly can be objected; but, though I submit, I have yet much to say on some other points of the subject, when I shall have the honour of seeing you. In the meantime I entreat you will take care of Theresa, for the sake of, Sir,

Your affectionate niece,

EMILY ST. AUBERT.'

Montoni smiled satirically at what Emily had written, but did not object to it, and she withdrew to her own apartment, where she sat down to begin a letter to Valancourt, in which she related the particulars of her journey,

and her arrival at Venice, described some of the most striking scenes in the passage over the Alps; her emotions on her first view of Italy; the manners and characters of the people around her, and some few circumstances of Montoni's conduct. But she avoided even naming Count Morano, much more the declaration he had made, since she well knew how tremblingly alive to fear is real love, how jealously watchful of every circumstance that may affect its interest; and she scrupulously avoided to give Valancourt even the slightest reason for believing he had a rival.

On the following day Count Morano dined again at Montoni's. He was in an uncommon flow of spirits, and Emily thought there was somewhat of exultation in his manner of addressing her, which she had never observed before. She endeavoured to repress this by more than her usual reserve, but the cold civility of her air now seemed rather to encourage than to depress him. He appeared watchful of an opportunity of speaking with her alone, and more than once solicited this; but Emily always replied, that she could hear nothing from him which he would be unwilling to repeat before the whole company.

In the evening, Madame Montoni and her party went out upon the sea, and as the Count led Emily to his zendaletto, he carried her hand to his lips, and thanked her for the condescension she had shown him. Emily, in extreme surprise and displeasure, hastily withdrew her hand, and concluded that he had spoken ironically; but, on reaching the steps of the terrace, and observing by the livery, that it was the Count's zendaletto which waited below, while the rest of the party, having arranged themselves in the gondolas, were moving on, she determined not to permit a separate conversation, and, wishing him a good evening, returned to the portico. The Count followed to expostulate and entreat, and Montoni, who then came out, rendered solicitation unnecessary, for, without condescending to speak, he took her hand, and led her to the zendaletto. Emily was not silent; she entreated Montoni, in a low voice, to consider the impropriety of these circumstances, and that he would spare her the mortification of submitting to them; he, however, was inflexible.

'This caprice is intolerable,' said he, 'and shall not be indulged: there is no impropriety in the case.'

At this moment, Emily's dislike of Count Morano rose to abhorrence. That he should, with undaunted assurance, thus pursue her,

notwithstanding all she had expressed on the subject of his addresses, and think, as it was evident he did, that her opinion of him was of no consequence, so long as his pretensions were sanctioned by Montoni, added indignation to the disgust which she had felt towards him. She was somewhat relieved by observing that Montoni was to be of the party, who seated himself on one side of her, while Morano placed himself on the other. There was a pause for some moments as the gondolieri prepared their oars, and Emily trembled from apprehension of the discourse that might follow this silence. At length she collected courage to break it herself, in the hope of preventing fine speeches from Morano, and reproof from Montoni. To some trivial remark which she made, the latter returned a short and disobliging reply; but Morano immediately followed with a general observation, which he contrived to end with a particular compliment, and, though Emily passed it without even the notice of a smile, he was not discouraged.

‘I have been impatient,’ said he, addressing Emily, ‘to express my gratitude; to thank you for your goodness; but I must also thank Signor Montoni, who has allowed me this opportunity of doing so.’

Emily regarded the Count with a look of mingled astonishment and displeasure.

‘Why,’ continued he, ‘should you wish to diminish the delight of this moment by that air of cruel reserve? — Why seek to throw me again into the perplexities of doubt, by teaching your eyes to contradict the kindness of your late declaration? You cannot doubt the sincerity, the ardour of my passion; it is therefore unnecessary, charming Emily! surely unnecessary, any longer to attempt a disguise of your sentiments.’

‘If I ever had disguised them, sir,’ said Emily, with recollected spirit, ‘it would certainly be unnecessary any longer to do so. I had hoped, sir, that you would have spared me any farther necessity of alluding to them; but, since you do not grant this, hear me declare, and for the last time, that your perseverance has deprived you even of the esteem, which I was inclined to believe you merited.’

‘Astonishing!’ exclaimed Montoni: ‘this is beyond even my expectation, though I have hitherto done justice to the caprice of the sex! But you will observe, Mademoiselle Emily, that I am no lover, though Count Morano is, and that I will not be made the amusement of your

capricious moments. Here is the offer of an alliance, which would do honour to any family; yours, you will recollect, is not noble; you long resisted my remonstrances, but my honour is now engaged, and it shall not be trifled with. — You shall adhere to the declaration, which you have made me an agent to convey to the Count.'

'I must certainly mistake you, sir,' said Emily; 'my answers on the subject have been uniform; it is unworthy of you to accuse me of caprice. If you have condescended to be my agent, it is an honour I did not solicit. I myself have constantly assured Count Morano, and you also, sir, that I never can accept the honour he offers me, and I now repeat the declaration.'

The Count looked with an air of surprise and enquiry at Montoni, whose countenance also was marked with surprise, but it was surprise mingled with indignation.

'Here is confidence, as well as caprice!' said the latter. 'Will you deny your own words, Madam?'

'Such a question is unworthy of an answer, sir;' said Emily blushing; 'you will recollect yourself, and be sorry that you have asked it.'

'Speak to the point,' rejoined Montoni, in a voice of increasing vehemence. 'Will you deny your own words; will you deny, that you acknowledged, only a few hours ago, that it was too late to recede from your engagements, and that you accepted the Count's hand?'

'I will deny all this, for no words of mine ever imported it.'

'Astonishing! Will you deny what you wrote to *Mons.* Quesnel, your uncle? if you do, your own hand will bear testimony against you. What have you now to say?' continued Montoni, observing the silence and confusion of Emily.

'I now perceive, sir, that you are under a very great error, and that I have been equally mistaken.'

'No more duplicity, I entreat; be open and candid, if it be possible.'

'I have always been so, sir; and can claim no merit in such conduct, for I have had nothing to conceal.'

'How is this, Signor?' cried Morano, with trembling emotion.

'Suspend your judgment, Count,' replied Montoni, 'the wiles of a female heart are unsearchable. Now, Madame, your EXPLANATION.'

‘Excuse me, sir, if I withhold my explanation till you appear willing to give me your confidence; assertion as present can only subject me to insult.’

‘Your explanation, I entreat you!’ said Morano.

‘Well, well,’ rejoined Montoni, ‘I give you my confidence; let us hear this explanation.’

‘Let me lead to it then, by asking a question.’

‘As many as you please,’ said Montoni, contemptuously.

‘What, then, was the subject of your letter to *Mons.* Quesnel?’

‘The same that was the subject of your note to him, certainly. You did well to stipulate for my confidence before you demanded that question.’

‘I must beg you will be more explicit, sir; what was that subject?’

‘What could it be, but the noble offer of Count Morano,’ said Montoni.

‘Then, sir, we entirely misunderstood each other,’ replied Emily.

‘We entirely misunderstood each other too, I suppose,’ rejoined Montoni, ‘in the conversation which preceded the writing of that note? I must do you the justice to own, that you are very ingenious at this same art of misunderstanding.’

Emily tried to restrain the tears that came to her eyes, and to answer with becoming firmness. ‘Allow me, sir, to explain myself fully, or to be wholly silent.’

‘The explanation may now be dispensed with; it is anticipated. If Count Morano still thinks one necessary, I will give him an honest one — You have changed your intention since our last conversation; and, if he can have patience and humility enough to wait till tomorrow, he will probably find it changed again: but as I have neither the patience or the humility, which you expect from a lover, I warn you of the effect of my displeasure!’

‘Montoni, you are too precipitate,’ said the Count, who had listened to this conversation in extreme agitation and impatience;— ‘Signora, I entreat your own explanation of this affair!’

‘Signor Montoni has said justly,’ replied Emily, ‘that all explanation may now be dispensed with; after what has passed I cannot suffer myself to give one. It is sufficient for me, and for you, sir, that I repeat my late declaration; let me hope this is the last time it will be necessary for me to repeat it — I never can accept the honour of your alliance.’

‘Charming Emily!’ exclaimed the Count in an impassioned tone, ‘let not resentment make you unjust; let me not suffer for the offence of Montoni! — Revoke— ‘

‘Offence!’ interrupted Montoni— ‘Count, this language is ridiculous, this submission is childish! — speak as becomes a man, not as the slave of a pretty tyrant.’

‘You distract me, Signor; suffer me to plead my own cause; you have already proved insufficient to it.’

‘All conversation on this subject, sir,’ said Emily, ‘is worse than useless, since it can bring only pain to each of us: if you would oblige me, pursue it no farther.’

‘It is impossible, Madam, that I can thus easily resign the object of a passion, which is the delight and torment of my life. — I must still love — still pursue you with unremitting ardour; — when you shall be convinced of the strength and constancy of my passion, your heart must soften into pity and repentance.’

‘Is this generous, sir? is this manly? can it either deserve or obtain the esteem you solicit, thus to continue a persecution from which I have no present means of escaping?’

A gleam of moonlight that fell upon Morano’s countenance, revealed the strong emotions of his soul; and, glancing on Montoni discovered the dark resentment, which contrasted his features.

‘By heaven this is too much!’ suddenly exclaimed the Count; ‘Signor Montoni, you treat me ill; it is from you that I shall look for explanation.’

‘From me, sir! you shall have it;’ muttered Montoni, ‘if your discernment is indeed so far obscured by passion, as to make explanation necessary. And for you, Madam, you should learn, that a man of honour is not to be trifled with, though you may, perhaps, with impunity, treat a BOY like a puppet.’

This sarcasm roused the pride of Morano, and the resentment which he had felt at the indifference of Emily, being lost in indignation of the insolence of Montoni, he determined to mortify him, by defending her.

‘This also,’ said he, replying to Montoni’s last words, ‘this also, shall not pass unnoticed. I bid you learn, sir, that you have a stronger enemy than a woman to contend with: I will protect Signora St. Aubert from your

threatened resentment. You have misled me, and would revenge your disappointed views upon the innocent.’

‘Misled you!’ retorted Montoni with quickness, ‘is my conduct — my word’ — then pausing, while he seemed endeavouring to restrain the resentment, that flashed in his eyes, in the next moment he added, in a subdued voice, ‘Count Morano, this is a language, a sort of conduct to which I am not accustomed: it is the conduct of a passionate boy — as such, I pass it over in contempt.’

‘In contempt, Signor?’

‘The respect I owe myself,’ rejoined Montoni, ‘requires, that I should converse more largely with you upon some points of the subject in dispute. Return with me to Venice, and I will condescend to convince you of your error.’

‘Condescend, sir! but I will not condescend to be so conversed with.’

Montoni smiled contemptuously; and Emily, now terrified for the consequences of what she saw and heard, could no longer be silent. She explained the whole subject upon which she had mistaken Montoni in the morning, declaring, that she understood him to have consulted her solely concerning the disposal of La Vallee, and concluding with entreating, that he would write immediately to M. Quesnel, and rectify the mistake.

But Montoni either was, or affected to be, still incredulous; and Count Morano was still entangled in perplexity. While she was speaking, however, the attention of her auditors had been diverted from the immediate occasion of their resentment, and their passion consequently became less. Montoni desired the Count would order his servants to row back to Venice, that he might have some private conversation with him; and Morano, somewhat soothed by his softened voice and manner, and eager to examine into the full extent of his difficulties, complied.

Emily, comforted by this prospect of release, employed the present moments in endeavouring, with conciliating care, to prevent any fatal mischief between the persons who so lately had persecuted and insulted her.

Her spirits revived, when she heard once more the voice of song and laughter, resounding from the grand canal, and at length entered again between its stately piazzas. The zendaletto stopped at Montoni’s mansion, and the Count hastily led her into the hall, where Montoni took his arm,

and said something in a low voice, on which Morano kissed the hand he held, notwithstanding Emily's effort to disengage it, and, wishing her a good evening, with an accent and look she could not misunderstand, returned to his zendaletto with Montoni.

Emily, in her own apartment, considered with intense anxiety all the unjust and tyrannical conduct of Montoni, the dauntless perseverance of Morano, and her own desolate situation, removed from her friends and country. She looked in vain to Valancourt, confined by his profession to a distant kingdom, as her protector; but it gave her comfort to know, that there was, at least, one person in the world, who would sympathize in her afflictions, and whose wishes would fly eagerly to release her. Yet she determined not to give him unavailing pain by relating the reasons she had to regret the having rejected his better judgment concerning Montoni; reasons, however, which could not induce her to lament the delicacy and disinterested affection that had made her reject his proposal for a clandestine marriage. The approaching interview with her uncle she regarded with some degree of hope, for she determined to represent to him the distresses of her situation, and to entreat that he would allow her to return to France with him and Madame Quesnel. Then, suddenly remembering that her beloved La Vallee, her only home, was no longer at her command, her tears flowed anew, and she feared that she had little pity to expect from a man who, like M. Quesnel, could dispose of it without deigning to consult with her, and could dismiss an aged and faithful servant, destitute of either support or asylum. But, though it was certain, that she had herself no longer a home in France, and few, very few friends there, she determined to return, if possible, that she might be released from the power of Montoni, whose particularly oppressive conduct towards herself, and general character as to others, were justly terrible to her imagination. She had no wish to reside with her uncle, M. Quesnel, since his behaviour to her late father and to herself, had been uniformly such as to convince her, that in flying to him she could only obtain an exchange of oppressors; neither had she the slightest intention of consenting to the proposal of Valancourt for an immediate marriage, though this would give her a lawful and a generous protector, for the chief reasons, which had formerly influenced her conduct, still existed against it, while others, which seemed to justify the step, would not be done away;

and his interest, his fame were at all times too dear to her, to suffer her to consent to a union, which, at this early period of their lives, would probably defeat both. One sure, and proper asylum, however, would still be open to her in France. She knew that she could board in the convent, where she had formerly experienced so much kindness, and which had an affecting and solemn claim upon her heart, since it contained the remains of her late father. Here she could remain in safety and tranquillity, till the term, for which La Vallee might be let, should expire; or, till the arrangement of M. Motteville's affairs enabled her so far to estimate the remains of her fortune, as to judge whether it would be prudent for her to reside there.

Concerning Montoni's conduct with respect to his letters to M. Quesnel, she had many doubts; however he might be at first mistaken on the subject, she much suspected that he wilfully persevered in his error, as a means of intimidating her into a compliance with his wishes of uniting her to Count Morano. Whether this was or was not the fact, she was extremely anxious to explain the affair to M. Quesnel, and looked forward with a mixture of impatience, hope and fear, to her approaching visit.

On the following day, Madame Montoni, being alone with Emily, introduced the mention of Count Morano, by expressing her surprise, that she had not joined the party on the water the preceding evening, and at her abrupt departure to Venice. Emily then related what had passed, expressed her concern for the mutual mistake that had occurred between Montoni and herself, and solicited her aunt's kind offices in urging him to give a decisive denial to the count's further addresses; but she soon perceived, that Madame Montoni had not been ignorant of the late conversation, when she introduced the present.

'You have no encouragement to expect from me,' said her aunt, 'in these notions. I have already given my opinion on the subject, and think Signor Montoni right in enforcing, by any means, your consent. If young persons will be blind to their interest, and obstinately oppose it, why, the greatest blessings they can have are friends, who will oppose their folly. Pray what pretensions of any kind do you think you have to such a match as is now offered you?'

'Not any whatever, Madam,' replied Emily, 'and, therefore, at least, suffer me to be happy in my humility.'

‘Nay, niece, it cannot be denied, that you have pride enough; my poor brother, your father, had his share of pride too; though, let me add, his fortune did not justify it.’

Emily, somewhat embarrassed by the indignation, which this malevolent allusion to her father excited, and by the difficulty of rendering her answer as temperate as it should be reprehensive, hesitated for some moments, in a confusion, which highly gratified her aunt. At length she said, ‘My father’s pride, Madam, had a noble object — the happiness which he knew could be derived only from goodness, knowledge and charity. As it never consisted in his superiority, in point of fortune, to some persons, it was not humbled by his inferiority, in that respect, to others. He never disdained those, who were wretched by poverty and misfortune; he did sometimes despise persons, who, with many opportunities of happiness, rendered themselves miserable by vanity, ignorance and cruelty. I shall think it my highest glory to emulate such pride.’

‘I do not pretend to understand any thing of these high-flown sentiments, niece; you have all that glory to yourself: I would teach you a little plain sense, and not have you so wise as to despise happiness.’

‘That would indeed not be wisdom, but folly,’ said Emily, ‘for wisdom can boast no higher attainment than happiness; but you will allow, Madam, that our ideas of happiness may differ. I cannot doubt, that you wish me to be happy, but I must fear you are mistaken in the means of making me so.’

‘I cannot boast of a learned education, niece, such as your father thought proper to give you, and, therefore, do not pretend to understand all these fine speeches about happiness. I must be contented to understand only common sense, and happy would it have been for you and your father, if that had been included in his education.’

Emily was too much shocked by these reflections on her father’s memory, to despise this speech as it deserved.

Madame Montoni was about to speak, but Emily quitted the room, and retired to her own, where the little spirit she had lately exerted yielded to grief and vexation, and left her only to her tears. From every review of her situation she could derive, indeed, only new sorrow. To the discovery, which had just been forced upon her, of Montoni’s unworthiness, she had now to add, that of the cruel vanity, for the gratification of which her aunt was about to sacrifice her; of the effrontery and cunning, with which, at

the time that she meditated the sacrifice, she boasted of her tenderness, or insulted her victim; and of the venomous envy, which, as it did not scruple to attack her father's character, could scarcely be expected to withhold from her own.

During the few days that intervened between this conversation and the departure for Miarenti, Montoni did not once address himself to Emily. His looks sufficiently declared his resentment; but that he should forbear to renew a mention of the subject of it, exceedingly surprised her, who was no less astonished, that, during three days, Count Morano neither visited Montoni, or was named by him. Several conjectures arose in her mind. Sometimes she feared that the dispute between them had been revived, and had ended fatally to the Count. Sometimes she was inclined to hope, that weariness, or disgust at her firm rejection of his suit had induced him to relinquish it; and, at others, she suspected that he had now recourse to stratagem, and forbore his visits, and prevailed with Montoni to forbear the repetition of his name, in the expectation that gratitude and generosity would prevail with her to give him the consent, which he could not hope from love.

Thus passed the time in vain conjecture, and alternate hopes and fears, till the day arrived when Montoni was to set out for the villa of Miarenti, which, like the preceding ones, neither brought the Count, or the mention of him.

Montoni having determined not to leave Venice, till towards evening, that he might avoid the heats, and catch the cool breezes of night, embarked about an hour before sun-set, with his family, in a barge, for the Brenta. Emily sat alone near the stern of the vessel, and, as it floated slowly on, watched the gay and lofty city lessening from her view, till its palaces seemed to sink in the distant waves, while its loftier towers and domes, illumined by the declining sun, appeared on the horizon, like those far-seen clouds which, in more northern climes, often linger on the western verge, and catch the last light of a summer's evening. Soon after, even these grew dim, and faded in distance from her sight; but she still sat gazing on the vast scene of cloudless sky, and mighty waters, and listening in pleasing awe to the deep-sounding waves, while, as her eyes glanced over the Adriatic, towards the opposite shores, which were, however, far beyond the reach of sight, she thought of Greece, and, a thousand classical

remembrances stealing to her mind, she experienced that pensive luxury which is felt on viewing the scenes of ancient story, and on comparing their present state of silence and solitude with that of their former grandeur and animation. The scenes of the Illiad illapsed in glowing colours to her fancy — scenes, once the haunt of heroes — now lonely, and in ruins; but which still shone, in the poet’s strain, in all their youthful splendour.

As her imagination painted with melancholy touches, the deserted plains of Troy, such as they appeared in this after-day, she reanimated the landscape with the following little story.

STANZAS

O’er Ilion’s plains, where once the warrior bled,
And once the poet rais’d his deathless strain,
O’er Ilion’s plains a weary driver led
His stately camels: For the ruin’d fane

Wide round the lonely scene his glance he threw,
For now the red cloud faded in the west,
And twilight o’er the silent landscape drew
Her deep’ning veil; eastward his course he prest:

There, on the grey horizon’s glimm’ring bound,
Rose the proud columns of deserted Troy,
And wandering shepherds now a shelter found
Within those walls, where princes wont to joy.

Beneath a lofty porch the driver pass’d,
Then, from his camels heav’d the heavy load;
Partook with them the simple, cool repast,
And in short vesper gave himself to God.

From distant lands with merchandise he came,
His all of wealth his patient servants bore;
Oft deep-drawn sighs his anxious wish proclaim
To reach, again, his happy cottage door;

For there, his wife, his little children, dwell;
Their smiles shall pay the toil of many an hour:
Ev’n now warm tears to expectation swell,
As fancy o’er his mind extends her pow’r.

A deathlike stillness reign’d, where once the song,
The song of heroes, wak’d the midnight air,
Save, when a solemn murmur roll’d along,
That seem’d to say— ‘for future worlds prepare.’

For Time’s imperious voice was frequent heard
Shaking the marble temple to its fall,
(By hands he long had conquer’d, vainly rear’d),
And distant ruins answer’d to his call.

While Hamet slept, his camels round him lay,
Beneath him, all his store of wealth was piled;
And here, his cruse and empty wallet lay,
And there, the flute that chear’d him in the wild.

The robber Tartar on his slumber stole,
For o’er the waste, at eve, he watch’d his train;
Ah! who his thirst of plunder shall control?
Who calls on him for mercy — calls in vain!

A poison’d poignard in his belt he wore,
A crescent sword depended at his side,
The deathful quiver at his back he bore,
And infants — at his very look had died!

The moon’s cold beam athwart the temple fell,
And to his sleeping prey the Tartar led;
But soft! — a startled camel shook his bell,
Then stretch’d his limbs, and rear’d his drowsy head.

Hamet awoke! the poignard glitter’d high!
Swift from his couch he sprung, and ‘scap’d the blow;
When from an unknown hand the arrows fly,

That lay the ruffian, in his vengeance, low.

He groan’d, he died! from forth a column’d gate
A fearful shepherd, pale and silent, crept,
Who, as he watch’d his folded flock star-late,
Had mark’d the robber steal where Hamet slept.

He fear’d his own, and sav’d a stranger’s life!
Poor Hamet clasp’d him to his grateful heart;
Then, rous’d his camels for the dusty strife,
And, with the shepherd, hasten’d to depart.

And now, aurora breathes her fresh’ning gale,
And faintly trembles on the eastern cloud;
And now, the sun, from under twilight’s veil,
Looks gaily forth, and melts her airy shroud.

Wide o’er the level plains, his slanting beams
Dart their long lines on Ilion’s tower’d site;
The distant Hellespont with morning gleams,
And old Scamander winds his waves in light.

All merry sound the camel bells, so gay,
And merry beats fond Hamet’s heart, for he,
E’er the dim evening steals upon the day,
His children, wife and happy home shall see.

As Emily approached the shores of Italy she began to discriminate the rich features and varied colouring of the landscape — the purple hills, groves of orange pine and cypress, shading magnificent villas, and towns rising among vineyards and plantations. The noble Brenta, pouring its broad waves into the sea, now appeared, and, when she reached its mouth, the barge stopped, that the horses might be fastened which were now to

tow it up the stream. This done, Emily gave a last look to the Adriatic, and to the dim sail,

that from the sky-mix’d wave
Dawns on the sight,

and the barge slowly glided between the green and luxuriant slopes of the river. The grandeur of the Palladian villas, that adorn these shores, was considerably heightened by the setting rays, which threw strong contrasts of light and shade upon the porticos and long arcades, and beamed a mellow lustre upon the orangeries and the tall groves of pine and cypress, that overhung the buildings. The scent of oranges, of flowering myrtles, and other odoriferous plants was diffused upon the air, and often, from these embowered retreats, a strain of music stole on the calm, and ‘softened into silence.’

The sun now sunk below the horizon, twilight fell over the landscape, and Emily, wrapt in musing silence, continued to watch its features gradually vanishing into obscurity. She remembered her many happy evenings, when with St. Aubert she had observed the shades of twilight steal over a scene as beautiful as this, from the gardens of La Vallee, and a tear fell to the memory of her father. Her spirits were softened into melancholy by the influence of the hour, by the low murmur of the wave passing under the vessel, and the stillness of the air, that trembled only at intervals with distant music: — why else should she, at these moments, have looked on her attachment to Valancourt with presages so very afflicting, since she had but lately received letters from him, that had soothed for a while all her anxieties? It now seemed to her oppressed mind, that she had taken leave of him for ever, and that the countries, which separated them, would never more be retraced by her. She looked upon Count Morano with horror, as in some degree the cause of this; but apart from him, a conviction, if such that may be called, which arises from no proof, and which she knew not how to account for, seized her mind — that she should never see Valancourt again. Though she knew, that neither Morano’s solicitations, nor Montoni’s commands had lawful power to

enforce her obedience, she regarded both with a superstitious dread, that they would finally prevail.

Lost in this melancholy reverie, and shedding frequent tears, Emily was at length roused by Montoni, and she followed him to the cabin, where refreshments were spread, and her aunt was seated alone. The countenance of Madame Montoni was inflamed with resentment, that appeared to be the consequence of some conversation she had held with her husband, who regarded her with a kind of sullen disdain, and both preserved, for some time, a haughty silence. Montoni then spoke to Emily of *Mons.* Quesnel: 'You will not, I hope, persist in disclaiming your knowledge of the subject of my letter to him?'

'I had hoped, sir, that it was no longer necessary for me to disclaim it,' said Emily, 'I had hoped, from your silence, that you was convinced of your error.'

'You have hoped impossibilities then,' replied Montoni; 'I might as reasonably have expected to find sincerity and uniformity of conduct in one of your sex, as you to convict me of error in this affair.'

Emily blushed, and was silent; she now perceived too clearly, that she had hoped an impossibility, for, where no mistake had been committed no conviction could follow; and it was evident, that Montoni's conduct had not been the consequence of mistake, but of design.

Anxious to escape from conversation, which was both afflicting and humiliating to her, she soon returned to the deck, and resumed her station near the stern, without apprehension of cold, for no vapour rose from the water, and the air was dry and tranquil; here, at least, the benevolence of nature allowed her the quiet which Montoni had denied her elsewhere. It was now past midnight. The stars shed a kind of twilight, that served to shew the dark outline of the shores on either hand, and the grey surface of the river; till the moon rose from behind a high palm grove, and shed her mellow lustre over the scene. The vessel glided smoothly on: amid the stillness of the hour Emily heard, now and then, the solitary voice of the barge-men on the bank, as they spoke to their horses; while, from a remote part of the vessel, with melancholy song,

The sailor sooth'd,

Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave.

Emily, meanwhile, anticipated her reception by Mons, and Madame Quesnel; considered what she should say on the subject of La Vallee; and then, to withhold her mind from more anxious topics, tried to amuse herself by discriminating the faint-drawn features of the landscape, reposing in the moonlight. While her fancy thus wandered, she saw, at a distance, a building peeping between the moonlight trees, and, as the barge approached, heard voices speaking, and soon distinguished the lofty portico of a villa, overshadowed by groves of pine and sycamore, which she recollected to be the same, that had formerly been pointed out to her, as belonging to Madame Quesnel's relative.

The barge stopped at a flight of marble steps, which led up the bank to a lawn. Lights appeared between some pillars beyond the portico. Montoni sent forward his servant, and then disembarked with his family. They found *Mons.* and Madame Quesnel, with a few friends, seated on sofas in the portico, enjoying the cool breeze of the night, and eating fruits and ices, while some of their servants at a little distance, on the river's bank, were performing a simple serenade. Emily was now accustomed to the way of living in this warm country, and was not surprised to find *Mons.* and Madame Quesnel in their portico, two hours after midnight.

The usual salutations being over, the company seated themselves in the portico, and refreshments were brought them from the adjoining hall, where a banquet was spread, and servants attended. When the bustle of this meeting had subsided, and Emily had recovered from the little flutter into which it had thrown her spirits, she was struck with the singular beauty of the hall, so perfectly accommodated to the luxuries of the season. It was of white marble, and the roof, rising into an open cupola, was supported by columns of the same material. Two opposite sides of the apartment, terminating in open porticos, admitted to the hall a full view of the gardens, and of the river scenery; in the centre a fountain continually refreshed the air, and seemed to heighten the fragrance, that breathed from the surrounding orangeries, while its dashing waters gave an agreeable and soothing sound. Etruscan lamps, suspended from the pillars, diffused a

brilliant light over the interior part of the hall, leaving the remoter porticos to the softer lustre of the moon.

Mons. Quesnel talked apart to Montoni of his own affairs, in his usual strain of self-importance; boasted of his new acquisitions, and then affected to pity some disappointments, which Montoni had lately sustained. Meanwhile, the latter, whose pride at least enabled him to despise such vanity as this, and whose discernment at once detected under this assumed pity, the frivolous malignity of Quesnel's mind, listened to him in contemptuous silence, till he named his niece, and then they left the portico, and walked away into the gardens.

Emily, however, still attended to Madame Quesnel, who spoke of France (for even the name of her native country was dear to her) and she found some pleasure in looking at a person, who had lately been in it. That country, too, was inhabited by Valancourt, and she listened to the mention of it, with a faint hope, that he also would be named. Madame Quesnel, who, when she was in France, had talked with rapture of Italy, now, that she was in Italy, talked with equal praise of France, and endeavoured to excite the wonder and the envy of her auditors by accounts of places, which they had not been happy enough to see. In these descriptions she not only imposed upon them, but upon herself, for she never thought a present pleasure equal to one, that was passed; and thus the delicious climate, the fragrant orangeries and all the luxuries, which surrounded her, slept unnoticed, while her fancy wandered over the distant scenes of a northern country.

Emily listened in vain for the name of Valancourt. Madame Montoni spoke in her turn of the delights of Venice, and of the pleasure she expected from visiting the fine castle of Montoni, on the Apennine; which latter mention, at least, was merely a retaliating boast, for Emily well knew, that her aunt had no taste for solitary grandeur, and, particularly, for such as the castle of Udolpho promised. Thus the party continued to converse, and, as far as civility would permit, to torture each other by mutual boasts, while they reclined on sofas in the portico, and were environed with delights both from nature and art, by which any honest minds would have been tempered to benevolence, and happy imaginations would have been soothed into enchantment.

The dawn, soon after, trembled in the eastern horizon, and the light tints of morning, gradually expanding, shewed the beautifully declining forms of the Italian mountains and the gleaming landscapes, stretched at their feet. Then the sunbeams, shooting up from behind the hills, spread over the scene that fine saffron tinge, which seems to impart repose to all it touches. The landscape no longer gleamed; all its glowing colours were revealed, except that its remoter features were still softened and united in the mist of distance, whose sweet effect was heightened to Emily by the dark verdure of the pines and cypresses, that overarched the foreground of the river.

The market people, passing with their boats to Venice, now formed a moving picture on the Brenta. Most of these had little painted awnings, to shelter their owners from the sunbeams, which, together with the piles of fruit and flowers, displayed beneath, and the tasteful simplicity of the peasant girls, who watched the rural treasures, rendered them gay and striking objects. The swift movement of the boats down the current, the quick glance of oars in the water, and now and then the passing chorus of peasants, who reclined under the sail of their little bark, or the tones of some rustic instrument, played by a girl, as she sat near her sylvan cargo, heightened the animation and festivity of the scene.

When Montoni and M. Quesnel had joined the ladies, the party left the portico for the gardens, where the charming scenery soon withdrew Emily’s thoughts from painful subjects. The majestic forms and rich verdure of cypresses she had never seen so perfect before: groves of cedar, lemon, and orange, the spiry clusters of the pine and poplar, the luxuriant chesnut and oriental plane, threw all their pomp of shade over these gardens; while bowers of flowering myrtle and other spicy shrubs mingled their fragrance with that of flowers, whose vivid and various colouring glowed with increased effect beneath the contrasted umbrage of the groves. The air also was continually refreshed by rivulets, which, with more taste than fashion, had been suffered to wander among the green recesses.

Emily often lingered behind the party, to contemplate the distant landscape, that closed a vista, or that gleamed beneath the dark foliage of the foreground; — the spiral summits of the mountains, touched with a purple tint, broken and steep above, but shelving gradually to their base;

the open valley, marked by no formal lines of art; and the tall groves of cypress, pine and poplar, sometimes embellished by a ruined villa, whose broken columns appeared between the branches of a pine, that seemed to droop over their fall.

From other parts of the gardens, the character of the view was entirely changed, and the fine solitary beauty of the landscape shifted for the crowded features and varied colouring of inhabitation.

The sun was now gaining fast upon the sky, and the party quitted the gardens, and retired to repose.

CHAPTER IV

And poor Misfortune feels the lash of Vice.

THOMSON

Emily seized the first opportunity of conversing alone with *Mons.* Quesnel, concerning La Vallee. His answers to her enquiries were concise, and delivered with the air of a man, who is conscious of possessing absolute power and impatient of hearing it questioned. He declared, that the disposal of the place was a necessary measure; and that she might consider herself indebted to his prudence for even the small income that remained for her. ‘But, however,’ added he, ‘when this Venetian Count (I have forgot his name) marries you, your present disagreeable state of dependence will cease. As a relation to you I rejoice in the circumstance, which is so fortunate for you, and, I may add, so unexpected by your friends.’ For some moments Emily was chilled into silence by this speech; and, when she attempted to undeceive him, concerning the purport of the note she had inclosed in Montoni’s letter, he appeared to have some private reason for disbelieving her assertion, and, for a considerable time, persevered in accusing her of capricious conduct. Being, at length, however, convinced that she really disliked Morano and had positively rejected his suit, his resentment was extravagant, and he expressed it in terms equally pointed and inhuman; for, secretly flattered by the prospect of a connection with a nobleman, whose title he had affected to forget, he was incapable of feeling pity for whatever sufferings of his niece might stand in the way of his ambition.

Emily saw at once in his manner all the difficulties, that awaited her, and, though no oppression could have power to make her renounce Valancourt for Morano, her fortitude now trembled at an encounter with the violent passions of her uncle.

She opposed his turbulence and indignation only by the mild dignity of a superior mind; but the gentle firmness of her conduct served to exasperate still more his resentment, since it compelled him to feel his own inferiority, and, when he left her, he declared, that, if she persisted in her folly, both himself and Montoni would abandon her to the contempt of the world.

The calmness she had assumed in his presence failed Emily, when alone, and she wept bitterly, and called frequently upon the name of her departed father, whose advice to her from his deathbed she then remembered. ‘Alas!’ said she, ‘I do indeed perceive how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude than the grace of sensibility, and I will also endeavour to fulfil the promise I then made; I will not indulge in unavailing lamentation, but will try to endure, with firmness, the oppression I cannot elude.’

Somewhat soothed by the consciousness of performing a part of St. Aubert’s last request, and of endeavouring to pursue the conduct which he would have approved, she overcame her tears, and, when the company met at dinner, had recovered her usual serenity of countenance.

In the cool of the evening, the ladies took the FRESCO along the bank of the Brenta in Madame Quesnel’s carriage. The state of Emily’s mind was in melancholy contrast with the gay groups assembled beneath the shades that overhung this enchanting stream. Some were dancing under the trees, and others reclining on the grass, taking ices and coffee and calmly enjoying the effect of a beautiful evening, on a luxuriant landscape. Emily, when she looked at the snow-capt Apennines, ascending in the distance, thought of Montoni’s castle, and suffered some terror, lest he should convey her thither, for the purpose of enforcing her obedience; but the thought vanished, when she considered, that she was as much in his power at Venice as she could be elsewhere.

It was moonlight before the party returned to the villa, where supper was spread in the airy hall, which had so much enchanted Emily’s fancy, on the preceding night. The ladies seated themselves in the portico, till *Mons.* Quesnel, Montoni, and other gentlemen should join them at table, and Emily endeavoured to resign herself to the tranquillity of the hour. Presently, a barge stopped at the steps that led into the gardens, and, soon after, she distinguished the voices of Montoni and Quesnel, and then that of Morano, who, in the next moment, appeared. His compliments she received in silence, and her cold air seemed at first to discompose him; but he soon recovered his usual gaiety of manner, though the officious kindness of M. and Madame Quesnel Emily perceived disgusted him. Such a degree of attention she had scarcely believed could be shewn by M.

Quesnel, for she had never before seen him otherwise than in the presence of his inferiors or equals.

When she could retire to her own apartment, her mind almost involuntarily dwelt on the most probable means of prevailing with the Count to withdraw his suit, and to her liberal mind none appeared more probable, than that of acknowledging to him a prior attachment and throwing herself upon his generosity for a release. When, however, on the following day, he renewed his addresses, she shrunk from the adoption of the plan she had formed. There was something so repugnant to her just pride, in laying open the secret of her heart to such a man as Morano, and in suing to him for compassion, that she impatiently rejected this design and wondered, that she could have paused upon it for a moment. The rejection of his suit she repeated in the most decisive terms she could select, mingling with it a severe censure of his conduct; but, though the Count appeared mortified by this, he persevered in the most ardent professions of admiration, till he was interrupted and Emily released by the presence of Madame Quesnel.

During her stay at this pleasant villa, Emily was thus rendered miserable by the assiduities of Morano, together with the cruelly exerted authority of M. Quesnel and Montoni, who, with her aunt, seemed now more resolutely determined upon this marriage than they had even appeared to be at Venice. M. Quesnel, finding, that both argument and menace were ineffectual in enforcing an immediate conclusion to it, at length relinquished his endeavours, and trusted to the power of Montoni and to the course of events at Venice. Emily, indeed, looked to Venice with hope, for there she would be relieved in some measure from the persecution of Morano, who would no longer be an inhabitant of the same house with herself, and from that of Montoni, whose engagements would not permit him to be continually at home. But amidst the pressure of her own misfortunes, she did not forget those of poor Theresa, for whom she pleaded with courageous tenderness to Quesnel, who promised, in slight and general terms, that she should not be forgotten.

Montoni, in a long conversation with M. Quesnel, arranged the plan to be pursued respecting Emily, and M. Quesnel proposed to be at Venice, as soon as he should be informed, that the nuptials were concluded.

It was new to Emily to part with any person, with whom she was connected, without feeling of regret; the moment, however, in which she took leave of M. and Madame Quesnel, was, perhaps, the only satisfactory one she had known in their presence.

Morano returned in Montoni's barge, and Emily, as she watched her gradual approach to that magic city, saw at her side the only person, who occasioned her to view it with less than perfect delight. They arrived there about midnight, when Emily was released from the presence of the Count, who, with Montoni, went to a Casino, and she was suffered to retire to her own apartment.

On the following day, Montoni, in a short conversation, which he held with Emily, informed her, that he would no longer be TRIFLED with, and that, since her marriage with the Count would be so highly advantageous to her, that folly only could object to it, and folly of such extent as was incapable of conviction, it should be celebrated without further delay, and, if that was necessary, without her consent.

Emily, who had hitherto tried remonstrance, had now recourse to supplication, for distress prevented her from foreseeing, that, with a man of Montoni's disposition, supplication would be equally useless. She afterwards enquired by what right he exerted this unlimited authority over her? a question, which her better judgment would have withheld her, in a calmer moment, from making, since it could avail her nothing, and would afford Montoni another opportunity of triumphing over her defenceless condition.

'By what right!' cried Montoni, with a malicious smile, 'by the right of my will; if you can elude that, I will not inquire by what right you do so. I now remind you, for the last time, that you are a stranger, in a foreign country, and that it is your interest to make me your friend; you know the means; if you compel me to become your enemy — I will venture to tell you, that the punishment shall exceed your expectation. You may know *I* am not to be trifled with.'

Emily continued, for some time after Montoni had left her, in a state of despair, or rather stupefaction; a consciousness of misery was all that remained in her mind. In this situation Madame Montoni found her, at the sound of whose voice Emily looked up, and her aunt, somewhat softened by the expression of despair, that fixed her countenance, spoke in a manner

more kind than she had ever yet done. Emily's heart was touched; she shed tears, and, after weeping for some time, recovered sufficient composure to speak on the subject of her distress, and to endeavour to interest Madame Montoni in her behalf. But, though the compassion of her aunt had been surprised, her ambition was not to be overcome, and her present object was to be the aunt of a Countess. Emily's efforts, therefore, were as unsuccessful as they had been with Montoni, and she withdrew to her apartment to think and weep alone. How often did she remember the parting scene with Valancourt, and wish, that the Italian had mentioned Montoni's character with less reserve! When her mind, however, had recovered from the first shock of this behaviour, she considered, that it would be impossible for him to compel her alliance with Morano, if she persisted in refusing to repeat any part of the marriage ceremony; and she persevered in her resolution to await Montoni's threatened vengeance rather than give herself for life to a man, whom she must have despised for his present conduct, had she never even loved Valancourt; yet she trembled at the revenge she thus resolved to brave.

An affair, however, soon after occurred, which somewhat called off Montoni's attention from Emily. The mysterious visits of Orsino were renewed with more frequency since the return of the former to Venice. There were others, also, besides Orsino, admitted to these midnight councils, and among them Cavigni and Verezzi. Montoni became more reserved and austere in his manner than ever; and Emily, if her own interests had not made her regardless of his, might have perceived, that something extraordinary was working in his mind.

One night, on which a council was not held, Orsino came in great agitation of spirits, and dispatched his confidential servant to Montoni, who was at a Casino, desiring that he would return home immediately; but charging the servant not to mention his name. Montoni obeyed the summons, and, on meeting Orsino, was informed of the circumstances, that occasioned his visit and his visible alarm, with a part of which he was already acquainted.

A Venetian nobleman, who had, on some late occasion, provoked the hatred of Orsino, had been waylaid and poniarded by hired assassins: and, as the murdered person was of the first connections, the Senate had taken up the affair. One of the assassins was now apprehended, who had

confessed, that Orsino was his employer in the atrocious deed; and the latter, informed of his danger, had now come to Montoni to consult on the measures necessary to favour his escape. He knew, that, at this time, the officers of the police were upon the watch for him, all over the city; to leave it, at present, therefore, was impracticable, and Montoni consented to secrete him for a few days till the vigilance of justice should relax, and then to assist him in quitting Venice. He knew the danger he himself incurred by permitting Orsino to remain in his house, but such was the nature of his obligations to this man, that he did not think it prudent to refuse him an asylum.

Such was the person whom Montoni had admitted to his confidence, and for whom he felt as much friendship as was compatible with his character.

While Orsino remained concealed in his house, Montoni was unwilling to attract public observation by the nuptials of Count Morano; but this obstacle was, in a few days, overcome by the departure of his criminal visitor, and he then informed Emily, that her marriage was to be celebrated on the following morning. To her repeated assurances, that it should not take place, he replied only by a malignant smile; and, telling her that the Count and a priest would be at his house, early in the morning, he advised her no further to dare his resentment, by opposition to his will and to her own interest. ‘I am now going out for the evening,’ said he, ‘remember, that I shall give your hand to Count Morano in the morning.’ Emily, having, ever since his late threats, expected, that her trials would at length arrive to this crisis, was less shocked by the declaration, that she otherwise would have been, and she endeavoured to support herself by the belief, that the marriage could not be valid, so long as she refused before the priest to repeat any part of the ceremony. Yet, as the moment of trial approached, her long-harassed spirits shrunk almost equally from the encounter of his vengeance, and from the hand of Count Morano. She was not even perfectly certain of the consequence of her steady refusal at the altar, and she trembled, more than ever, at the power of Montoni, which seemed unlimited as his will, for she saw, that he would not scruple to transgress any law, if, by so doing, he could accomplish his project.

While her mind was thus suffering and in a state little short of distraction, she was informed that Morano asked permission to see her, and the servant had scarcely departed with an excuse, before she repented

that she had sent one. In the next moment, reverting to her former design, and determining to try, whether expostulation and entreaty would not succeed, where a refusal and a just disdain had failed, she recalled the servant, and, sending a different message, prepared to go down to the Count.

The dignity and assumed composure with which she met him, and the kind of pensive resignation, that softened her countenance, were circumstances not likely to induce him to relinquish her, serving, as they did, to heighten a passion, which had already intoxicated his judgment. He listened to all she said with an appearance of complacency and of a wish to oblige her; but his resolution remained invariably the same, and he endeavoured to win her admiration by every insinuating art he so well knew how to practise. Being, at length, assured, that she had nothing to hope from his justice, she repeated, in a solemn and impressive manner, her absolute rejection of his suit, and quitted him with an assurance, that her refusal would be effectually maintained against every circumstance, that could be imagined for subduing it. A just pride had restrained her tears in his presence, but now they flowed from the fulness of her heart. She often called upon the name of her late father, and often dwelt with unutterable anguish on the idea of Valancourt.

She did not go down to supper, but remained alone in her apartment, sometimes yielding to the influence of grief and terror, and, at others, endeavouring to fortify her mind against them, and to prepare herself to meet, with composed courage, the scene of the following morning, when all the stratagem of Morano and the violence of Montoni would be united against her.

The evening was far advanced, when Madame Montoni came to her chamber with some bridal ornaments, which the Count had sent to Emily. She had, this day, purposely avoided her niece; perhaps, because her usual insensibility failed her, and she feared to trust herself with a view of Emily’s distress; or possibly, though her conscience was seldom audible, it now reproached her with her conduct to her brother’s orphan child, whose happiness had been entrusted to her care by a dying father.

Emily could not look at these presents, and made a last, though almost hopeless, effort to interest the compassion of Madame Montoni, who, if she did feel any degree of pity, or remorse, successfully concealed it, and

reproached her niece with folly in being miserable, concerning a marriage, which ought only to make her happy. ‘I am sure,’ said she, ‘if I was unmarried, and the Count had proposed to me, I should have been flattered by the distinction: and if I should have been so, I am sure, niece, you, who have no fortune, ought to feel yourself highly honoured, and shew a proper gratitude and humility towards the Count, for his condescension. I am often surprised, I must own, to observe how humbly he deports himself to you, notwithstanding the haughty airs you give yourself; I wonder he has patience to humour you so: if I was he, I know, I should often be ready to reprehend you, and make you know yourself a little better. I would not have flattered you, I can tell you, for it is this absurd flattery that makes you fancy yourself of so much consequence, that you think nobody can deserve you, and I often tell the Count so, for I have no patience to hear him pay you such extravagant compliments, which you believe every word of!’

‘Your patience, madam, cannot suffer more cruelly on such occasions, than my own,’ said Emily.

‘O! that is all mere affectation,’ rejoined her aunt. ‘I know that his flattery delights you, and makes you so vain, that you think you may have the whole world at your feet. But you are very much mistaken; I can assure you, niece, you will not meet with many such suitors as the Count: every other person would have turned upon his heel, and left you to repent at your leisure, long ago.’

‘O that the Count had resembled every other person, then!’ said Emily, with a heavy sigh.

‘It is happy for you, that he does not,’ rejoined Madame Montoni; ‘and what I am now saying is from pure kindness. I am endeavouring to convince you of your good fortune, and to persuade you to submit to necessity with a good grace. It is nothing to me, you know, whether you like this marriage or not, for it must be; what I say, therefore, is from pure kindness. I wish to see you happy, and it is your own fault if you are not so. I would ask you, now, seriously and calmly, what kind of a match you can expect, since a Count cannot content your ambition?’

‘I have no ambition whatever, madam,’ replied Emily, ‘my only wish is to remain in my present station.’

‘O! that is speaking quite from the purpose,’ said her aunt, ‘I see you are still thinking of *Mons.* Valancourt. Pray get rid of all those fantastic notions about love, and this ridiculous pride, and be something like a reasonable creature. But, however, this is nothing to the purpose — for your marriage with the Count takes place tomorrow, you know, whether you approve it or not. The Count will be trifled with no longer.’

Emily made no attempt to reply to this curious speech; she felt it would be mean, and she knew it would be useless. Madame Montoni laid the Count’s presents upon the table, on which Emily was leaning, and then, desiring she would be ready early in the morning, bade her good-night. ‘Good-night, madam,’ said Emily, with a deep sigh, as the door closed upon her aunt, and she was left once more to her own sad reflections. For some time she sat so lost in thought, as to be wholly unconscious where she was; at length, raising her head, and looking round the room, its gloom and profound stillness awed her. She fixed her eyes on the door, through which her aunt had disappeared, and listened anxiously for some sound, that might relieve the deep dejection of her spirits; but it was past midnight, and all the family except the servant, who sat up for Montoni, had retired to bed. Her mind, long harassed by distress, now yielded to imaginary terrors; she trembled to look into the obscurity of her spacious chamber, and feared she knew not what; a state of mind, which continued so long, that she would have called up Annette, her aunt’s woman, had her fears permitted her to rise from her chair, and to cross the apartment.

These melancholy illusions at length began to disperse, and she retired to her bed, not to sleep, for that was scarcely possible, but to try, at least, to quiet her disturbed fancy, and to collect strength of spirits sufficient to bear her through the scene of the approaching morning.

CHAPTER V

Dark power! with shudd’ring, meek submitted thought
Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awak’ning bards have told,
And, lest they meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.
COLLINS’ ODE TO FEAR

Emily was recalled from a kind of slumber, into which she had, at length, sunk, by a quick knocking at her chamber door. She started up in terror, for Montoni and Count Morano instantly came to her mind; but, having listened in silence for some time, and recognizing the voice of Annette, she rose and opened the door. ‘What brings you hither so early?’ said Emily, trembling excessively. She was unable to support herself, and sat down on the bed.

‘Dear ma’amselle!’ said Annette, ‘do not look so pale. I am quite frightened to see you. Here is a fine bustle below stairs, all the servants running to and fro, and none of them fast enough! Here is a bustle, indeed, all of a sudden, and nobody knows for what!’

‘Who is below besides them?’ said Emily, ‘Annette, do not trifle with me!’

‘Not for the world, ma’amselle, I would not trifle for the world; but one cannot help making one’s remarks, and there is the Signor in such a bustle, as I never saw him before; and he has sent me to tell you, ma’am, to get ready immediately.’

‘Good God support me!’ cried Emily, almost fainting, ‘Count Morano is below, then!’

‘No, ma’amselle, he is not below that I know of,’ replied Annette, ‘only his excellenza sent me to desire you would get ready directly to leave Venice, for that the gondolas would be at the steps of the canal in a few minutes: but I must hurry back to my lady, who is just at her wits end, and knows not which way to turn for haste.’

‘Explain, Annette, explain the meaning of all this before you go,’ said Emily, so overcome with surprise and timid hope, that she had scarcely breath to speak.

‘Nay, ma’amselle, that is more than I can do. I only know that the Signor is just come home in a very ill humour, that he has had us all called out of our beds, and tells us we are all to leave Venice immediately.’

‘Is Count Morano to go with the signor?’ said Emily, ‘and whither are we going?’

‘I know neither, ma’am, for certain; but I heard Ludovico say something about going, after we get to terra-firma, to the signor’s castle among some mountains, that he talked of.’

‘The Apennines!’ said Emily, eagerly, ‘O! then I have little to hope!’

‘That is the very place, ma’am. But cheer up, and do not take it so much to heart, and think what a little time you have to get ready in, and how impatient the Signor is. Holy St. Mark! I hear the oars on the canal; and now they come nearer, and now they are dashing at the steps below; it is the gondola, sure enough.’

Annette hastened from the room; and Emily prepared for this unexpected flight, as fast as her trembling hands would permit, not perceiving, that any change in her situation could possibly be for the worse. She had scarcely thrown her books and clothes into her travelling trunk, when, receiving a second summons, she went down to her aunt’s dressing-room, where she found Montoni impatiently reproving his wife for delay. He went out, soon after, to give some further orders to his people, and Emily then enquired the occasion of this hasty journey; but her aunt appeared to be as ignorant as herself, and to undertake the journey with more reluctance.

The family at length embarked, but neither Count Morano, nor Cavigni, was of the party. Somewhat revived by observing this, Emily, when the gondolieri dashed their oars in the water, and put off from the steps of the portico, felt like a criminal, who receives a short reprieve. Her heart beat yet lighter, when they emerged from the canal into the ocean, and lighter still, when they skimmed past the walls of St. Mark, without having stopped to take up Count Morano.

The dawn now began to tint the horizon, and to break upon the shores of the Adriatic. Emily did not venture to ask any questions of Montoni, who sat, for some time, in gloomy silence, and then rolled himself up in his cloak, as if to sleep, while Madame Montoni did the same; but Emily, who could not sleep, undrew one of the little curtains of the gondola, and

looked out upon the sea. The rising dawn now enlightened the mountain-tops of Friuli, but their lower sides, and the distant waves, that rolled at their feet, were still in deep shadow. Emily, sunk in tranquil melancholy, watched the strengthening light spreading upon the ocean, shewing successively Venice and her islets, and the shores of Italy, along which boats, with their pointed latin sails, began to move.

The gondolieri were frequently hailed, at this early hour, by the market-people, as they glided by towards Venice, and the lagune soon displayed a gay scene of innumerable little barks, passing from terra-firma with provisions. Emily gave a last look to that splendid city, but her mind was then occupied by considering the probable events, that awaited her, in the scenes, to which she was removing, and with conjectures, concerning the motive of this sudden journey. It appeared, upon calmer consideration, that Montoni was removing her to his secluded castle, because he could there, with more probability of success, attempt to terrify her into obedience; or, that, should its gloomy and sequestered scenes fail of this effect, her forced marriage with the Count could there be solemnized with the secrecy, which was necessary to the honour of Montoni. The little spirit, which this reprieve had recalled, now began to fail, and, when Emily reached the shore, her mind had sunk into all its former depression.

Montoni did not embark on the Brenta, but pursued his way in carriages across the country, towards the Apennine; during which journey, his manner to Emily was so particularly severe, that this alone would have confirmed her late conjecture, had any such confirmation been necessary. Her senses were now dead to the beautiful country, through which she travelled. Sometimes she was compelled to smile at the naivete of Annette, in her remarks on what she saw, and sometimes to sigh, as a scene of peculiar beauty recalled Valancourt to her thoughts, who was indeed seldom absent from them, and of whom she could never hope to hear in the solitude, to which she was hastening.

At length, the travellers began to ascend among the Apennines. The immense pine-forests, which, at that period, overhung these mountains, and between which the road wound, excluded all view but of the cliffs aspiring above, except, that, now and then, an opening through the dark woods allowed the eye a momentary glimpse of the country below. The gloom of these shades, their solitary silence, except when the breeze swept

over their summits, the tremendous precipices of the mountains, that came partially to the eye, each assisted to raise the solemnity of Emily's feelings into awe; she saw only images of gloomy grandeur, or of dreadful sublimity, around her; other images, equally gloomy and equally terrible, gleamed on her imagination. She was going she scarcely knew whither, under the dominion of a person, from whose arbitrary disposition she had already suffered so much, to marry, perhaps, a man who possessed neither her affection, or esteem; or to endure, beyond the hope of succour, whatever punishment revenge, and that Italian revenge, might dictate. — The more she considered what might be the motive of the journey, the more she became convinced, that it was for the purpose of concluding her nuptials with Count Morano, with that secrecy, which her resolute resistance had made necessary to the honour, if not to the safety, of Montoni. From the deep solitudes, into which she was immerging, and from the gloomy castle, of which she had heard some mysterious hints, her sick heart recoiled in despair, and she experienced, that, though her mind was already occupied by peculiar distress, it was still alive to the influence of new and local circumstance; why else did she shudder at the idea of this desolate castle?

As the travellers still ascended among the pine forests, steep rose over steep, the mountains seemed to multiply, as they went, and what was the summit of one eminence proved to be only the base of another. At length, they reached a little plain, where the drivers stopped to rest the mules, whence a scene of such extent and magnificence opened below, as drew even from Madame Montoni a note of admiration. Emily lost, for a moment, her sorrows, in the immensity of nature. Beyond the amphitheatre of mountains, that stretched below, whose tops appeared as numerous almost, as the waves of the sea, and whose feet were concealed by the forests — extended the campagna of Italy, where cities and rivers, and woods and all the glow of cultivation were mingled in gay confusion. The Adriatic bounded the horizon, into which the Po and the Brenta, after winding through the whole extent of the landscape, poured their fruitful waves. Emily gazed long on the splendours of the world she was quitting, of which the whole magnificence seemed thus given to her sight only to increase her regret on leaving it; for her, Valancourt alone was in that world; to him alone her heart turned, and for him alone fell her bitter tears.

From this sublime scene the travellers continued to ascend among the pines, till they entered a narrow pass of the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and, in its stead, exhibited only tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared, except here and there the trunk and scathed branches of an oak, that hung nearly headlong from the rock, into which its strong roots had fastened. This pass, which led into the heart of the Apennine, at length opened to day, and a scene of mountains stretched in long perspective, as wild as any the travellers had yet passed. Still vast pine-forests hung upon their base, and crowned the ridgy precipice, that rose perpendicularly from the vale, while, above, the rolling mists caught the sunbeams, and touched their cliffs with all the magical colouring of light and shade. The scene seemed perpetually changing, and its features to assume new forms, as the winding road brought them to the eye in different attitudes; while the shifting vapours, now partially concealing their minuter beauties and now illuminating them with splendid tints, assisted the illusions of the sight.

Though the deep vallies between these mountains were, for the most part, clothed with pines, sometimes an abrupt opening presented a perspective of only barren rocks, with a cataract flashing from their summit among broken cliffs, till its waters, reaching the bottom, foamed along with unceasing fury; and sometimes pastoral scenes exhibited their ‘green delights’ in the narrow vales, smiling amid surrounding horror. There herds and flocks of goats and sheep, browsing under the shade of hanging woods, and the shepherd’s little cabin, reared on the margin of a clear stream, presented a sweet picture of repose.

Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime, that had those of the Alps, which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt those emotions of indescribable awe which she had so continually experienced, in her passage over the Alps.

Towards the close of day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, that exhibited the Apennines in their darkest

horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits, rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest, that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle, that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade, which involved the valley below.

'There,' said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, 'is Udolpho.'

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen, rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length, the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and, soon after, reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions, that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the gloom, that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know, that it was vast, ancient and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy

strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam, that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war. — Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts; after which an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal, to admit his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court, into which she passed, served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify.

Another gate delivered them into the second court, grass-grown, and more wild than the first, where, as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation — its lofty walls, overtopt with briony, moss and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above, — long-suffering and murder came to her thoughts. One of those instantaneous and unaccountable convictions, which sometimes conquer even strong minds, impressed her with its horror. The sentiment was not diminished, when she entered an extensive gothic hall, obscured by the gloom of evening, which a light, glimmering at a distance through a long perspective of arches, only rendered more striking. As a servant brought the lamp nearer partial gleams fell upon the pillars and the pointed arches, forming a strong contrast with their shadows, that stretched along the pavement and the walls.

The sudden journey of Montoni had prevented his people from making any other preparations for his reception, than could be had in the short interval, since the arrival of the servant, who had been sent forward from

Venice; and this, in some measure, may account for the air of extreme desolation, that everywhere appeared.

The servant, who came to light Montoni, bowed in silence, and the muscles of his countenance relaxed with no symptom of joy. — Montoni noticed the salutation by a slight motion of his hand, and passed on, while his lady, following, and looking round with a degree of surprise and discontent, which she seemed fearful of expressing, and Emily, surveying the extent and grandeur of the hall in timid wonder, approached a marble staircase. The arches here opened to a lofty vault, from the centre of which hung a tripod lamp, which a servant was hastily lighting; and the rich fretwork of the roof, a corridor, leading into several upper apartments, and a painted window, stretching nearly from the pavement to the ceiling of the hall, became gradually visible.

Having crossed the foot of the staircase, and passed through an ante-room, they entered a spacious apartment, whose walls, wainscoted with black larch-wood, the growth of the neighbouring mountains, were scarcely distinguishable from darkness itself. ‘Bring more light,’ said Montoni, as he entered. The servant, setting down his lamp, was withdrawing to obey him, when Madame Montoni observing, that the evening air of this mountainous region was cold, and that she should like a fire, Montoni ordered that wood might be brought.

While he paced the room with thoughtful steps, and Madame Montoni sat silently on a couch, at the upper end of it, waiting till the servant returned, Emily was observing the singular solemnity and desolation of the apartment, viewed, as it now was, by the glimmer of the single lamp, placed near a large Venetian mirror, that duskily reflected the scene, with the tall figure of Montoni passing slowly along, his arms folded, and his countenance shaded by the plume, that waved in his hat.

From the contemplation of this scene, Emily’s mind proceeded to the apprehension of what she might suffer in it, till the remembrance of Valancourt, far, far distant! came to her heart, and softened it into sorrow. A heavy sigh escaped her: but, trying to conceal her tears, she walked away to one of the high windows, that opened upon the ramparts, below which, spread the woods she had passed in her approach to the castle. But the nightshade sat deeply on the mountains beyond, and their indented

outline alone could be faintly traced on the horizon, where a red streak yet glimmered in the west. The valley between was sunk in darkness.

The scene within, upon which Emily turned on the opening of the door, was scarcely less gloomy. The old servant, who had received them at the gates, now entered, bending under a load of pine-branches, while two of Montoni's Venetian servants followed with lights.

'Your excellenza is welcome to the castle,' said the old man, as he raised himself from the hearth, where he had laid the wood: 'it has been a lonely place a long while; but you will excuse it, Signor, knowing we had but short notice. It is near two years, come next feast of St. Mark, since your excellenza was within these walls.'

'You have a good memory, old Carlo,' said Montoni: 'it is thereabout; and how hast thou contrived to live so long?'

'A-well-a-day, sir, with much ado; the cold winds, that blow through the castle in winter, are almost too much for me; and I thought sometimes of asking your excellenza to let me leave the mountains, and go down into the lowlands. But I don't know how it is — I am loth to quit these old walls I have lived in so long.'

'Well, how have you gone on in the castle, since I left it?' said Montoni.

'Why much as usual, Signor, only it wants a good deal of repairing. There is the north tower — some of the battlements have tumbled down, and had liked one day to have knocked my poor wife (God rest her soul!) on the head. Your excellenza must know' —

'Well, but the repairs,' interrupted Montoni.

'Aye, the repairs,' said Carlo: 'a part of the roof of the great hall has fallen in, and all the winds from the mountains rushed through it last winter, and whistled through the whole castle so, that there was no keeping one's self warm, be where one would. There, my wife and I used to sit shivering over a great fire in one corner of the little hall, ready to die with cold, and' —

'But there are no more repairs wanted,' said Montoni, impatiently.

'O Lord! Your excellenza, yes — the wall of the rampart has tumbled down in three places; then, the stairs, that lead to the west gallery, have been a long time so bad, that it is dangerous to go up them; and the passage leading to the great oak chamber, that overhangs the north rampart

— one night last winter I ventured to go there by myself, and your excellenza' —

'Well, well, enough of this,' said Montoni, with quickness: 'I will talk more with thee tomorrow.'

The fire was now lighted; Carlo swept the hearth, placed chairs, wiped the dust from a large marble table that stood near it, and then left the room.

Montoni and his family drew round the fire. Madame Montoni made several attempts at conversation, but his sullen answers repulsed her, while Emily sat endeavouring to acquire courage enough to speak to him. At length, in a tremulous voice, she said, 'May I ask, sir, the motive of this sudden journey?' — After a long pause, she recovered sufficient courage to repeat the question.

'It does not suit me to answer enquiries,' said Montoni, 'nor does it become you to make them; time may unfold them all: but I desire I may be no further harassed, and I recommend it to you to retire to your chamber, and to endeavour to adopt a more rational conduct, than that of yielding to fancies, and to a sensibility, which, to call it by the gentlest name, is only a weakness.'

Emily rose to withdraw. 'Good night, madam,' said she to her aunt, with an assumed composure, that could not disguise her emotion.

'Good night, my dear,' said Madame Montoni, in a tone of kindness, which her niece had never before heard from her; and the unexpected endearment brought tears to Emily's eyes. She curtsied to Montoni, and was retiring; 'But you do not know the way to your chamber,' said her aunt. Montoni called the servant, who waited in the ante-room, and bade him send Madame Montoni's woman, with whom, in a few minutes, Emily withdrew.

'Do you know which is my room?' said she to Annette, as they crossed the hall.

'Yes, I believe I do, ma'amselle; but this is such a strange rambling place! I have been lost in it already: they call it the double chamber, over the south rampart, and I went up this great staircase to it. My lady's room is at the other end of the castle.'

Emily ascended the marble staircase, and came to the corridor, as they passed through which, Annette resumed her chat— 'What a wild lonely

place this is, ma’am! I shall be quite frightened to live in it. How often, and often have I wished myself in France again! I little thought, when I came with my lady to see the world, that I should ever be shut up in such a place as this, or I would never have left my own country! This way, ma’amselle, down this turning. I can almost believe in giants again, and such like, for this is just like one of their castles; and, some night or other, I suppose I shall see fairies too, hopping about in that great old hall, that looks more like a church, with its huge pillars, than any thing else.’

‘Yes,’ said Emily, smiling, and glad to escape from more serious thought, ‘if we come to the corridor, about midnight, and look down into the hall, we shall certainly see it illuminated with a thousand lamps, and the fairies tripping in gay circles to the sound of delicious music; for it is in such places as this, you know, that they come to hold their revels. But I am afraid, Annette, you will not be able to pay the necessary penance for such a sight: and, if once they hear your voice, the whole scene will vanish in an instant.’

‘O! if you will bear me company, ma’amselle, I will come to the corridor, this very night, and I promise you I will hold my tongue; it shall not be my fault if the show vanishes. — But do you think they will come?’

‘I cannot promise that with certainty, but I will venture to say, it will not be your fault if the enchantment should vanish.’

‘Well, ma’amselle, that is saying more than I expected of you: but I am not so much afraid of fairies, as of ghosts, and they say there are a plentiful many of them about the castle: now I should be frightened to death, if I should chance to see any of them. But hush! ma’amselle, walk softly! I have thought, several times, something passed by me.’

‘Ridiculous!’ said Emily, ‘you must not indulge such fancies.’

‘O ma’am! they are not fancies, for aught I know; Benedetto says these dismal galleries and halls are fit for nothing but ghosts to live in; and I verily believe, if I LIVE long in them I shall turn to one myself!’

‘I hope,’ said Emily, ‘you will not suffer Signor Montoni to hear of these weak fears; they would highly displease him.’

‘What, you know then, ma’amselle, all about it!’ rejoined Annette. ‘No, no, I do know better than to do so; though, if the Signor can sleep sound, nobody else in the castle has any right to lie awake, I am sure.’ Emily did not appear to notice this remark.

‘Down this passage, ma’amselle; this leads to a back staircase. O! if I see any thing, I shall be frightened out of my wits!’

‘That will scarcely be possible,’ said Emily smiling, as she followed the winding of the passage, which opened into another gallery: and then Annette, perceiving that she had missed her way, while she had been so eloquently haranguing on ghosts and fairies, wandered about through other passages and galleries, till, at length, frightened by their intricacies and desolation, she called aloud for assistance: but they were beyond the hearing of the servants, who were on the other side of the castle, and Emily now opened the door of a chamber on the left.

‘O! do not go in there, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘you will only lose yourself further.’

‘Bring the light forward,’ said Emily, ‘we may possibly find our way through these rooms.’

Annette stood at the door, in an attitude of hesitation, with the light held up to shew the chamber, but the feeble rays spread through not half of it. ‘Why do you hesitate?’ said Emily, ‘let me see whither this room leads.’

Annette advanced reluctantly. It opened into a suite of spacious and ancient apartments, some of which were hung with tapestry, and others wainscoted with cedar and black larch-wood. What furniture there was, seemed to be almost as old as the rooms, and retained an appearance of grandeur, though covered with dust, and dropping to pieces with the damps, and with age.

‘How cold these rooms are, ma’amselle!’ said Annette: ‘nobody has lived in them for many, many years, they say. Do let us go.’

‘They may open upon the great staircase, perhaps,’ said Emily, passing on till she came to a chamber, hung with pictures, and took the light to examine that of a soldier on horseback in a field of battle. — He was darting his spear upon a man, who lay under the feet of the horse, and who held up one hand in a supplicating attitude. The soldier, whose beaver was up, regarded him with a look of vengeance, and the countenance, with that expression, struck Emily as resembling Montoni. She shuddered, and turned from it. Passing the light hastily over several other pictures, she came to one concealed by a veil of black silk. The singularity of the circumstance struck her, and she stopped before it, wishing to remove the veil, and examine what could thus carefully be concealed, but somewhat

wanting courage. ‘Holy Virgin! what can this mean?’ exclaimed Annette. ‘This is surely the picture they told me of at Venice.’

‘What picture?’ said Emily. ‘Why a picture — a picture,’ replied Annette, hesitatingly— ‘but I never could make out exactly what it was about, either.’

‘Remove the veil, Annette.’

‘What! I, ma’amselle! — I! not for the world!’ Emily, turning round, saw Annette’s countenance grow pale. ‘And pray, what have you heard of this picture, to terrify you so, my good girl?’ said she. ‘Nothing, ma’amselle: I have heard nothing, only let us find our way out.’

‘Certainly: but I wish first to examine the picture; take the light, Annette, while I lift the veil.’ Annette took the light, and immediately walked away with it, disregarding Emily’s call to stay, who, not choosing to be left alone in the dark chamber, at length followed her. ‘What is the reason of this, Annette?’ said Emily, when she overtook her, ‘what have you heard concerning that picture, which makes you so unwilling to stay when I bid you?’

‘I don’t know what is the reason, ma’amselle, replied Annette, ‘nor any thing about the picture, only I have heard there is something very dreadful belonging to it — and that it has been covered up in black EVER SINCE — and that nobody has looked at it for a great many years — and it somehow has to do with the owner of this castle before Signor Montoni came to the possession of it — and’ —

‘Well, Annette,’ said Emily, smiling, ‘I perceive it is as you say — that you know nothing about the picture.’

‘No, nothing, indeed, ma’amselle, for they made me promise never to tell: — but’ —

‘Well,’ rejoined Emily, who observed that she was struggling between her inclination to reveal a secret, and her apprehension for the consequence, ‘I will enquire no further’ —

‘No, pray, ma’am, do not.’

‘Lest you should tell all,’ interrupted Emily.

Annette blushed, and Emily smiled, and they passed on to the extremity of this suite of apartments, and found themselves, after some further perplexity, once more at the top of the marble staircase, where Annette left

Emily, while she went to call one of the servants of the castle to shew them to the chamber, for which they had been seeking.

While she was absent, Emily's thoughts returned to the picture; an unwillingness to tamper with the integrity of a servant, had checked her enquiries on this subject, as well as concerning some alarming hints, which Annette had dropped respecting Montoni; though her curiosity was entirely awakened, and she had perceived, that her questions might easily be answered. She was now, however, inclined to go back to the apartment and examine the picture; but the loneliness of the hour and of the place, with the melancholy silence that reigned around her, conspired with a certain degree of awe, excited by the mystery attending this picture, to prevent her. She determined, however, when daylight should have reanimated her spirits, to go thither and remove the veil. As she leaned from the corridor, over the staircase, and her eyes wandered round, she again observed, with wonder, the vast strength of the walls, now somewhat decayed, and the pillars of solid marble, that rose from the hall, and supported the roof.

A servant now appeared with Annette, and conducted Emily to her chamber, which was in a remote part of the castle, and at the very end of the corridor, from whence the suite of apartments opened, through which they had been wandering. The lonely aspect of her room made Emily unwilling that Annette should leave her immediately, and the dampness of it chilled her with more than fear. She begged Caterina, the servant of the castle, to bring some wood and light a fire.

'Aye, lady, it's many a year since a fire was lighted here,' said Caterina.

'You need not tell us that, good woman,' said Annette; 'every room in the castle feels like a well. I wonder how you contrive to live here; for my part, I wish myself at Venice again.' Emily waved her hand for Caterina to fetch the wood.

'I wonder, ma'am, why they call this the double chamber?' said Annette, while Emily surveyed it in silence and saw that it was lofty and spacious, like the others she had seen, and, like many of them, too, had its walls lined with dark larch-wood. The bed and other furniture was very ancient, and had an air of gloomy grandeur, like all that she had seen in the castle. One of the high casements, which she opened, overlooked a rampart, but the view beyond was hid in darkness.

In the presence of Annette, Emily tried to support her spirits, and to restrain the tears, which, every now and then, came to her eyes. She wished much to enquire when Count Morano was expected at the castle, but an unwillingness to ask unnecessary questions, and to mention family concerns to a servant, withheld her. Meanwhile, Annette's thoughts were engaged upon another subject: she dearly loved the marvellous, and had heard of a circumstance, connected with the castle, that highly gratified this taste. Having been enjoined not to mention it, her inclination to tell it was so strong, that she was every instant on the point of speaking what she had heard. Such a strange circumstance, too, and to be obliged to conceal it, was a severe punishment; but she knew, that Montoni might impose one much severer, and she feared to incur it by offending him.

Caterina now brought the wood, and its bright blaze dispelled, for a while, the gloom of the chamber. She told Annette, that her lady had enquired for her, and Emily was once again left to her own sad reflections. Her heart was not yet hardened against the stern manners of Montoni, and she was nearly as much shocked now, as she had been when she first witnessed them. The tenderness and affection, to which she had been accustomed, till she lost her parents, had made her particularly sensible to any degree of unkindness, and such a reverse as this no apprehension had prepared her to support.

To call off her attention from subjects, that pressed heavily on her spirits, she rose and again examined her room and its furniture. As she walked round it, she passed a door, that was not quite shut, and, perceiving, that it was not the one, through which she entered, she brought the light forward to discover whither it led. She opened it, and, going forward, had nearly fallen down a steep, narrow staircase that wound from it, between two stone walls. She wished to know to what it led, and was the more anxious, since it communicated so immediately with her apartment; but, in the present state of her spirits, she wanted courage to venture into the darkness alone. Closing the door, therefore, she endeavoured to fasten it, but, upon further examination, perceived, that it had no bolts on the chamber side, though it had two on the other. By placing a heavy chair against it, she in some measure remedied the defect; yet she was still alarmed at the thought of sleeping in this remote room alone, with a door opening she knew not whither, and which could not be perfectly fastened

on the inside. Sometimes she wished to entreat of Madame Montoni, that Annette might have leave to remain with her all night, but was deterred by an apprehension of betraying what would be thought childish fears, and by an unwillingness to increase the apt terrors of Annette.

Her gloomy reflections were, soon after, interrupted by a footstep in the corridor, and she was glad to see Annette enter with some supper, sent by Madame Montoni. Having a table near the fire, she made the good girl sit down and sup with her; and, when their little repast was over, Annette, encouraged by her kindness and stirring the wood into a blaze, drew her chair upon the hearth, nearer to Emily, and said— 'Did you ever hear, ma'amselle, of the strange accident, that made the Signor lord of this castle?'

'What wonderful story have you now to tell?' said Emily, concealing the curiosity, occasioned by the mysterious hints she had formerly heard on that subject.

'I have heard all about it, ma'amselle,' said Annette, looking round the chamber and drawing closer to Emily; 'Benedetto told it me as we travelled together: says he, "Annette, you don't know about this castle here, that we are going to?" No, says I, Mr. Benedetto, pray what do you know? But, ma'amselle, you can keep a secret, or I would not tell it you for the world; for I promised never to tell, and they say, that the Signor does not like to have it talked of.'

'If you promised to keep this secret,' said Emily, 'you do right not to mention it.'

Annette paused a moment, and then said, 'O, but to you, ma'amselle, to you I may tell it safely, I know.'

Emily smiled, 'I certainly shall keep it as faithful as yourself, Annette.'

Annette replied very gravely, that would do, and proceeded— 'This castle, you must know, ma'amselle, is very old, and very strong, and has stood out many sieges as they say. Now it was not Signor Montoni's always, nor his father's; no; but, by some law or other, it was to come to the Signor, if the lady died unmarried.'

'What lady?' said Emily.

'I am not come to that yet,' replied Annette, 'it is the lady I am going to tell you about, ma'amselle: but, as I was saying, this lady lived in the castle, and had everything very grand about her, as you may suppose,

ma’amselle. The Signor used often to come to see her, and was in love with her, and offered to marry her; for, though he was somehow related, that did not signify. But she was in love with somebody else, and would not have him, which made him very angry, as they say, and you know, ma’amselle, what an ill-looking gentleman he is, when he is angry. Perhaps she saw him in a passion, and therefore would not have him. But, as I was saying, she was very melancholy and unhappy, and all that, for a long while, and — Holy Virgin! what noise is that? did not you hear a sound, ma’amselle?’

‘It was only the wind,’ said Emily, ‘but do come to the end of your story.’

‘As I was saying — O, where was I? — as I was saying — she was very melancholy and unhappy a long while, and used to walk about upon the terrace, there, under the windows, by herself, and cry so! it would have done your heart good to hear her. That is — I don’t mean good, but it would have made you cry too, as they tell me.’

‘Well, but, Annette, do tell me the substance of your tale.’

‘All in good time, ma’am; all this I heard before at Venice, but what is to come I never heard till to-day. This happened a great many years ago, when Signor Montoni was quite a young man. The lady — they called her Signora Laurentini, was very handsome, but she used to be in great passions, too, sometimes, as well as the Signor. Finding he could not make her listen to him — what does he do, but leave the castle, and never comes near it for a long time! but it was all one to her; she was just as unhappy whether he was here or not, till one evening, Holy St. Peter! ma’amselle,’ cried Annette, ‘look at that lamp, see how blue it burns!’ She looked fearfully round the chamber. ‘Ridiculous girl!’ said Emily, ‘why will you indulge those fancies? Pray let me hear the end of your story, I am weary.’

Annette still kept her eyes on the lamp, and proceeded in a lower voice. ‘It was one evening, they say, at the latter end of the year, it might be about the middle of September, I suppose, or the beginning of October; nay, for that matter, it might be November, for that, too, is the latter end of the year, but that I cannot say for certain, because they did not tell me for certain themselves. However, it was at the latter end of the year, this grand lady walked out of the castle into the woods below, as she had often done before, all alone, only her maid was with her. The wind blew cold, and

strewed the leaves about, and whistled dismally among those great old chesnut trees, that we passed, ma'amselle, as we came to the castle — for Benedetto shewed me the trees as he was talking — the wind blew cold, and her woman would have persuaded her to return: but all would not do, for she was fond of walking in the woods, at evening time, and, if the leaves were falling about her, so much the better.

'Well, they saw her go down among the woods, but night came, and she did not return: ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock came, and no lady! Well, the servants thought to be sure, some accident had befallen her, and they went out to seek her. They searched all night long, but could not find her, or any trace of her; and, from that day to this, ma'amselle, she has never been heard of.'

'Is this true, Annette?' said Emily, in much surprise.

'True, ma'am!' said Annette, with a look of horror, 'yes, it is true, indeed. But they do say,' she added, lowering her voice, 'they do say, that the Signora has been seen, several times since, walking in the woods and about the castle in the night: several of the old servants, who remained here some time after, declare they saw her; and, since then, she has been seen by some of the vassals, who have happened to be in the castle, at night. Carlo, the old steward, could tell such things, they say, if he would.'

'How contradictory is this, Annette!' said Emily, 'you say nothing has been since known of her, and yet she has been seen!'

'But all this was told me for a great secret,' rejoined Annette, without noticing the remark, 'and I am sure, ma'am, you would not hurt either me or Benedetto, so much as to go and tell it again.' Emily remained silent, and Annette repeated her last sentence.

'You have nothing to fear from my indiscretion,' replied Emily, 'and let me advise you, my good Annette, be discreet yourself, and never mention what you have just told me to any other person. Signor Montoni, as you say, may be angry if he hears of it. But what inquiries were made concerning the lady?'

'O! a great deal, indeed, ma'amselle, for the Signor laid claim to the castle directly, as being the next heir, and they said, that is, the judges, or the senators, or somebody of that sort, said, he could not take possession of it till so many years were gone by, and then, if, after all, the lady could not be found, why she would be as good as dead, and the castle would be

his own; and so it is his own. But the story went round, and many strange reports were spread, so very strange, ma'amselle, that I shall not tell them.'

'That is stranger still, Annette,' said Emily, smiling, and rousing herself from her reverie. 'But, when Signora Laurentini was afterwards seen in the castle, did nobody speak to her?'

'Speak — speak to her!' cried Annette, with a look of terror; 'no, to be sure.'

'And why not?' rejoined Emily, willing to hear further.

'Holy Mother! speak to a spirit!'

'But what reason had they to conclude it was a spirit, unless they had approached, and spoken to it?' 'O ma'amselle, I cannot tell. How can you ask such shocking questions? But nobody ever saw it come in, or go out of the castle; and it was in one place now, and then the next minute in quite another part of the castle; and then it never spoke, and, if it was alive, what should it do in the castle if it never spoke? Several parts of the castle have never been gone into since, they say, for that very reason.'

'What, because it never spoke?' said Emily, trying to laugh away the fears that began to steal upon her.— 'No, ma'amselle, no;' replied Annette, rather angrily 'but because something has been seen there. They say, too, there is an old chapel adjoining the west side of the castle, where, any time at midnight, you may hear such groans! — it makes one shudder to think of them! — and strange sights have been seen there— '

'Pr'ythee, Annette, no more of these silly tales,' said Emily.

'Silly tales, ma'amselle! O, but I will tell you one story about this, if you please, that Caterina told me. It was one cold winter's night that Caterina (she often came to the castle then, she says, to keep old Carlo and his wife company, and so he recommended her afterwards to the Signor, and she has lived here ever since) Caterina was sitting with them in the little hall, says Carlo, "I wish we had some of those figs to roast, that lie in the store-closet, but it is a long way off, and I am loath to fetch them; do, Caterina," says he, "for you are young and nimble, do bring us some, the fire is in nice trim for roasting them; they lie," says he, "in such a corner of the store-room, at the end of the north-gallery; here, take the lamp," says he, "and mind, as you go up the great staircase, that the wind, through

the roof, does not blow it out.” So, with that, Caterina took the lamp — Hush! ma’amselle, I surely heard a noise!’

Emily, whom Annette had now infected with her own terrors, listened attentively; but every thing was still, and Annette proceeded:

‘Caterina went to the north-gallery, that is the wide gallery we passed, ma’am, before we came to the corridor, here. As she went with the lamp in her hand, thinking of nothing at all — There, again!’ cried Annette suddenly— ‘I heard it again! — it was not fancy, ma’amselle!’

‘Hush!’ said Emily, trembling. They listened, and, continuing to sit quite still, Emily heard a low knocking against the wall. It came repeatedly. Annette then screamed loudly, and the chamber door slowly opened. — It was Caterina, come to tell Annette, that her lady wanted her. Emily, though she now perceived who it was, could not immediately overcome her terror; while Annette, half laughing, half crying, scolded Caterina heartily for thus alarming them; and was also terrified lest what she had told had been overheard. — Emily, whose mind was deeply impressed by the chief circumstance of Annette’s relation, was unwilling to be left alone, in the present state of her spirits; but, to avoid offending Madame Montoni, and betraying her own weakness, she struggled to overcome the illusions of fear, and dismissed Annette for the night.

When she was alone, her thoughts recurred to the strange history of Signora Laurentini and then to her own strange situation, in the wild and solitary mountains of a foreign country, in the castle, and the power of a man, to whom, only a few preceding months, she was an entire stranger; who had already exercised an usurped authority over her, and whose character she now regarded, with a degree of terror, apparently justified by the fears of others. She knew, that he had invention equal to the conception and talents to the execution of any project, and she greatly feared he had a heart too void of feeling to oppose the perpetration of whatever his interest might suggest. She had long observed the unhappiness of Madame Montoni, and had often been witness to the stern and contemptuous behaviour she received from her husband. To these circumstances, which conspired to give her just cause for alarm, were now added those thousand nameless terrors, which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance.

Emily remembered all that Valancourt had told her, on the eve of her departure from Languedoc, respecting Montoni, and all that he had said to dissuade her from venturing on the journey. His fears had often since appeared to her prophetic — now they seemed confirmed. Her heart, as it gave her back the image of Valancourt, mourned in vain regret, but reason soon came with a consolation which, though feeble at first, acquired vigour from reflection. She considered, that, whatever might be her sufferings, she had withheld from involving him in misfortune, and that, whatever her future sorrows could be, she was, at least, free from self-reproach.

Her melancholy was assisted by the hollow sighings of the wind along the corridor and round the castle. The cheerful blaze of the wood had long been extinguished, and she sat with her eyes fixed on the dying embers, till a loud gust, that swept through the corridor, and shook the doors and casements, alarmed her, for its violence had moved the chair she had placed as a fastening, and the door, leading to the private staircase stood half open. Her curiosity and her fears were again awakened. She took the lamp to the top of the steps, and stood hesitating whether to go down; but again the profound stillness and the gloom of the place awed her, and, determining to enquire further, when daylight might assist the search, she closed the door, and placed against it a stronger guard.

She now retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the table; but its gloomy light, instead of dispelling her fear, assisted it; for, by its uncertain rays, she almost fancied she saw shapes flit past her curtains and glide into the remote obscurity of her chamber. — The castle clock struck one before she closed her eyes to sleep.

CHAPTER VI

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes,
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me!

JULIUS CAESAR

Daylight dispelled from Emily's mind the glooms of superstition, but not those of apprehension. The Count Morano was the first image, that occurred to her waking thoughts, and then came a train of anticipated evils, which she could neither conquer, nor avoid. She rose, and, to relieve her mind from the busy ideas, that tormented it, compelled herself to notice external objects. From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by alpine steeps, whose tops, peeping over each other, faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below were dark with woods, that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow vallies. The rich pomp of these woods was particularly delightful to Emily; and she viewed with astonishment the fortifications of the castle spreading along a vast extent of rock, and now partly in decay, the grandeur of the ramparts below, and the towers and battlements and various features of the fabric above. From these her sight wandered over the cliffs and woods into the valley, along which foamed a broad and rapid stream, seen falling among the crags of an opposite mountain, now flashing in the sunbeams, and now shadowed by overarching pines, till it was entirely concealed by their thick foliage. Again it burst from beneath this darkness in one broad sheet of foam, and fell thundering into the vale. Nearer, towards the west, opened the mountain-vista, which Emily had viewed with such sublime emotion, on her approach to the castle: a thin dusky vapour, that rose from the valley, overspread its features with a sweet obscurity. As this ascended and caught the sunbeams, it kindled into a crimson tint, and touched with exquisite beauty the woods and cliffs, over which it passed to the summit of the mountains; then, as the veil drew up, it was delightful to watch the gleaming objects, that progressively disclosed themselves in the valley — the green turf — dark woods — little rocky recesses — a few peasants' huts — the foaming stream — a herd of cattle, and various images of pastoral beauty. Then, the pine-forests brightened, and then the broad breast of the mountains, till, at length, the mist settled round their summit, touching them with a ruddy glow. The features of the vista now appeared

distinctly, and the broad deep shadows, that fell from the lower cliffs, gave strong effect to the streaming splendour above; while the mountains, gradually sinking in the perspective, appeared to shelve into the Adriatic sea, for such Emily imagined to be the gleam of blueish light, that terminated the view.

Thus she endeavoured to amuse her fancy, and was not unsuccessful. The breezy freshness of the morning, too, revived her. She raised her thoughts in prayer, which she felt always most disposed to do, when viewing the sublimity of nature, and her mind recovered its strength.

When she turned from the casement, her eyes glanced upon the door she had so carefully guarded, on the preceding night, and she now determined to examine whither it led; but, on advancing to remove the chairs, she perceived, that they were already moved a little way. Her surprise cannot be easily imagined, when, in the next minute, she perceived that the door was fastened. — She felt, as if she had seen an apparition. The door of the corridor was locked as she had left it, but this door, which could be secured only on the outside, must have been bolted, during the night. She became seriously uneasy at the thought of sleeping again in a chamber, thus liable to intrusion, so remote, too, as it was from the family, and she determined to mention the circumstance to Madame Montoni, and to request a change.

After some perplexity she found her way into the great hall, and to the room, which she had left, on the preceding night, where breakfast was spread, and her aunt was alone, for Montoni had been walking over the environs of the castle, examining the condition of its fortifications, and talking for some time with Carlo. Emily observed that her aunt had been weeping, and her heart softened towards her, with an affection, that shewed itself in her manner, rather than in words, while she carefully avoided the appearance of having noticed, that she was unhappy. She seized the opportunity of Montoni’s absence to mention the circumstance of the door, to request that she might be allowed another apartment, and to enquire again, concerning the occasion of their sudden journey. On the first subject her aunt referred her to Montoni, positively refusing to interfere in the affair; on the last, she professed utter ignorance.

Emily, then, with a wish of making her aunt more reconciled to her situation, praised the grandeur of the castle and the surrounding scenery,

and endeavoured to soften every unpleasing circumstance attending it. But, though misfortune had somewhat conquered the asperities of Madame Montoni's temper, and, by increasing her cares for herself, had taught her to feel in some degree for others, the capricious love of rule, which nature had planted and habit had nourished in her heart, was not subdued. She could not now deny herself the gratification of tyrannizing over the innocent and helpless Emily, by attempting to ridicule the taste she could not feel.

Her satirical discourse was, however, interrupted by the entrance of Montoni, and her countenance immediately assumed a mingled expression of fear and resentment, while he seated himself at the breakfast-table, as if unconscious of there being any person but himself in the room.

Emily, as she observed him in silence, saw, that his countenance was darker and sterner than usual. 'O could I know,' said she to herself, 'what passes in that mind; could I know the thoughts, that are known there, I should no longer be condemned to this torturing suspense!' Their breakfast passed in silence, till Emily ventured to request, that another apartment might be allotted to her, and related the circumstance which made her wish it.

'I have no time to attend to these idle whims,' said Montoni, 'that chamber was prepared for you, and you must rest contented with it. It is not probable, that any person would take the trouble of going to that remote staircase, for the purpose of fastening a door. If it was not fastened, when you entered the chamber, the wind, perhaps, shook the door and made the bolts slide. But I know not why I should undertake to account for so trifling an occurrence.'

This explanation was by no means satisfactory to Emily, who had observed, that the bolts were rusted, and consequently could not be thus easily moved; but she forbore to say so, and repeated her request.

'If you will not release yourself from the slavery of these fears,' said Montoni, sternly, 'at least forbear to torment others by the mention of them. Conquer such whims, and endeavour to strengthen your mind. No existence is more contemptible than that, which is embittered by fear.' As he said this, his eye glanced upon Madame Montoni, who coloured highly, but was still silent. Emily, wounded and disappointed, thought her fears were, in this instance, too reasonable to deserve ridicule; but, perceiving,

that, however they might oppress her, she must endure them, she tried to withdraw her attention from the subject.

Carlo soon after entered with some fruit:

‘Your excellenza is tired after your long ramble,’ said he, as he set the fruit upon the table; ‘but you have more to see after breakfast. There is a place in the vaulted passage leading to— ‘

Montoni frowned upon him, and waved his hand for him to leave the room. Carlo stopped, looked down, and then added, as he advanced to the breakfast-table, and took up the basket of fruit, ‘I made bold, your excellenza, to bring some cherries, here, for my honoured lady and my young mistress. Will your ladyship taste them, madam?’ said Carlo, presenting the basket, ‘they are very fine ones, though I gathered them myself, and from an old tree, that catches all the south sun; they are as big as plums, your ladyship.’

‘Very well, old Carlo,’ said Madame Montoni; ‘I am obliged to you.’

‘And the young Signora, too, she may like some of them,’ rejoined Carlo, turning with the basket to Emily, ‘it will do me good to see her eat some.’

‘Thank you, Carlo,’ said Emily, taking some cherries, and smiling kindly.

‘Come, come,’ said Montoni, impatiently, ‘enough of this. Leave the room, but be in waiting. I shall want you presently.’

Carlo obeyed, and Montoni, soon after, went out to examine further into the state of the castle; while Emily remained with her aunt, patiently enduring her ill humour, and endeavouring, with much sweetness, to soothe her affliction, instead of resenting its effect.

When Madame Montoni retired to her dressing-room, Emily endeavoured to amuse herself by a view of the castle. Through a folding door she passed from the great hall to the ramparts, which extended along the brow of the precipice, round three sides of the edifice; the fourth was guarded by the high walls of the courts, and by the gateway, through which she had passed, on the preceding evening. The grandeur of the broad ramparts, and the changing scenery they overlooked, excited her high admiration; for the extent of the terraces allowed the features of the country to be seen in such various points of view, that they appeared to form new landscapes. She often paused to examine the gothic

magnificence of Udolpho, its proud irregularity, its lofty towers and battlements, its high-arched casements, and its slender watchtowers, perched upon the corners of turrets. Then she would lean on the wall of the terrace, and, shuddering, measure with her eye the precipice below, till the dark summits of the woods arrested it. Wherever she turned, appeared mountain-tops, forests of pine and narrow glens, opening among the Apennines and retiring from the sight into inaccessible regions.

While she thus leaned, Montoni, followed by two men, appeared, ascending a winding path, cut in the rock below. He stopped upon a cliff, and, pointing to the ramparts, turned to his followers, and talked with much eagerness of gesticulation. — Emily perceived, that one of these men was Carlo; the other was in the dress of a peasant, and he alone seemed to be receiving the directions of Montoni.

She withdrew from the walls, and pursued her walk, till she heard at a distance the sound of carriage wheels, and then the loud bell of the portal, when it instantly occurred to her, that Count Morano was arrived. As she hastily passed the folding doors from the terrace, towards her own apartment, several persons entered the hall by an opposite door. She saw them at the extremities of the arcades, and immediately retreated; but the agitation of her spirits, and the extent and duskiness of the hall, had prevented her from distinguishing the persons of the strangers. Her fears, however, had but one object, and they had called up that object to her fancy: — she believed that she had seen Count Morano.

When she thought that they had passed the hall, she ventured again to the door, and proceeded, unobserved, to her room, where she remained, agitated with apprehensions, and listening to every distant sound. At length, hearing voices on the rampart, she hastened to her window, and observed Montoni, with Signor Cavigni, walking below, conversing earnestly, and often stopping and turning towards each other, at which time their discourse seemed to be uncommonly interesting.

Of the several persons who had appeared in the hall, here was Cavigni alone: but Emily’s alarm was soon after heightened by the steps of some one in the corridor, who, she apprehended, brought a message from the Count. In the next moment, Annette appeared.

‘Ah! ma’amselle,’ said she, ‘here is the Signor Cavigni arrived! I am sure I rejoiced to see a christian person in this place; and then he is so

good natured too, he always takes so much notice of me! — And here is also Signor Verezzi, and who do you think besides, ma'amselle?'

'I cannot guess, Annette; tell me quickly.'

'Nay, ma'am, do guess once.'

'Well, then,' said Emily, with assumed composure, 'it is — Count Morano, I suppose.'

'Holy Virgin!' cried Annette, 'are you ill, ma'amselle? you are going to faint! let me get some water.'

Emily sunk into a chair. 'Stay, Annette,' said she, feebly, 'do not leave me — I shall soon be better; open the casement. — The Count, you say — he is come, then?'

'Who, I! — the Count! No, ma'amselle, I did not say so.' 'He is NOT come then?' said Emily eagerly. 'No, ma'amselle.'

'You are sure of it?'

'Lord bless me!' said Annette, 'you recover very suddenly, ma'am! why, I thought you was dying, just now.'

'But the Count — you are sure, is not come?'

'O yes, quite sure of that, ma'amselle. Why, I was looking out through the grate in the north turret, when the carriages drove into the courtyard, and I never expected to see such a goodly sight in this dismal old castle! but here are masters and servants, too, enough to make the place ring again. O! I was ready to leap through the rusty old bars for joy! — O! who would ever have thought of seeing a christian face in this huge dreary house? I could have kissed the very horses that brought them.'

'Well, Annette, well, I am better now.'

'Yes, ma'amselle, I see you are. O! all the servants will lead merry lives here, now; we shall have singing and dancing in the little hall, for the Signor cannot hear us there — and droll stories — Ludovico's come, ma'am; yes, there is Ludovico come with them! You remember Ludovico, ma'am — a tall, handsome young man — Signor Cavigni's lacquey — who always wears his cloak with such a grace, thrown round his left arm, and his hat set on so smartly, all on one side, and— '

'No,' said Emily, who was wearied by her loquacity.

'What, ma'amselle, don't you remember Ludovico — who rowed the Cavaliero's gondola, at the last regatta, and won the prize? And who used to sing such sweet verses about Orlandos and about the Black-a-moors,

too; and Charly — Charly — magne, yes, that was the name, all under my lattice, in the west portico, on the moonlight nights at Venice? O! I have listened to him!' —

'I fear, to thy peril, my good Annette,' said Emily; 'for it seems his verses have stolen thy heart. But let me advise you; if it is so, keep the secret; never let him know it.'

'Ah — ma'amselle! — how can one keep such a secret as that?'

'Well, Annette, I am now so much better, that you may leave me.'

'O, but, ma'amselle, I forgot to ask — how did you sleep in this dreary old chamber last night?'— 'As well as usual.'— 'Did you hear no noises?'— 'None.'— 'Nor see anything?'— 'Nothing.'— 'Well, that is surprising!'— 'Not in the least: and now tell me, why you ask these questions.'

'O, ma'amselle! I would not tell you for the world, nor all I have heard about this chamber, either; it would frighten you so.'

'If that is all, you have frightened me already, and may therefore tell me what you know, without hurting your conscience.'

'O Lord! they say the room is haunted, and has been so these many years.'

'It is by a ghost, then, who can draw bolts,' said Emily, endeavouring to laugh away her apprehensions; 'for I left the door open, last night, and found it fastened this morning.'

Annette turned pale, and said not a word.

'Do you know whether any of the servants fastened this door in the morning, before I rose?'

'No, ma'am, that I will be bound they did not; but I don't know: shall I go and ask, ma'amselle?' said Annette, moving hastily towards the corridor.

'Stay, Annette, I have another question to ask; tell me what you have heard concerning this room, and whither that staircase leads.'

'I will go and ask it all directly, ma'am; besides, I am sure my lady wants me. I cannot stay now, indeed, ma'am.'

She hurried from the room, without waiting Emily's reply, whose heart, lightened by the certainty, that Morano was not arrived, allowed her to smile at the superstitious terror, which had seized on Annette; for, though

she sometimes felt its influence herself, she could smile at it, when apparent in other persons.

Montoni having refused Emily another chamber, she determined to bear with patience the evil she could not remove, and, in order to make the room as comfortable as possible, unpacked her books, her sweet delight in happier days, and her soothing resource in the hours of moderate sorrow: but there were hours when even these failed of their effect; when the genius, the taste, the enthusiasm of the sublimest writers were felt no longer.

Her little library being arranged on a high chest, part of the furniture of the room, she took out her drawing utensils, and was tranquil enough to be pleased with the thought of sketching the sublime scenes, beheld from her windows; but she suddenly checked this pleasure, remembering how often she had soothed herself by the intention of obtaining amusement of this kind, and had been prevented by some new circumstance of misfortune.

‘How can I suffer myself to be deluded by hope,’ said she, ‘and, because Count Morano is not yet arrived, feel a momentary happiness? Alas! what is it to me, whether he is here to-day, or tomorrow, if he comes at all? — and that he will come — it were weakness to doubt.’

To withdraw her thoughts, however, from the subject of her misfortunes, she attempted to read, but her attention wandered from the page, and, at length, she threw aside the book, and determined to explore the adjoining chambers of the castle. Her imagination was pleased with the view of ancient grandeur, and an emotion of melancholy awe awakened all its powers, as she walked through rooms, obscure and desolate, where no footsteps had passed probably for many years, and remembered the strange history of the former possessor of the edifice. This brought to her recollection the veiled picture, which had attracted her curiosity, on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. As she passed through the chambers, that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated; its connection with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil, throwing a mystery over the subject, that excited a faint degree of terror. But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high

expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object, from which we appear to shrink.

Emily passed on with faltering steps, and having paused a moment at the door, before she attempted to open it, she then hastily entered the chamber, and went towards the picture, which appeared to be enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again, and then, with a timid hand, lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall — perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and, before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor.

When she recovered her recollection, the remembrance of what she had seen had nearly deprived her of it a second time. She had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own; and, when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind, and excluded, for a time, all sense of past, and dread of future misfortune: she seated herself near the casement, because from thence she heard voices, though distant, on the terrace, and might see people pass, and these, trifling as they were, were reviving circumstances. When her spirits had recovered their tone, she considered, whether she should mention what she had seen to Madame Montoni, and various and important motives urged her to do so, among which the least was the hope of the relief, which an overburdened mind finds in speaking of the subject of its interest. But she was aware of the terrible consequences, which such a communication might lead to; and, dreading the indiscretion of her aunt, at length, endeavoured to arm herself with resolution to observe a profound silence, on the subject. Montoni and Verezzi soon after passed under the casement, speaking cheerfully, and their voices revived her. Presently the Signors Bertolini and Cavigni joined the party on the terrace, and Emily, supposing that Madame Montoni was then alone, went to seek her; for the solitude of her chamber, and its proximity to that where she had received so severe a shock, again affected her spirit.

She found her aunt in her dressing-room, preparing for dinner. Emily’s pale and affrighted countenance alarmed even Madame Montoni; but she had sufficient strength of mind to be silent on the subject, that still made her shudder, and which was ready to burst from her lips. In her aunt’s apartment she remained, till they both descended to dinner. There she met the gentlemen lately arrived, who had a kind of busy seriousness in their

looks, which was somewhat unusual with them, while their thoughts seemed too much occupied by some deep interest, to suffer them to bestow much attention either on Emily, or Madame Montoni. They spoke little, and Montoni less. Emily, as she now looked on him, shuddered. The horror of the chamber rushed on her mind. Several times the colour faded from her cheeks, and she feared, that illness would betray her emotions, and compel her to leave the room; but the strength of her resolution remedied the weakness of her frame; she obliged herself to converse, and even tried to look cheerful.

Montoni evidently laboured under some vexation, such as would probably have agitated a weaker mind, or a more susceptible heart, but which appeared, from the sternness of his countenance, only to bend up his faculties to energy and fortitude.

It was a comfortless and silent meal. The gloom of the castle seemed to have spread its contagion even over the gay countenance of Cavigni, and with this gloom was mingled a fierceness, such as she had seldom seen him indicate. Count Morano was not named, and what conversation there was, turned chiefly upon the wars, which at that time agitated the Italian states, the strength of the Venetian armies, and the characters of their generals.

After dinner, when the servants had withdrawn, Emily learned, that the cavalier, who had drawn upon himself the vengeance of Orsino, had since died of his wounds, and that strict search was still making for his murderer. The intelligence seemed to disturb Montoni, who mused, and then enquired, where Orsino had concealed himself. His guests, who all, except Cavigni, were ignorant, that Montoni had himself assisted him to escape from Venice, replied, that he had fled in the night with such precipitation and secrecy, that his most intimate companions knew not whither. Montoni blamed himself for having asked the question, for a second thought convinced him, that a man of Orsino’s suspicious temper was not likely to trust any of the persons present with the knowledge of his asylum. He considered himself, however, as entitled to his utmost confidence, and did not doubt, that he should soon hear of him.

Emily retired with Madame Montoni, soon after the cloth was withdrawn, and left the cavaliers to their secret councils, but not before the significant frowns of Montoni had warned his wife to depart, who passed

from the hall to the ramparts, and walked, for some time, in silence, which Emily did not interrupt, for her mind was also occupied by interests of its own. It required all her resolution, to forbear communicating to Madame Montoni the terrible subject, which still thrilled her every nerve with horror; and sometimes she was on the point of doing so, merely to obtain the relief of a moment; but she knew how wholly she was in the power of Montoni, and, considering, that the indiscretion of her aunt might prove fatal to them both, she compelled herself to endure a present and an inferior evil, rather than to tempt a future and a heavier one. A strange kind of presentiment frequently, on this day, occurred to her; — it seemed as if her fate rested here, and was by some invisible means connected with this castle.

‘Let me not accelerate it,’ said she to herself: ‘for whatever I may be reserved, let me, at least, avoid self-reproach.’

As she looked on the massy walls of the edifice, her melancholy spirits represented it to be her prison; and she started as at a new suggestion, when she considered how far distant she was from her native country, from her little peaceful home, and from her only friend — how remote was her hope of happiness, how feeble the expectation of again seeing him! Yet the idea of Valancourt, and her confidence in his faithful love, had hitherto been her only solace, and she struggled hard to retain them. A few tears of agony started to her eyes, which she turned aside to conceal.

While she afterwards leaned on the wall of the rampart, some peasants, at a little distance, were seen examining a breach, before which lay a heap of stones, as if to repair it, and a rusty old cannon, that appeared to have fallen from its station above. Madame Montoni stopped to speak to the men, and enquired what they were going to do. ‘To repair the fortifications, your ladyship,’ said one of them; a labour which she was somewhat surprised, that Montoni should think necessary, particularly since he had never spoken of the castle, as of a place, at which he meant to reside for any considerable time; but she passed on towards a lofty arch, that led from the south to the east rampart, and which adjoined the castle, on one side, while, on the other, it supported a small watchtower, that entirely commanded the deep valley below. As she approached this arch, she saw, beyond it, winding along the woody descent of a distant mountain, a long troop of horse and foot, whom she knew to be soldiers,

only by the glitter of their pikes and other arms, for the distance did not allow her to discover the colour of their liveries. As she gazed, the vanguard issued from the woods into the valley, but the train still continued to pour over the remote summit of the mountain, in endless succession; while, in the front, the military uniform became distinguishable, and the commanders, riding first, and seeming, by their gestures, to direct the march of those that followed, at length, approached very near to the castle.

Such a spectacle, in these solitary regions, both surprised and alarmed Madame Montoni, and she hastened towards some peasants, who were employed in raising bastions before the south rampart, where the rock was less abrupt than elsewhere. These men could give no satisfactory answers to her enquiries, but, being roused by them, gazed in stupid astonishment upon the long cavalcade. Madame Montoni, then thinking it necessary to communicate further the object of her alarm, sent Emily to say, that she wished to speak to Montoni; an errand her niece did not approve, for she dreaded his frowns, which she knew this message would provoke; but she obeyed in silence.

As she drew near the apartment, in which he sat with his guests, she heard them in earnest and loud dispute, and she paused a moment, trembling at the displeasure, which her sudden interruption would occasion. In the next, their voices sunk all together; she then ventured to open the door, and, while Montoni turned hastily and looked at her, without speaking, she delivered her message.

‘Tell Madam Montoni I am engaged,’ said he.

Emily then thought it proper to mention the subject of her alarm. Montoni and his companions rose instantly and went to the windows, but, these not affording them a view of the troops, they at length proceeded to the ramparts, where Cavigni conjectured it to be a legion of condottieri, on their march towards Modena.

One part of the cavalcade now extended along the valley, and another wound among the mountains towards the north, while some troops still lingered on the woody precipices, where the first had appeared, so that the great length of the procession seemed to include an whole army. While Montoni and his family watched its progress, they heard the sound of trumpets and the clash of cymbals in the vale, and then others, answering

from the heights. Emily listened with emotion to the shrill blast, that woke the echoes of the mountains, and Montoni explained the signals, with which he appeared to be well acquainted, and which meant nothing hostile. The uniforms of the troops, and the kind of arms they bore, confirmed to him the conjecture of Cavigni, and he had the satisfaction to see them pass by, without even stopping to gaze upon his castle. He did not, however, leave the rampart, till the bases of the mountains had shut them from his view, and the last murmur of the trumpet floated away on the wind. Cavigni and Verezzi were inspirited by this spectacle, which seemed to have roused all the fire of their temper; Montoni turned into the castle in thoughtful silence.

Emily's mind had not yet sufficiently recovered from its late shock, to endure the loneliness of her chamber, and she remained upon the ramparts; for Madame Montoni had not invited her to her dressing-room, whither she had gone evidently in low spirits, and Emily, from her late experience, had lost all wish to explore the gloomy and mysterious recesses of the castle. The ramparts, therefore, were almost her only retreat, and here she lingered, till the gray haze of evening was again spread over the scene.

The cavaliers supped by themselves, and Madame Montoni remained in her apartment, whither Emily went, before she retired to her own. She found her aunt weeping, and in much agitation. The tenderness of Emily was naturally so soothing, that it seldom failed to give comfort to the drooping heart: but Madame Montoni's was torn, and the softest accents of Emily's voice were lost upon it. With her usual delicacy, she did not appear to observe her aunt's distress, but it gave an involuntary gentleness to her manners, and an air of solicitude to her countenance, which Madame Montoni was vexed to perceive, who seemed to feel the pity of her niece to be an insult to her pride, and dismissed her as soon as she properly could. Emily did not venture to mention again the reluctance she felt to her gloomy chamber, but she requested that Annette might be permitted to remain with her till she retired to rest; and the request was somewhat reluctantly granted. Annette, however, was now with the servants, and Emily withdrew alone.

With light and hasty steps she passed through the long galleries, while the feeble glimmer of the lamp she carried only shewed the gloom around her, and the passing air threatened to extinguish it. The lonely silence, that

reigned in this part of the castle, awed her; now and then, indeed, she heard a faint peal of laughter rise from a remote part of the edifice, where the servants were assembled, but it was soon lost, and a kind of breathless stillness remained. As she passed the suite of rooms which she had visited in the morning, her eyes glanced fearfully on the door, and she almost fancied she heard murmuring sounds within, but she paused not a moment to enquire.

Having reached her own apartment, where no blazing wood on the hearth dissipated the gloom, she sat down with a book, to enliven her attention, till Annette should come, and a fire could be kindled. She continued to read till her light was nearly expired, but Annette did not appear, and the solitude and obscurity of her chamber again affected her spirits, the more, because of its nearness to the scene of horror, that she had witnessed in the morning. Gloomy and fantastic images came to her mind. She looked fearfully towards the door of the staircase, and then, examining whether it was still fastened, found that it was so. Unable to conquer the uneasiness she felt at the prospect of sleeping again in this remote and insecure apartment, which some person seemed to have entered during the preceding night, her impatience to see Annette, whom she had bidden to enquire concerning this circumstance, became extremely painful. She wished also to question her, as to the object, which had excited so much horror in her own mind, and which Annette on the preceding evening had appeared to be in part acquainted with, though her words were very remote from the truth, and it appeared plainly to Emily, that the girl had been purposely misled by a false report: above all she was surprised, that the door of the chamber, which contained it, should be left unguarded. Such an instance of negligence almost surpassed belief. But her light was now expiring; the faint flashes it threw upon the walls called up all the terrors of fancy, and she rose to find her way to the habitable part of the castle, before it was quite extinguished. As she opened the chamber door, she heard remote voices, and, soon after, saw a light issue upon the further end of the corridor, which Annette and another servant approached. ‘I am glad you are come,’ said Emily: ‘what has detained you so long? Pray light me a fire immediately.’

‘My lady wanted me, ma’amselle,’ replied Annette in some confusion; ‘I will go and get the wood.’

‘No,’ said Caterina, ‘that is my business,’ and left the room instantly, while Annette would have followed; but, being called back, she began to talk very loud, and laugh, and seemed afraid to trust a pause of silence.

Caterina soon returned with the wood, and then, when the cheerful blaze once more animated the room, and this servant had withdrawn, Emily asked Annette, whether she had made the enquiry she bade her. ‘Yes, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘but not a soul knows any thing about the matter: and old Carlo — I watched him well, for they say he knows strange things — old Carlo looked so as I don’t know how to tell, and he asked me again and again, if I was sure the door was ever unfastened. Lord, says I — am I sure I am alive? And as for me, ma’am, I am all astounded, as one may say, and would no more sleep in this chamber, than I would on the great cannon at the end of the east rampart.’

‘And what objection have you to that cannon, more than to any of the rest?’ said Emily smiling: ‘the best would be rather a hard bed.’

‘Yes, ma’amselle, any of them would be hard enough for that matter; but they do say, that something has been seen in the dead of night, standing beside the great cannon, as if to guard it.’

‘Well! my good Annette, the people who tell such stories, are happy in having you for an auditor, for I perceive you believe them all.’

‘Dear ma’amselle! I will shew you the very cannon; you can see it from these windows!’

‘Well,’ said Emily, ‘but that does not prove, that an apparition guards it.’

‘What! not if I shew you the very cannon! Dear ma’am, you will believe nothing.’

‘Nothing probably upon this subject, but what I see,’ said Emily.— ‘Well, ma’am, but you shall see it, if you will only step this way to the casement.’ — Emily could not forbear laughing, and Annette looked surprised. Perceiving her extreme aptitude to credit the marvellous, Emily forbore to mention the subject she had intended, lest it should overcome her with idle terrors, and she began to speak on a lively topic — the regattas of Venice.

‘Aye, ma’amselle, those rowing matches,’ said Annette, ‘and the fine moonlight nights, are all, that are worth seeing in Venice. To be sure the moon is brighter than any I ever saw; and then to hear such sweet music,

too, as Ludovico has often and often sung under the lattice by the west portico! Ma'amselle, it was Ludovico, that told me about that picture, which you wanted so to look at last night, and— '

'What picture?' said Emily, wishing Annette to explain herself.

'O! that terrible picture with the black veil over it.'

'You never saw it, then?' said Emily.

'Who, I! — No, ma'amselle, I never did. But this morning,' continued Annette, lowering her voice, and looking round the room, 'this morning, as it was broad daylight, do you know, ma'am, I took a strange fancy to see it, as I had heard such odd hints about it, and I got as far as the door, and should have opened it, if it had not been locked!'

Emily, endeavouring to conceal the emotion this circumstance occasioned, enquired at what hour she went to the chamber, and found, that it was soon after herself had been there. She also asked further questions, and the answers convinced her, that Annette, and probably her informer, were ignorant of the terrible truth, though in Annette's account something very like the truth, now and then, mingled with the falsehood. Emily now began to fear, that her visit to the chamber had been observed, since the door had been closed, so immediately after her departure; and dreaded lest this should draw upon her the vengeance of Montoni. Her anxiety, also, was excited to know whence, and for what purpose, the delusive report, which had been imposed upon Annette, had originated, since Montoni could only have wished for silence and secrecy; but she felt, that the subject was too terrible for this lonely hour, and she compelled herself to leave it, to converse with Annette, whose chat, simple as it was, she preferred to the stillness of total solitude.

Thus they sat, till near midnight, but not without many hints from Annette, that she wished to go. The embers were now nearly burnt out; and Emily heard, at a distance, the thundering sound of the hall doors, as they were shut for the night. She, therefore, prepared for rest, but was still unwilling that Annette should leave her. At this instant, the great bell of the portal sounded. They listened in fearful expectation, when, after a long pause of silence, it sounded again. Soon after, they heard the noise of carriage wheels in the courtyard. Emily sunk almost lifeless in her chair; 'It is the Count,' said she.

‘What, at this time of night, ma’am!’ said Annette: ‘no, my dear lady. But, for that matter, it is a strange time of night for any body to come!’

‘Nay, pr’ythee, good Annette, stay not talking,’ said Emily in a voice of agony— ‘Go, pr’ythee, go, and see who it is.’

Annette left the room, and carried with her the light, leaving Emily in darkness, which a few moments before would have terrified her in this room, but was now scarcely observed by her. She listened and waited, in breathless expectation, and heard distant noises, but Annette did not return. Her patience, at length, exhausted, she tried to find her way to the corridor, but it was long before she could touch the door of the chamber, and, when she had opened it, the total darkness without made her fear to proceed. Voices were now heard, and Emily even thought she distinguished those of Count Morano, and Montoni. Soon after, she heard steps approaching, and then a ray of light streamed through the darkness, and Annette appeared, whom Emily went to meet.

‘Yes, ma’amselle,’ said she, ‘you was right, it is the Count sure enough.’

‘It is he!’ exclaimed Emily, lifting her eyes towards heaven and supporting herself by Annette’s arm.

‘Good Lord! my dear lady, don’t be in such a FLUSTER, and look so pale, we shall soon hear more.’

‘We shall, indeed!’ said Emily, moving as fast as she was able towards her apartment. ‘I am not well; give me air.’ Annette opened a casement, and brought water. The faintness soon left Emily, but she desired Annette would not go till she heard from Montoni.

‘Dear ma’amselle! he surely will not disturb you at this time of night; why he must think you are asleep.’

‘Stay with me till I am so, then,’ said Emily, who felt temporary relief from this suggestion, which appeared probable enough, though her fears had prevented its occurring to her. Annette, with secret reluctance, consented to stay, and Emily was now composed enough to ask her some questions; among others, whether she had seen the Count.

‘Yes, ma’am, I saw him alight, for I went from hence to the grate in the north turret, that overlooks the inner courtyard, you know. There I saw the Count’s carriage, and the Count in it, waiting at the great door, — for the porter was just gone to bed — with several men on horseback all by the light of the torches they carried.’ Emily was compelled to smile. ‘When

the door was opened, the Count said something, that I could not make out, and then got out, and another gentleman with him. I thought, to be sure, the Signor was gone to bed, and I hastened away to my lady's dressing-room, to see what I could hear. But in the way I met Ludovico, and he told me that the Signor was up, counselling with his master and the other Signors, in the room at the end of the north gallery; and Ludovico held up his finger, and laid it on his lips, as much as to say — There is more going on, than you think of, Annette, but you must hold your tongue. And so I did hold my tongue, ma'amselle, and came away to tell you directly.'

Emily enquired who the cavalier was, that accompanied the Count, and how Montoni received them; but Annette could not inform her.

'Ludovico,' she added, 'had just been to call Signor Montoni's valet, that he might tell him they were arrived, when I met him.'

Emily sat musing, for some time, and then her anxiety was so much increased, that she desired Annette would go to the servants' hall, where it was possible she might hear something of the Count's intention, respecting his stay at the castle.

'Yes, ma'am,' said Annette with readiness; 'but how am I to find the way, if I leave the lamp with you?'

Emily said she would light her, and they immediately quitted the chamber. When they had reached the top of the great staircase, Emily recollected, that she might be seen by the Count, and, to avoid the great hall, Annette conducted her through some private passages to a back staircase, which led directly to that of the servants.

As she returned towards her chamber, Emily began to fear, that she might again lose herself in the intricacies of the castle, and again be shocked by some mysterious spectacle; and, though she was already perplexed by the numerous turnings, she feared to open one of the many doors that offered. While she stepped thoughtfully along, she fancied, that she heard a low moaning at no great distance, and, having paused a moment, she heard it again and distinctly. Several doors appeared on the right hand of the passage. She advanced, and listened. When she came to the second, she heard a voice, apparently in complaint, within, to which she continued to listen, afraid to open the door, and unwilling to leave it. Convulsive sobs followed, and then the piercing accents of an agonizing spirit burst forth. Emily stood appalled, and looked through the gloom,

that surrounded her, in fearful expectation. The lamentations continued. Pity now began to subdue terror; it was possible she might administer comfort to the sufferer, at least, by expressing sympathy, and she laid her hand on the door. While she hesitated she thought she knew this voice, disguised as it was by tones of grief. Having, therefore, set down the lamp in the passage, she gently opened the door, within which all was dark, except that from an inner apartment a partial light appeared; and she stepped softly on. Before she reached it, the appearance of Madame Montoni, leaning on her dressing-table, weeping, and with a handkerchief held to her eyes, struck her, and she paused.

Some person was seated in a chair by the fire, but who it was she could not distinguish. He spoke, now and then, in a low voice, that did not allow Emily to hear what was uttered, but she thought, that Madame Montoni, at those times, wept the more, who was too much occupied by her own distress, to observe Emily, while the latter, though anxious to know what occasioned this, and who was the person admitted at so late an hour to her aunt's dressing-room, forbore to add to her sufferings by surprising her, or to take advantage of her situation, by listening to a private discourse. She, therefore, stepped softly back, and, after some further difficulty, found the way to her own chamber, where nearer interests, at length, excluded the surprise and concern she had felt, respecting Madame Montoni.

Annette, however, returned without satisfactory intelligence, for the servants, among whom she had been, were either entirely ignorant, or affected to be so, concerning the Count's intended stay at the castle. They could talk only of the steep and broken road they had just passed, and of the numerous dangers they had escaped and express wonder how their lord could choose to encounter all these, in the darkness of night; for they scarcely allowed, that the torches had served for any other purpose but that of shewing the dreariness of the mountains. Annette, finding she could gain no information, left them, making noisy petitions, for more wood on the fire and more supper on the table.

'And now, ma'amselle,' added she, 'I am so sleepy! — I am sure, if you was so sleepy, you would not desire me to sit up with you.'

Emily, indeed, began to think it was cruel to wish it; she had also waited so long, without receiving a summons from Montoni, that it appeared he did not mean to disturb her, at this late hour, and she determined to

dismiss Annette. But, when she again looked round her gloomy chamber, and recollected certain circumstances, fear seized her spirits, and she hesitated.

‘And yet it were cruel of me to ask you to stay, till I am asleep, Annette,’ said she, ‘for I fear it will be very long before I forget myself in sleep.’

‘I dare say it will be very long, ma’amselle,’ said Annette.

‘But, before you go,’ rejoined Emily, ‘let me ask you — Had Signor Montoni left Count Morano, when you quitted the hall?’

‘O no, ma’am, they were alone together.’

‘Have you been in my aunt’s dressing-room, since you left me?’

‘No, ma’amselle, I called at the door as I passed, but it was fastened; so I thought my lady was gone to bed.’

‘Who, then, was with your lady just now?’ said Emily, forgetting, in surprise, her usual prudence.

‘Nobody, I believe, ma’am,’ replied Annette, ‘nobody has been with her, I believe, since I left you.’

Emily took no further notice of the subject, and, after some struggle with imaginary fears, her good nature prevailed over them so far, that she dismissed Annette for the night. She then sat, musing upon her own circumstances and those of Madame Montoni, till her eye rested on the miniature picture, which she had found, after her father’s death, among the papers he had enjoined her to destroy. It was open upon the table, before her, among some loose drawings, having, with them, been taken out of a little box by Emily, some hours before. The sight of it called up many interesting reflections, but the melancholy sweetness of the countenance soothed the emotions, which these had occasioned. It was the same style of countenance as that of her late father, and, while she gazed on it with fondness on this account, she even fancied a resemblance in the features. But this tranquillity was suddenly interrupted, when she recollected the words in the manuscript, that had been found with this picture, and which had formerly occasioned her so much doubt and horror. At length, she roused herself from the deep reverie, into which this remembrance had thrown her; but, when she rose to undress, the silence and solitude, to which she was left, at this midnight hour, for not even a distant sound was now heard, conspired with the impression the subject she had been

considering had given to her mind, to appall her. Annette's hints, too, concerning this chamber, simple as they were, had not failed to affect her, since they followed a circumstance of peculiar horror, which she herself had witnessed, and since the scene of this was a chamber nearly adjoining her own.

The door of the staircase was, perhaps, a subject of more reasonable alarm, and she now began to apprehend, such was the aptitude of her fears, that this staircase had some private communication with the apartment, which she shuddered even to remember. Determined not to undress, she lay down to sleep in her clothes, with her late father's dog, the faithful MANCHON, at the foot of the bed, whom she considered as a kind of guard.

Thus circumstanced, she tried to banish reflection, but her busy fancy would still hover over the subjects of her interest, and she heard the clock of the castle strike two, before she closed her eyes.

From the disturbed slumber, into which she then sunk, she was soon awakened by a noise, which seemed to arise within her chamber; but the silence, that prevailed, as she fearfully listened, inclined her to believe, that she had been alarmed by such sounds as sometimes occur in dreams, and she laid her head again upon the pillow.

A return of the noise again disturbed her; it seemed to come from that part of the room, which communicated with the private staircase, and she instantly remembered the odd circumstance of the door having been fastened, during the preceding night, by some unknown hand. Her late alarming suspicion, concerning its communication, also occurred to her. Her heart became faint with terror. Half raising herself from the bed, and gently drawing aside the curtain, she looked towards the door of the staircase, but the lamp, that burnt on the hearth, spread so feeble a light through the apartment, that the remote parts of it were lost in shadow. The noise, however, which, she was convinced, came from the door, continued. It seemed like that made by the undrawing of rusty bolts, and often ceased, and was then renewed more gently, as if the hand, that occasioned it, was restrained by a fear of discovery.

While Emily kept her eyes fixed on the spot, she saw the door move, and then slowly open, and perceived something enter the room, but the extreme duskiness prevented her distinguishing what it was. Almost

fainting with terror, she had yet sufficient command over herself, to check the shriek, that was escaping from her lips, and, letting the curtain drop from her hand, continued to observe in silence the motions of the mysterious form she saw. It seemed to glide along the remote obscurity of the apartment, then paused, and, as it approached the hearth, she perceived, in the stronger light, what appeared to be a human figure. Certain remembrances now struck upon her heart, and almost subdued the feeble remains of her spirits; she continued, however, to watch the figure, which remained for some time motionless, but then, advancing slowly towards the bed, stood silently at the feet, where the curtains, being a little open, allowed her still to see it; terror, however, had now deprived her of the power of discrimination, as well as of that of utterance.

Having continued there a moment, the form retreated towards the hearth, when it took the lamp, held it up, surveyed the chamber, for a few moments, and then again advanced towards the bed. The light at that instant awakening the dog, that had slept at Emily's feet, he barked loudly, and, jumping to the floor, flew at the stranger, who struck the animal smartly with a sheathed sword, and, springing towards the bed, Emily discovered — Count Morano!

She gazed at him for a moment in speechless affright, while he, throwing himself on his knee at the bedside, besought her to fear nothing, and, having thrown down his sword, would have taken her hand, when the faculties, that terror had suspended, suddenly returned, and she sprung from the bed, in the dress, which surely a kind of prophetic apprehension had prevented her, on this night, from throwing aside.

Morano rose, followed her to the door, through which he had entered, and caught her hand, as she reached the top of the staircase, but not before she had discovered, by the gleam of a lamp, another man halfway down the steps. She now screamed in despair, and, believing herself given up by Montoni, saw, indeed, no possibility of escape.

The Count, who still held her hand, led her back into the chamber.

'Why all this terror?' said he, in a tremulous voice. 'Hear me, Emily: I come not to alarm you; no, by Heaven! I love you too well — too well for my own peace.'

Emily looked at him for a moment, in fearful doubt.

'Then leave me, sir,' said she, 'leave me instantly.'

‘Hear me, Emily,’ resumed Morano, ‘hear me! I love, and am in despair — yes — in despair. How can I gaze upon you, and know, that it is, perhaps, for the last time, without suffering all the phrensy of despair? But it shall not be so; you shall be mine, in spite of Montoni and all his villany.’

‘In spite of Montoni!’ cried Emily eagerly: ‘what is it I hear?’

‘You hear, that Montoni is a villain,’ exclaimed Morano with vehemence,— ‘a villain who would have sold you to my love! — Who— ‘

‘And is he less, who would have bought me?’ said Emily, fixing on the Count an eye of calm contempt. ‘Leave the room, sir, instantly,’ she continued in a voice, trembling between joy and fear, ‘or I will alarm the family, and you may receive that from Signor Montoni’s vengeance, which I have vainly supplicated from his pity.’ But Emily knew, that she was beyond the hearing of those, who might protect her.

‘You can never hope any thing from his pity,’ said Morano, ‘he has used me infamously, and my vengeance shall pursue him. And for you, Emily, for you, he has new plans more profitable than the last, no doubt.’ The gleam of hope, which the Count’s former speech had revived, was now nearly extinguished by the latter; and, while Emily’s countenance betrayed the emotions of her mind, he endeavoured to take advantage of the discovery.

‘I lose time,’ said he: ‘I came not to exclaim against Montoni; I came to solicit, to plead — to Emily; to tell her all I suffer, to entreat her to save me from despair, and herself from destruction. Emily! the schemes of Montoni are insearchable, but, I warn you, they are terrible; he has no principle, when interest, or ambition leads. Can I love you, and abandon you to his power? Fly, then, fly from this gloomy prison, with a lover, who adores you! I have bribed a servant of the castle to open the gates, and, before tomorrow’s dawn, you shall be far on the way to Venice.’

Emily, overcome by the sudden shock she had received, at the moment, too, when she had begun to hope for better days, now thought she saw destruction surround her on every side. Unable to reply, and almost to think, she threw herself into a chair, pale and breathless. That Montoni had formerly sold her to Morano, was very probable; that he had now withdrawn his consent to the marriage, was evident from the Count’s present conduct; and it was nearly certain, that a scheme of stronger

interest only could have induced the selfish Montoni to forego a plan, which he had hitherto so strenuously pursued. These reflections made her tremble at the hints, which Morano had just given, which she no longer hesitated to believe; and, while she shrunk from the new scenes of misery and oppression, that might await her in the castle of Udolpho, she was compelled to observe, that almost her only means of escaping them was by submitting herself to the protection of this man, with whom evils more certain and not less terrible appeared, — evils, upon which she could not endure to pause for an instant.

Her silence, though it was that of agony, encouraged the hopes of Morano, who watched her countenance with impatience, took again the resisting hand she had withdrawn, and, as he pressed it to his heart, again conjured her to determine immediately. ‘Every moment we lose, will make our departure more dangerous,’ said he: ‘these few moments lost may enable Montoni to overtake us.’

‘I beseech you, sir, be silent,’ said Emily faintly: ‘I am indeed very wretched, and wretched I must remain. Leave me — I command you, leave me to my fate.’

‘Never!’ cried the Count vehemently: ‘let me perish first! But forgive my violence! the thought of losing you is madness. You cannot be ignorant of Montoni’s character, you may be ignorant of his schemes — nay, you must be so, or you would not hesitate between my love and his power.’

‘Nor do I hesitate,’ said Emily.

‘Let us go, then,’ said Morano, eagerly kissing her hand, and rising, ‘my carriage waits, below the castle walls.’

‘You mistake me, sir,’ said Emily. ‘Allow me to thank you for the interest you express in my welfare, and to decide by my own choice. I shall remain under the protection of Signor Montoni.’

‘Under his protection!’ exclaimed Morano, proudly, ‘his PROTECTION! Emily, why will you suffer yourself to be thus deluded? I have already told you what you have to expect from his PROTECTION.’

‘And pardon me, sir, if, in this instance, I doubt mere assertion, and, to be convinced, require something approaching to proof.’

‘I have now neither the time, or the means of adducing proof,’ replied the Count.

‘Nor have I, sir, the inclination to listen to it, if you had.’

‘But you trifle with my patience and my distress,’ continued Morano. ‘Is a marriage with a man, who adores you, so very terrible in your eyes, that you would prefer to it all the misery, to which Montoni may condemn you in this remote prison? Some wretch must have stolen those affections, which ought to be mine, or you would not thus obstinately persist in refusing an offer, that would place you beyond the reach of oppression.’ Morano walked about the room, with quick steps, and a disturbed air.

‘This discourse, Count Morano, sufficiently proves, that my affections ought not to be yours,’ said Emily, mildly, ‘and this conduct, that I should not be placed beyond the reach of oppression, so long as I remained in your power. If you wish me to believe otherwise, cease to oppress me any longer by your presence. If you refuse this, you will compel me to expose you to the resentment of Signor Montoni.’

‘Yes, let him come,’ cried Morano furiously, ‘and brave MY resentment! Let him dare to face once more the man he has so courageously injured; danger shall teach him morality, and vengeance justice — let him come, and receive my sword in his heart!’

The vehemence, with which this was uttered, gave Emily new cause of alarm, who arose from her chair, but her trembling frame refused to support her, and she resumed her seat; — the words died on her lips, and, when she looked wistfully towards the door of the corridor, which was locked, she considered it was impossible for her to leave the apartment, before Morano would be apprised of, and able to counteract, her intention.

Without observing her agitation, he continued to pace the room in the utmost perturbation of spirits. His darkened countenance expressed all the rage of jealousy and revenge; and a person, who had seen his features under the smile of ineffable tenderness, which he so lately assumed, would now scarcely have believed them to be the same.

‘Count Morano,’ said Emily, at length recovering her voice, ‘calm, I entreat you, these transports, and listen to reason, if you will not to pity. You have equally misplaced your love, and your hatred. — I never could have returned the affection, with which you honour me, and certainly have never encouraged it; neither has Signor Montoni injured you, for you must have known, that he had no right to dispose of my hand, had he even possessed the power to do so. Leave, then, leave the castle, while you may

with safety. Spare yourself the dreadful consequences of an unjust revenge, and the remorse of having prolonged to me these moments of suffering.’

‘Is it for mine, or for Montoni’s safety, that you are thus alarmed?’ said Morano, coldly, and turning towards her with a look of acrimony.

‘For both,’ replied Emily, in a trembling voice.

‘Unjust revenge!’ cried the Count, resuming the abrupt tones of passion. ‘Who, that looks upon that face, can imagine a punishment adequate to the injury he would have done me? Yes, I will leave the castle; but it shall not be alone. I have trifled too long. Since my prayers and my sufferings cannot prevail, force shall. I have people in waiting, who shall convey you to my carriage. Your voice will bring no succour; it cannot be heard from this remote part of the castle; submit, therefore, in silence, to go with me.’

This was an unnecessary injunction, at present; for Emily was too certain, that her call would avail her nothing; and terror had so entirely disordered her thoughts, that she knew not how to plead to Morano, but sat, mute and trembling, in her chair, till he advanced to lift her from it, when she suddenly raised herself, and, with a repulsive gesture, and a countenance of forced serenity, said, ‘Count Morano! I am now in your power; but you will observe, that this is not the conduct which can win the esteem you appear so solicitous to obtain, and that you are preparing for yourself a load of remorse, in the miseries of a friendless orphan, which can never leave you. Do you believe your heart to be, indeed, so hardened, that you can look without emotion on the suffering, to which you would condemn me?’ —

Emily was interrupted by the growling of the dog, who now came again from the bed, and Morano looked towards the door of the staircase, where no person appearing, he called aloud, ‘Cesario!’

‘Emily,’ said the Count, ‘why will you reduce me to adopt this conduct? How much more willingly would I persuade, than compel you to become my wife! but, by Heaven! I will not leave you to be sold by Montoni. Yet a thought glances across my mind, that brings madness with it. I know not how to name it. It is preposterous — it cannot be. — Yet you tremble — you grow pale! It is! it is so; — you — you — love Montoni!’ cried Morano, grasping Emily’s wrist, and stamping his foot on the floor.

An involuntary air of surprise appeared on her countenance. ‘If you have indeed believed so,’ said she, ‘believe so still.’

‘That look, those words confirm it,’ exclaimed Morano, furiously. ‘No, no, no, Montoni had a richer prize in view, than gold. But he shall not live to triumph over me! — This very instant— ‘

He was interrupted by the loud barking of the dog.

‘Stay, Count Morano,’ said Emily, terrified by his words, and by the fury expressed in his eyes, ‘I will save you from this error. — Of all men, Signor Montoni is not your rival; though, if I find all other means of saving myself vain, I will try whether my voice may not arouse his servants to my succour.’

‘Assertion,’ replied Morano, ‘at such a moment, is not to be depended upon. How could I suffer myself to doubt, even for an instant, that he could see you, and not love? — But my first care shall be to convey you from the castle. Cesario! ho, — Cesario!’

A man now appeared at the door of the staircase, and other steps were heard ascending. Emily uttered a loud shriek, as Morano hurried her across the chamber, and, at the same moment, she heard a noise at the door, that opened upon the corridor. The Count paused an instant, as if his mind was suspended between love and the desire of vengeance; and, in that instant, the door gave way, and Montoni, followed by the old steward and several other persons, burst into the room.

‘Draw!’ cried Montoni to the Count, who did not pause for a second bidding, but, giving Emily into the hands of the people, that appeared from the staircase, turned fiercely round. ‘This in thine heart, villain!’ said he, as he made a thrust at Montoni with his sword, who parried the blow, and aimed another, while some of the persons, who had followed him into the room, endeavoured to part the combatants, and others rescued Emily from the hands of Morano’s servants.

‘Was it for this, Count Morano,’ said Montoni, in a cool sarcastic tone of voice, ‘that I received you under my roof, and permitted you, though my declared enemy, to remain under it for the night? Was it, that you might repay my hospitality with the treachery of a fiend, and rob me of my niece?’

‘Who talks of treachery?’ said Morano, in a tone of unrestrained vehemence. ‘Let him that does, shew an unblushing face of innocence.

Montoni, you are a villain! If there is treachery in this affair, look to yourself as the author of it. IF — do I say? I — whom you have wronged with unexampled baseness, whom you have injured almost beyond redress! But why do I use words? — Come on, coward, and receive justice at my hands!'

'Coward!' cried Montoni, bursting from the people who held him, and rushing on the Count, when they both retreated into the corridor, where the fight continued so desperately, that none of the spectators dared approach them, Montoni swearing, that the first who interfered, should fall by his sword.

Jealousy and revenge lent all their fury to Morano, while the superior skill and the temperance of Montoni enabled him to wound his adversary, whom his servants now attempted to seize, but he would not be restrained, and, regardless of his wound, continued to fight. He seemed to be insensible both of pain and loss of blood, and alive only to the energy of his passions. Montoni, on the contrary, persevered in the combat, with a fierce, yet wary, valour; he received the point of Morano's sword on his arm, but, almost in the same instant, severely wounded and disarmed him. The Count then fell back into the arms of his servant, while Montoni held his sword over him, and bade him ask his life. Morano, sinking under the anguish of his wound, had scarcely replied by a gesture, and by a few words, feebly articulated, that he would not — when he fainted; and Montoni was then going to have plunged the sword into his breast, as he lay senseless, but his arm was arrested by Cavigni. To the interruption he yielded without much difficulty, but his complexion changed almost to blackness, as he looked upon his fallen adversary, and ordered, that he should be carried instantly from the castle.

In the mean time, Emily, who had been withheld from leaving the chamber during the affray, now came forward into the corridor, and pleaded a cause of common humanity, with the feelings of the warmest benevolence, when she entreated Montoni to allow Morano the assistance in the castle, which his situation required. But Montoni, who had seldom listened to pity, now seemed rapacious of vengeance, and, with a monster's cruelty, again ordered his defeated enemy to be taken from the castle, in his present state, though there were only the woods, or a solitary neighbouring cottage, to shelter him from the night.

The Count’s servants having declared, that they would not move him till he revived, Montoni’s stood inactive, Cavigni remonstrating, and Emily, superior to Montoni’s menaces, giving water to Morano, and directing the attendants to bind up his wound. At length, Montoni had leisure to feel pain from his own hurt, and he withdrew to examine it.

The Count, meanwhile, having slowly recovered, the first object he saw, on raising his eyes, was Emily, bending over him with a countenance strongly expressive of solicitude. He surveyed her with a look of anguish.

‘I have deserved this,’ said he, ‘but not from Montoni. It is from you, Emily, that I have deserved punishment, yet I receive only pity!’ He paused, for he had spoken with difficulty. After a moment, he proceeded. ‘I must resign you, but not to Montoni. Forgive me the sufferings I have already occasioned you! But for THAT villain — his infamy shall not go unpunished. Carry me from this place,’ said he to his servants. ‘I am in no condition to travel: you must, therefore, take me to the nearest cottage, for I will not pass the night under his roof, although I may expire on the way from it.’

Cesario proposed to go out, and enquire for a cottage, that might receive his master, before he attempted to remove him: but Morano was impatient to be gone; the anguish of his mind seemed to be even greater than that of his wound, and he rejected, with disdain, the offer of Cavigni to entreat Montoni, that he might be suffered to pass the night in the castle. Cesario was now going to call up the carriage to the great gate, but the Count forbade him. ‘I cannot bear the motion of a carriage,’ said he: ‘call some others of my people, that they may assist in bearing me in their arms.’

At length, however, Morano submitted to reason, and consented, that Cesario should first prepare some cottage to receive him. Emily, now that he had recovered his senses, was about to withdraw from the corridor, when a message from Montoni commanded her to do so, and also that the Count, if he was not already gone, should quit the castle immediately. Indignation flashed from Morano’s eyes, and flushed his cheeks.

‘Tell Montoni,’ said he, ‘that I shall go when it suits my own convenience; that I quit the castle, he dares to call his, as I would the nest of a serpent, and that this is not the last he shall hear from me. Tell him, I will not leave ANOTHER murder on his conscience, if I can help it.’

‘Count Morano! do you know what you say?’ said Cavigni.

‘Yes, Signor, I know well what I say, and he will understand well what I mean. His conscience will assist his understanding, on this occasion.’

‘Count Morano,’ said Verezzi, who had hitherto silently observed him, ‘dare again to insult my friend, and I will plunge this sword in your body.’

‘It would be an action worthy the friend of a villain!’ said Morano, as the strong impulse of his indignation enabled him to raise himself from the arms of his servants; but the energy was momentary, and he sunk back, exhausted by the effort. Montoni’s people, meanwhile, held Verezzi, who seemed inclined, even in this instant, to execute his threat; and Cavigni, who was not so depraved as to abet the cowardly malignity of Verezzi, endeavoured to withdraw him from the corridor; and Emily, whom a compassionate interest had thus long detained, was now quitting it in new terror, when the supplicating voice of Morano arrested her, and, by a feeble gesture, he beckoned her to draw nearer. She advanced with timid steps, but the fainting languor of his countenance again awakened her pity, and overcame her terror.

‘I am going from hence for ever,’ said he: ‘perhaps, I shall never see you again. I would carry with me your forgiveness, Emily; nay more — I would also carry your good wishes.’

‘You have my forgiveness, then,’ said Emily, ‘and my sincere wishes for your recovery.’

‘And only for my recovery?’ said Morano, with a sigh. ‘For your general welfare,’ added Emily.

‘Perhaps I ought to be contented with this,’ he resumed; ‘I certainly have not deserved more; but I would ask you, Emily, sometimes to think of me, and, forgetting my offence, to remember only the passion which occasioned it. I would ask, alas! impossibilities: I would ask you to love me! At this moment, when I am about to part with you, and that, perhaps, for ever, I am scarcely myself. Emily — may you never know the torture of a passion like mine! What do I say? O, that, for me, you might be sensible of such a passion!’

Emily looked impatient to be gone. ‘I entreat you, Count, to consult your own safety,’ said she, ‘and linger here no longer. I tremble for the consequences of Signor Verezzi’s passion, and of Montoni’s resentment, should he learn that you are still here.’

Morano’s face was overspread with a momentary crimson, his eyes sparkled, but he seemed endeavouring to conquer his emotion, and replied in a calm voice, ‘Since you are interested for my safety, I will regard it, and be gone. But, before I go, let me again hear you say, that you wish me well,’ said he, fixing on her an earnest and mournful look.

Emily repeated her assurances. He took her hand, which she scarcely attempted to withdraw, and put it to his lips. ‘Farewell, Count Morano!’ said Emily; and she turned to go, when a second message arrived from Montoni, and she again conjured Morano, as he valued his life, to quit the castle immediately. He regarded her in silence, with a look of fixed despair. But she had no time to enforce her compassionate entreaties, and, not daring to disobey the second command of Montoni, she left the corridor, to attend him.

He was in the cedar parlour, that adjoined the great hall, laid upon a couch, and suffering a degree of anguish from his wound, which few persons could have disguised, as he did. His countenance, which was stern, but calm, expressed the dark passion of revenge, but no symptom of pain; bodily pain, indeed, he had always despised, and had yielded only to the strong and terrible energies of the soul. He was attended by old Carlo and by Signor Bertolini, but Madame Montoni was not with him.

Emily trembled, as she approached and received his severe rebuke, for not having obeyed his first summons; and perceived, also, that he attributed her stay in the corridor to a motive, that had not even occurred to her artless mind.

‘This is an instance of female caprice,’ said he, ‘which I ought to have foreseen. Count Morano, whose suit you obstinately rejected, so long as it was countenanced by me, you favour, it seems, since you find I have dismissed him.’

Emily looked astonished. ‘I do not comprehend you, sir,’ said she: ‘You certainly do not mean to imply, that the design of the Count to visit the double-chamber, was founded upon any approbation of mine.’

‘To that I reply nothing,’ said Montoni; ‘but it must certainly be a more than common interest, that made you plead so warmly in his cause, and that could detain you thus long in his presence, contrary to my express order — in the presence of a man, whom you have hitherto, on all occasions, most scrupulously shunned!’

‘I fear, sir, it was a more than common interest, that detained me,’ said Emily calmly; ‘for of late I have been inclined to think, that of compassion is an uncommon one. But how could I, could YOU, sir, witness Count Morano’s deplorable condition, and not wish to relieve it?’

‘You add hypocrisy to caprice,’ said Montoni, frowning, ‘and an attempt at satire, to both; but, before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practise the virtues, which are indispensable to a woman — sincerity, uniformity of conduct and obedience.’

Emily, who had always endeavoured to regulate her conduct by the nicest laws, and whose mind was finely sensible, not only of what is just in morals, but of whatever is beautiful in the female character, was shocked by these words; yet, in the next moment, her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise, instead of censure, and she was proudly silent. Montoni, acquainted with the delicacy of her mind, knew how keenly she would feel his rebuke; but he was a stranger to the luxury of conscious worth, and, therefore, did not foresee the energy of that sentiment, which now repelled his satire. Turning to a servant who had lately entered the room, he asked whether Morano had quitted the castle. The man answered, that his servants were then removing him, on a couch, to a neighbouring cottage. Montoni seemed somewhat appeased, on hearing this; and, when Ludovico appeared, a few moments after, and said, that Morano was gone, he told Emily she might retire to her apartment.

She withdrew willingly from his presence; but the thought of passing the remainder of the night in a chamber, which the door from the staircase made liable to the intrusion of any person, now alarmed her more than ever, and she determined to call at Madame Montoni’s room, and request, that Annette might be permitted to be with her.

On reaching the great gallery, she heard voices seemingly in dispute, and, her spirits now apt to take alarm, she paused, but soon distinguished some words of Cavigni and Verezzi, and went towards them, in the hope of conciliating their difference. They were alone. Verezzi’s face was still flushed with rage; and, as the first object of it was now removed from him, he appeared willing to transfer his resentment to Cavigni, who seemed to be expostulating, rather than disputing, with him.

Verezzi was protesting, that he would instantly inform Montoni of the insult, which Morano had thrown out against him, and above all, that,

wherein he had accused him of murder.

‘There is no answering,’ said Cavigni, ‘for the words of a man in a passion; little serious regard ought to be paid to them. If you persist in your resolution, the consequences may be fatal to both. We have now more serious interests to pursue, than those of a petty revenge.’

Emily joined her entreaties to Cavigni’s arguments, and they, at length, prevailed so far, as that Verezzi consented to retire, without seeing Montoni.

On calling at her aunt’s apartment, she found it fastened. In a few minutes, however, it was opened by Madame Montoni herself.

It may be remembered, that it was by a door leading into the bedroom from a back passage, that Emily had secretly entered a few hours preceding. She now conjectured, by the calmness of Madame Montoni’s air, that she was not apprised of the accident, which had befallen her husband, and was beginning to inform her of it, in the tenderest manner she could, when her aunt interrupted her, by saying, she was acquainted with the whole affair.

Emily knew indeed, that she had little reason to love Montoni, but could scarcely have believed her capable of such perfect apathy, as she now discovered towards him; having obtained permission, however, for Annette to sleep in her chamber, she went thither immediately.

A track of blood appeared along the corridor, leading to it; and on the spot, where the Count and Montoni had fought, the whole floor was stained. Emily shuddered, and leaned on Annette, as she passed. When she reached her apartment, she instantly determined, since the door of the staircase had been left open, and that Annette was now with her, to explore whither it led, — a circumstance now materially connected with her own safety. Annette accordingly, half curious and half afraid, proposed to descend the stairs; but, on approaching the door, they perceived, that it was already fastened without, and their care was then directed to the securing it on the inside also, by placing against it as much of the heavy furniture of the room, as they could lift. Emily then retired to bed, and Annette continued on a chair by the hearth, where some feeble embers remained.

CHAPTER VII

Of aery tongues, that syllable men’s names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.

MILTON

It is now necessary to mention some circumstances, which could not be related amidst the events of Emily's hasty departure from Venice, or together with those, which so rapidly succeeded to her arrival in the castle.

On the morning of her journey, Count Morano had gone at the appointed hour to the mansion of Montoni, to demand his bride. When he reached it, he was somewhat surprised by the silence and solitary air of the portico, where Montoni's lacqueys usually loitered; but surprise was soon changed to astonishment, and astonishment to the rage of disappointment, when the door was opened by an old woman, who told his servants, that her master and his family had left Venice, early in the morning, for terra-firma. Scarcely believing what his servants told, he left his gondola, and rushed into the hall to enquire further. The old woman, who was the only person left in care of the mansion, persisted in her story, which the silent and deserted apartments soon convinced him was no fiction. He then seized her with a menacing air, as if he meant to wreak all his vengeance upon her, at the same time asking her twenty questions in a breath, and all these with a gesticulation so furious, that she was deprived of the power of answering them; then suddenly letting her go, he stamped about the hall, like a madman, cursing Montoni and his own folly.

When the good woman was at liberty, and had somewhat recovered from her fright, she told him all she knew of the affair, which was, indeed, very little, but enough to enable Morano to discover, that Montoni was gone to his castle on the Apennine. Thither he followed, as soon as his servants could complete the necessary preparation for the journey, accompanied by a friend, and attended by a number of his people, determined to obtain Emily, or a full revenge on Montoni. When his mind had recovered from the first effervescence of rage, and his thoughts became less obscured, his conscience hinted to him certain circumstances, which, in some measure, explained the conduct of Montoni: but how the latter could have been led to suspect an intention, which, he had believed, was known only to himself, he could not even guess. On this occasion, however, he had been partly betrayed by that sympathetic intelligence, which may be said to

exist between bad minds, and which teaches one man to judge what another will do in the same circumstances. Thus it was with Montoni, who had now received indisputable proof of a truth, which he had some time suspected — that Morano's circumstances, instead of being affluent, as he had been bidden to believe, were greatly involved. Montoni had been interested in his suit, by motives entirely selfish, those of avarice and pride; the last of which would have been gratified by an alliance with a Venetian nobleman, the former by Emily's estate in Gascony, which he had stipulated, as the price of his favour, should be delivered up to him from the day of her marriage. In the meantime, he had been led to suspect the consequence of the Count's boundless extravagance; but it was not till the evening, preceding the intended nuptials, that he obtained certain information of his distressed circumstances. He did not hesitate then to infer, that Morano designed to defraud him of Emily's estate; and in this supposition he was confirmed, and with apparent reason, by the subsequent conduct of the Count, who, after having appointed to meet him on that night, for the purpose of signing the instrument, which was to secure to him his reward, failed in his engagement. Such a circumstance, indeed, in a man of Morano's gay and thoughtless character, and at a time when his mind was engaged by the bustle of preparation for his nuptials, might have been attributed to a cause less decisive, than design; but Montoni did not hesitate an instant to interpret it his own way, and, after vainly waiting the Count's arrival, for several hours, he gave orders for his people to be in readiness to set off at a moment's notice. By hastening to Udolpho he intended to remove Emily from the reach of Morano, as well as to break off the affair, without submitting himself to useless altercation: and, if the Count meant what he called honourably, he would doubtless follow Emily, and sign the writings in question. If this was done, so little consideration had Montoni for her welfare, that he would not have scrupled to sacrifice her to a man of ruined fortune, since by that means he could enrich himself; and he forbore to mention to her the motive of his sudden journey, lest the hope it might revive should render her more intractable, when submission would be required.

With these considerations, he had left Venice; and, with others totally different, Morano had, soon after, pursued his steps across the rugged Apennines. When his arrival was announced at the castle, Montoni did not

believe, that he would have presumed to shew himself, unless he had meant to fulfil his engagement, and he, therefore, readily admitted him; but the enraged countenance and expressions of Morano, as he entered the apartment, instantly undeceived him; and, when Montoni had explained, in part, the motives of his abrupt departure from Venice, the Count still persisted in demanding Emily, and reproaching Montoni, without even naming the former stipulation.

Montoni, at length, weary of the dispute, deferred the settling of it till the morrow, and Morano retired with some hope, suggested by Montoni's apparent indecision. When, however, in the silence of his own apartment, he began to consider the past conversation, the character of Montoni, and some former instances of his duplicity, the hope, which he had admitted, vanished, and he determined not to neglect the present possibility of obtaining Emily by other means. To his confidential valet he told his design of carrying away Emily, and sent him back to Montoni's servants to find out one among them, who might enable him to execute it. The choice of this person he entrusted to the fellow's own discernment, and not imprudently; for he discovered a man, whom Montoni had, on some former occasion, treated harshly, and who was now ready to betray him. This man conducted Cesario round the castle, through a private passage, to the staircase, that led to Emily's chamber; then shewed him a short way out of the building, and afterwards procured him the keys, that would secure his retreat. The man was well rewarded for his trouble; how the Count was rewarded for his treachery, had already appeared.

Meanwhile, old Carlo had overheard two of Morano's servants, who had been ordered to be in waiting with the carriage, beyond the castle walls, expressing their surprise at their master's sudden, and secret departure, for the valet had entrusted them with no more of Morano's designs, than it was necessary for them to execute. They, however, indulged themselves in surmises, and in expressing them to each other; and from these Carlo had drawn a just conclusion. But, before he ventured to disclose his apprehensions to Montoni, he endeavoured to obtain further confirmation of them, and, for this purpose, placed himself, with one of his fellow-servants, at the door of Emily's apartment, that opened upon the corridor. He did not watch long in vain, though the growling of the dog had once nearly betrayed him. When he was convinced, that Morano was in the

room, and had listened long enough to his conversation, to understand his scheme, he immediately alarmed Montoni, and thus rescued Emily from the designs of the Count.

Montoni, on the following morning, appeared as usual, except that he wore his wounded arm in a sling; he went out upon the ramparts; overlooked the men employed in repairing them; gave orders for additional workmen, and then came into the castle to give audience to several persons, who were just arrived, and who were shewn into a private apartment, where he communicated with them, for near an hour. Carlo was then summoned, and ordered to conduct the strangers to a part of the castle, which, in former times, had been occupied by the upper servants of the family, and to provide them with every necessary refreshment. — When he had done this, he was bidden to return to his master.

Meanwhile, the Count remained in a cottage in the skirts of the woods below, suffering under bodily and mental pain, and meditating deep revenge against Montoni. His servant, whom he had dispatched for a surgeon to the nearest town, which was, however, at a considerable distance, did not return till the following day, when, his wounds being examined and dressed, the practitioner refused to deliver any positive opinion, concerning the degree of danger attending them; but giving his patient a composing draught and ordering him to be quiet, remained at the cottage to watch the event.

Emily, for the remainder of the late eventful night, had been suffered to sleep, undisturbed; and, when her mind recovered from the confusion of slumber, and she remembered, that she was now released from the addresses of Count Morano, her spirits were suddenly relieved from a part of the terrible anxiety, that had long oppressed them; that which remained, arose chiefly from a recollection of Morano’s assertions, concerning the schemes of Montoni. He had said, that plans of the latter, concerning Emily, were insearchable, yet that he knew them to be terrible. At the time he uttered this, she almost believed it to be designed for the purpose of prevailing with her to throw herself into his protection, and she still thought it might be chiefly so accounted for; but his assertions had left an impression on her mind, which a consideration of the character and former conduct of Montoni did not contribute to efface. She, however, checked her propensity to anticipate evil; and, determined to enjoy this respite

from actual misfortune, tried to dismiss thought, took her instruments for drawing, and placed herself at a window, to select into a landscape some features of the scenery without.

As she was thus employed, she saw, walking on the rampart below, the men, who had so lately arrived at the castle. The sight of strangers surprised her, but still more, of strangers such as these. There was a singularity in their dress, and a certain fierceness in their air, that fixed all her attention. She withdrew from the casement, while they passed, but soon returned to observe them further. Their figures seemed so well suited to the wildness of the surrounding objects, that, as they stood surveying the castle, she sketched them for banditti, amid the mountain-view of her picture, when she had finished which, she was surprised to observe the spirit of her group. But she had copied from nature.

Carlo, when he had placed refreshment before these men in the apartment assigned to them, returned, as he was ordered, to Montoni, who was anxious to discover by what servant the keys of the castle had been delivered to Morano, on the preceding night. But this man, though he was too faithful to his master quietly to see him injured, would not betray a fellow-servant even to justice; he, therefore, pretended to be ignorant who it was, that had conspired with Count Morano, and related, as before, that he had only overheard some of the strangers describing the plot.

Montoni's suspicions naturally fell upon the porter, whom he ordered now to attend. Carlo hesitated, and then with slow steps went to seek him.

Barnardine, the porter, denied the accusation with a countenance so steady and undaunted, that Montoni could scarcely believe him guilty, though he knew not how to think him innocent. At length, the man was dismissed from his presence, and, though the real offender, escaped detection.

Montoni then went to his wife's apartment, whither Emily followed soon after, but, finding them in high dispute, was instantly leaving the room, when her aunt called her back, and desired her to stay.— 'You shall be a witness,' said she, 'of my opposition. Now, sir, repeat the command, I have so often refused to obey.'

Montoni turned, with a stern countenance, to Emily, and bade her quit the apartment, while his wife persisted in desiring, that she would stay. Emily was eager to escape from this scene of contention, and anxious,

also, to serve her aunt; but she despaired of conciliating Montoni, in whose eyes the rising tempest of his soul flashed terribly.

‘Leave the room,’ said he, in a voice of thunder. Emily obeyed, and, walking down to the rampart, which the strangers had now left, continued to meditate on the unhappy marriage of her father’s sister, and on her own desolate situation, occasioned by the ridiculous imprudence of her, whom she had always wished to respect and love. Madame Montoni’s conduct had, indeed, rendered it impossible for Emily to do either; but her gentle heart was touched by her distress, and, in the pity thus awakened, she forgot the injurious treatment she had received from her.

As she sauntered on the rampart, Annette appeared at the hall door, looked cautiously round, and then advanced to meet her.

‘Dear ma’amselle, I have been looking for you all over the castle,’ said she. ‘If you will step this way, I will shew you a picture.’

‘A picture!’ exclaimed Emily, and shuddered.

‘Yes, ma’am, a picture of the late lady of this place. Old Carlo just now told me it was her, and I thought you would be curious to see it. As to my lady, you know, ma’amselle, one cannot talk about such things to her.’ —

‘And so,’ said Emily smilingly, ‘as you must talk of them to somebody — ‘

‘Why, yes, ma’amselle; what can one do in such a place as this, if one must not talk? If I was in a dungeon, if they would let me talk — it would be some comfort; nay, I would talk, if it was only to the walls. But come, ma’amselle, we lose time — let me shew you to the picture.’

‘Is it veiled?’ said Emily, pausing.

‘Dear ma’amselle!’ said Annette, fixing her eyes on Emily’s face, ‘what makes you look so pale? — are you ill?’

‘No, Annette, I am well enough, but I have no desire to see this picture; return into the hall.’

‘What! ma’am, not to see the lady of this castle?’ said the girl— ‘the lady, who disappeared to strangely? Well! now, I would have run to the furthest mountain we can see, yonder, to have got a sight of such a picture; and, to speak my mind, that strange story is all, that makes me care about this old castle, though it makes me thrill all over, as it were, whenever I think of it.’

‘Yes, Annette, you love the wonderful; but do you know, that, unless you guard against this inclination, it will lead you into all the misery of superstition?’

Annette might have smiled in her turn, at this sage observation of Emily, who could tremble with ideal terrors, as much as herself, and listen almost as eagerly to the recital of a mysterious story. Annette urged her request.

‘Are you sure it is a picture?’ said Emily, ‘Have you seen it? — Is it veiled?’

‘Holy Maria! ma’amselle, yes, no, yes. I am sure it is a picture — I have seen it, and it is not veiled!’

The tone and look of surprise, with which this was uttered, recalled Emily’s prudence; who concealed her emotion under a smile, and bade Annette lead her to the picture. It was in an obscure chamber, adjoining that part of the castle, allotted to the servants. Several other portraits hung on the walls, covered, like this, with dust and cobweb.

‘That is it, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, in a low voice, and pointing. Emily advanced, and surveyed the picture. It represented a lady in the flower of youth and beauty; her features were handsome and noble, full of strong expression, but had little of the captivating sweetness, that Emily had looked for, and still less of the pensive mildness she loved. It was a countenance, which spoke the language of passion, rather than that of sentiment; a haughty impatience of misfortune — not the placid melancholy of a spirit injured, yet resigned.

‘How many years have passed, since this lady disappeared, Annette?’ said Emily.

‘Twenty years, ma’amselle, or thereabout, as they tell me; I know it is a long while ago.’ Emily continued to gaze upon the portrait.

‘I think,’ resumed Annette, ‘the Signor would do well to hang it in a better place, than this old chamber. Now, in my mind, he ought to place the picture of a lady, who gave him all these riches, in the handsomest room in the castle. But he may have good reasons for what he does: and some people do say that he has lost his riches, as well as his gratitude. But hush, ma’am, not a word!’ added Annette, laying her finger on her lips. Emily was too much absorbed in thought, to hear what she said.

‘‘Tis a handsome lady, I am sure,’ continued Annette: ‘the Signor need not be ashamed to put her in the great apartment, where the veiled picture

hangs.’ Emily turned round. ‘But for that matter, she would be as little seen there, as here, for the door is always locked, I find.’

‘Let us leave this chamber,’ said Emily: ‘and let me caution you again, Annette; be guarded in your conversation, and never tell, that you know any thing of that picture.’

‘Holy Mother!’ exclaimed Annette, ‘it is no secret; why all the servants have seen it already!’

Emily started. ‘How is this?’ said she— ‘Have seen it! When? — how?’

‘Dear, ma’amselle, there is nothing surprising in that; we had all a little more CURIOUSNESS than you had.’

‘I thought you told me, the door was kept locked?’ said Emily.

‘If that was the case, ma’amselle,’ replied Annette, looking about her, ‘how could we get here?’

‘Oh, you mean THIS picture,’ said Emily, with returning calmness. ‘Well, Annette, here is nothing more to engage my attention; we will go.’

Emily, as she passed to her own apartment, saw Montoni go down to the hall, and she turned into her aunt’s dressing-room, whom she found weeping and alone, grief and resentment struggling on her countenance. Pride had hitherto restrained complaint. Judging of Emily’s disposition from her own, and from a consciousness of what her treatment of her deserved, she had believed, that her griefs would be cause of triumph to her niece, rather than of sympathy; that she would despise, not pity her. But she knew not the tenderness and benevolence of Emily’s heart, that had always taught her to forget her own injuries in the misfortunes of her enemy. The sufferings of others, whoever they might be, called forth her ready compassion, which dissipated at once every obscuring cloud to goodness, that passion or prejudice might have raised in her mind.

Madame Montoni’s sufferings, at length, rose above her pride, and, when Emily had before entered the room, she would have told them all, had not her husband prevented her; now that she was no longer restrained by his presence, she poured forth all her complaints to her niece.

‘O Emily!’ she exclaimed, ‘I am the most wretched of women — I am indeed cruelly treated! Who, with my prospects of happiness, could have foreseen such a wretched fate as this? — who could have thought, when I married such a man as the Signor, I should ever have to bewail my lot? But there is no judging what is for the best — there is no knowing what is for

our good! The most flattering prospects often change — the best judgments may be deceived — who could have foreseen, when I married the Signor, that I should ever repent my GENEROSITY?'

Emily thought she might have foreseen it, but this was not a thought of triumph. She placed herself in a chair near her aunt, took her hand, and, with one of those looks of soft compassion, which might characterize the countenance of a guardian angel, spoke to her in the tenderest accents. But these did not sooth Madame Montoni, whom impatience to talk made unwilling to listen. She wanted to complain, not to be consoled; and it was by exclamations of complaint only, that Emily learned the particular circumstances of her affliction.

'Ungrateful man!' said Madame Montoni, 'he has deceived me in every respect; and now he has taken me from my country and friends, to shut me up in this old castle; and, here he thinks he can compel me to do whatever he designs! But he shall find himself mistaken, he shall find that no threats can alter — But who would have believed! who would have supposed, that a man of his family and apparent wealth had absolutely no fortune? — no, scarcely a sequin of his own! I did all for the best; I thought he was a man of consequence, of great property, or I am sure I would never have married him, — ungrateful, artful man!' She paused to take breath.

'Dear Madam, be composed,' said Emily: 'the Signor may not be so rich as you had reason to expect, but surely he cannot be very poor, since this castle and the mansion at Venice are his. May I ask what are the circumstances, that particularly affect you?'

'What are the circumstances!' exclaimed Madame Montoni with resentment: 'why is it not sufficient, that he had long ago ruined his own fortune by play, and that he has since lost what I brought him — and that now he would compel me to sign away my settlement (it was well I had the chief of my property settled on myself!) that he may lose this also, or throw it away in wild schemes, which nobody can understand but himself? And, and — is not all this sufficient?'

'It is, indeed,' said Emily, 'but you must recollect, dear madam, that I knew nothing of all this.'

'Well, and is it not sufficient,' rejoined her aunt, 'that he is also absolutely ruined, that he is sunk deeply in debt, and that neither this

castle, or the mansion at Venice, is his own, if all his debts, honourable and dishonourable, were paid!'

'I am shocked by what you tell me, madam,' said Emily.

'And is it not enough,' interrupted Madame Montoni, 'that he has treated me with neglect, with cruelty, because I refused to relinquish my settlements, and, instead of being frightened by his menaces, resolutely defied him, and upbraided him with his shameful conduct? But I bore all meekly, — you know, niece, I never uttered a word of complaint, till now; no! That such a disposition as mine should be so imposed upon! That I, whose only faults are too much kindness, too much generosity, should be chained for life to such a vile, deceitful, cruel monster!'

Want of breath compelled Madame Montoni to stop. If any thing could have made Emily smile in these moments, it would have been this speech of her aunt, delivered in a voice very little below a scream, and with a vehemence of gesticulation and of countenance, that turned the whole into burlesque. Emily saw, that her misfortunes did not admit of real consolation, and, contemning the commonplace terms of superficial comfort, she was silent; while Madame Montoni, jealous of her own consequence, mistook this for the silence of indifference, or of contempt, and reproached her with want of duty and feeling.

'O! I suspected what all this boasted sensibility would prove to be!' rejoined she; 'I thought it would not teach you to feel either duty, or affection, for your relations, who have treated you like their own daughter!'

'Pardon me, madam,' said Emily, mildly, 'it is not natural to me to boast, and if it was, I am sure I would not boast of sensibility — a quality, perhaps, more to be feared, than desired.'

'Well, well, niece, I will not dispute with you. But, as I said, Montoni threatens me with violence, if I any longer refuse to sign away my settlements, and this was the subject of our contest, when you came into the room before. Now, I am determined no power on earth shall make me do this. Neither will I bear all this tamely. He shall hear his true character from me; I will tell him all he deserves, in spite of his threats and cruel treatment.'

Emily seized a pause of Madame Montoni's voice, to speak. 'Dear madam,' said she, 'but will not this serve to irritate the Signor

unnecessarily? will it not provoke the harsh treatment you dread?'

'I do not care,' replied Madame Montoni, 'it does not signify: I will not submit to such usage. You would have me give up my settlements, too, I suppose!'

'No, madam, I do not exactly mean that.'

'What is it you do mean then?'

'You spoke of reproaching the Signor,' — said Emily, with hesitation. 'Why, does he not deserve reproaches?' said her aunt.

'Certainly he does; but will it be prudent in you, madam, to make them?'

'Prudent!' exclaimed Madame Montoni. 'Is this a time to talk of prudence, when one is threatened with all sorts of violence?'

'It is to avoid that violence, that prudence is necessary.' said Emily.

'Of prudence!' continued Madame Montoni, without attending to her, 'of prudence towards a man, who does not scruple to break all the common ties of humanity in his conduct to me! And is it for me to consider prudence in my behaviour towards him! I am not so mean.'

'It is for your own sake, not for the Signor's, madam,' said Emily modestly, 'that you should consult prudence. Your reproaches, however just, cannot punish him, but they may provoke him to further violence against you.'

'What! would you have me submit, then, to whatever he commands — would you have me kneel down at his feet, and thank him for his cruelties? Would you have me give up my settlements?'

'How much you mistake me, madam!' said Emily, 'I am unequal to advise you on a point so important as the last: but you will pardon me for saying, that, if you consult your own peace, you will try to conciliate Signor Montoni, rather than to irritate him by reproaches.'

'Conciliate indeed! I tell you, niece, it is utterly impossible; I disdain to attempt it.'

Emily was shocked to observe the perverted understanding and obstinate temper of Madame Montoni; but, not less grieved for her sufferings, she looked round for some alleviating circumstance to offer her. 'Your situation is, perhaps, not so desperate, dear madam,' said Emily, 'as you may imagine. The Signor may represent his affairs to be worse than they are, for the purpose of pleading a stronger necessity for his possession of

your settlement. Besides, so long as you keep this, you may look forward to it as a resource, at least, that will afford you a competence, should the Signor's future conduct compel you to sue for separation.'

Madame Montoni impatiently interrupted her. 'Unfeeling, cruel girl!' said she, 'and so you would persuade me, that I have no reason to complain; that the Signor is in very flourishing circumstances, that my future prospects promise nothing but comfort, and that my griefs are as fanciful and romantic as your own! Is it the way to console me, to endeavour to persuade me out of my senses and my feelings, because you happen to have no feelings yourself? I thought I was opening my heart to a person, who could sympathize in my distress, but I find, that your people of sensibility can feel for nobody but themselves! You may retire to your chamber.'

Emily, without replying, immediately left the room, with a mingled emotion of pity and contempt, and hastened to her own, where she yielded to the mournful reflections, which a knowledge of her aunt's situation had occasioned. The conversation of the Italian with Valancourt, in France, again occurred to her. His hints, respecting the broken fortunes of Montoni, were now completely justified; those, also, concerning his character, appeared not less so, though the particular circumstances, connected with his fame, to which the stranger had alluded, yet remained to be explained. Notwithstanding, that her own observations and the words of Count Morano had convinced her, that Montoni's situation was not what it formerly appeared to be, the intelligence she had just received from her aunt on this point, struck her with all the force of astonishment, which was not weakened, when she considered the present style of Montoni's living, the number of servants he maintained, and the new expences he was incurring, by repairing and fortifying his castle. Her anxiety for her aunt and for herself increased with reflection. Several assertions of Morano, which, on the preceding night, she had believed were prompted either by interest, or by resentment, now returned to her mind with the strength of truth. She could not doubt, that Montoni had formerly agreed to give her to the Count, for a pecuniary reward; — his character, and his distressed circumstances justified the belief; these, also, seemed to confirm Morano's assertion, that he now designed to dispose of her, more advantageously for himself, to a richer suitor.

Amidst the reproaches, which Morano had thrown out against Montoni, he had said — he would not quit the castle HE DARED TO CALL HIS, nor willingly leave ANOTHER murder on his conscience — hints, which might have no other origin than the passion of the moment: but Emily was now inclined to account for them more seriously, and she shuddered to think, that she was in the hands of a man, to whom it was even possible they could apply. At length, considering, that reflection could neither release her from her melancholy situation, or enable her to bear it with greater fortitude, she tried to divert her anxiety, and took down from her little library a volume of her favourite Ariosto; but his wild imagery and rich invention could not long enchant her attention; his spells did not reach her heart, and over her sleeping fancy they played, without awakening it.

She now put aside the book, and took her lute, for it was seldom that her sufferings refused to yield to the magic of sweet sounds; when they did so, she was oppressed by sorrow, that came from excess of tenderness and regret; and there were times, when music had increased such sorrow to a degree, that was scarcely endurable; when, if it had not suddenly ceased, she might have lost her reason. Such was the time, when she mourned for her father, and heard the midnight strains, that floated by her window near the convent in Languedoc, on the night that followed his death.

She continued to play, till Annette brought dinner into her chamber, at which Emily was surprised, and enquired whose order she obeyed. ‘My lady’s, ma’amselle,’ replied Annette: ‘the Signor ordered her dinner to be carried to her own apartment, and so she has sent you yours. There have been sad doings between them, worse than ever, I think.’

Emily, not appearing to notice what she said, sat down to the little table, that was spread for her. But Annette was not to be silenced thus easily. While she waited, she told of the arrival of the men, whom Emily had observed on the ramparts, and expressed much surprise at their strange appearance, as well as at the manner, in which they had been attended by Montoni’s order. ‘Do they dine with the Signor, then?’ said Emily.

‘No, ma’amselle, they dined long ago, in an apartment at the north end of the castle, but I know not when they are to go, for the Signor told old Carlo to see them provided with every thing necessary. They have been walking all about the castle, and asking questions of the workmen on the

ramparts. I never saw such strange-looking men in my life; I am frightened whenever I see them.’

Emily enquired, if she had heard of Count Morano, and whether he was likely to recover: but Annette only knew, that he was lodged in a cottage in the wood below, and that every body said he must die. Emily’s countenance discovered her emotion.

‘Dear ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘to see how young ladies will disguise themselves, when they are in love! I thought you hated the Count, or I am sure I would not have told you; and I am sure you have cause enough to hate him.’

‘I hope I hate nobody,’ replied Emily, trying to smile; ‘but certainly I do not love Count Morano. I should be shocked to hear of any person dying by violent means.’

‘Yes, ma’amselle, but it is his own fault.’

Emily looked displeased; and Annette, mistaking the cause of her displeasure, immediately began to excuse the Count, in her way. ‘To be sure, it was very ungenteel behaviour,’ said she, ‘to break into a lady’s room, and then, when he found his discoursing was not agreeable to her, to refuse to go; and then, when the gentleman of the castle comes to desire him to walk about his business — to turn round, and draw his sword, and swear he’ll run him through the body! — To be sure it was very ungenteel behaviour, but then he was disguised in love, and so did not know what he was about.’

‘Enough of this,’ said Emily, who now smiled without an effort; and Annette returned to a mention of the disagreement between Montoni, and her lady. ‘It is nothing new,’ said she: ‘we saw and heard enough of this at Venice, though I never told you of it, ma’amselle.’

‘Well, Annette, it was very prudent of you not to mention it then: be as prudent now; the subject is an unpleasant one.’

‘Ah dear, ma’amselle! — to see now how considerate you can be about some folks, who care so little about you! I cannot bear to see you so deceived, and I must tell you. But it is all for your own good, and not to spite my lady, though, to speak truth, I have little reason to love her; but— ‘

‘You are not speaking thus of my aunt, I hope, Annette?’ said Emily, gravely.

‘Yes, ma’amselle, but I am, though; and if you knew as much as I do, you would not look so angry. I have often, and often, heard the Signor and her talking over your marriage with the Count, and she always advised him never to give up to your foolish whims, as she was pleased to call them, but to be resolute, and compel you to be obedient, whether you would, or no. And I am sure, my heart has ached a thousand times, and I have thought, when she was so unhappy herself, she might have felt a little for other people, and— ‘

‘I thank you for your pity, Annette,’ said Emily, interrupting her: ‘but my aunt was unhappy then, and that disturbed her temper perhaps, or I think — I am sure — You may take away, Annette, I have done.’

‘Dear ma’amselle, you have eat nothing at all! Do try, and take a little bit more. Disturbed her temper truly! why, her temper is always disturbed, I think. And at Tholouse too I have heard my lady talking of you and *Mons.* Valancourt to Madame Merveille and Madame Vaison, often and often, in a very ill-natured way, as I thought, telling them what a deal of trouble she had to keep you in order, and what a fatigue and distress it was to her, and that she believed you would run away with *Mons.* Valancourt, if she was not to watch you closely; and that you connived at his coming about the house at night, and— ‘

‘Good God!’ exclaimed Emily, blushing deeply, ‘it is surely impossible my aunt could thus have represented me!’

‘Indeed, ma’am, I say nothing more than the truth, and not all of that. But I thought, myself, she might have found something better to discourse about, than the faults of her own niece, even if you had been in fault, ma’amselle; but I did not believe a word of what she said. But my lady does not care what she says against any body, for that matter.’

‘However that may be, Annette,’ interrupted Emily, recovering her composure, ‘it does not become you to speak of the faults of my aunt to me. I know you have meant well, but — say no more. — I have quite dined.’

Annette blushed, looked down, and then began slowly to clear the table.

‘Is this, then, the reward of my ingenuousness?’ said Emily, when she was alone; ‘the treatment I am to receive from a relation — an aunt — who ought to have been the guardian, not the slanderer of my reputation, — who, as a woman, ought to have respected the delicacy of female

honour, and, as a relation, should have protected mine! But, to utter falsehoods on so nice a subject — to repay the openness, and, I may say with honest pride, the propriety of my conduct, with slanders — required a depravity of heart, such as I could scarcely have believed existed, such as I weep to find in a relation. O! what a contrast does her character present to that of my beloved father; while envy and low cunning form the chief traits of hers, his was distinguished by benevolence and philosophic wisdom! But now, let me only remember, if possible, that she is unfortunate.'

Emily threw her veil over her, and went down to walk upon the ramparts, the only walk, indeed, which was open to her, though she often wished, that she might be permitted to ramble among the woods below, and still more, that she might sometimes explore the sublime scenes of the surrounding country. But, as Montoni would not suffer her to pass the gates of the castle, she tried to be contented with the romantic views she beheld from the walls. The peasants, who had been employed on the fortifications, had left their work, and the ramparts were silent and solitary. Their lonely appearance, together with the gloom of a lowering sky, assisted the musings of her mind, and threw over it a kind of melancholy tranquillity, such as she often loved to indulge. She turned to observe a fine effect of the sun, as his rays, suddenly streaming from behind a heavy cloud, lighted up the west towers of the castle, while the rest of the edifice was in deep shade, except, that, through a lofty gothic arch, adjoining the tower, which led to another terrace, the beams darted in full splendour, and shewed the three strangers she had observed in the morning. Perceiving them, she started, and a momentary fear came over her, as she looked up the long rampart, and saw no other persons. While she hesitated, they approached. The gate at the end of the terrace, whither they were advancing, she knew, was always locked, and she could not depart by the opposite extremity, without meeting them; but, before she passed them, she hastily drew a thin veil over her face, which did, indeed, but ill conceal her beauty. They looked earnestly at her, and spoke to each other in bad Italian, of which she caught only a few words; but the fierceness of their countenances, now that she was near enough to discriminate them, struck her yet more than the wild singularity of their air and dress had formerly done. It was the countenance and figure of him,

who walked between the other two, that chiefly seized her attention, which expressed a sullen haughtiness and a kind of dark watchful villany, that gave a thrill of horror to her heart. All this was so legibly written on his features, as to be seen by a single glance, for she passed the group swiftly, and her timid eyes scarcely rested on them a moment. Having reached the terrace, she stopped, and perceived the strangers standing in the shadow of one of the turrets, gazing after her, and seemingly, by their action, in earnest conversation. She immediately left the rampart, and retired to her apartment.

In the evening, Montoni sat late, carousing with his guests in the cedar chamber. His recent triumph over Count Morano, or, perhaps, some other circumstance, contributed to elevate his spirits to an unusual height. He filled the goblet often, and gave a loose to merriment and talk. The gaiety of Cavigni, on the contrary, was somewhat clouded by anxiety. He kept a watchful eye upon Verezzi, whom, with the utmost difficulty, he had hitherto restrained from exasperating Montoni further against Morano, by a mention of his late taunting words.

One of the company exultingly recurred to the event of the preceding evening. Verezzi's eyes sparkled. The mention of Morano led to that of Emily, of whom they were all profuse in the praise, except Montoni, who sat silent, and then interrupted the subject.

When the servants had withdrawn, Montoni and his friends entered into close conversation, which was sometimes checked by the irascible temper of Verezzi, but in which Montoni displayed his conscious superiority, by that decisive look and manner, which always accompanied the vigour of his thought, and to which most of his companions submitted, as to a power, that they had no right to question, though of each other's self-importance they were jealously scrupulous. Amidst this conversation, one of them imprudently introduced again the name of Morano; and Verezzi, now more heated by wine, disregarded the expressive looks of Cavigni, and gave some dark hints of what had passed on the preceding night. These, however, Montoni did not appear to understand, for he continued silent in his chair, without discovering any emotion, while, the choler of Verezzi increasing with the apparent insensibility of Montoni, he at length told the suggestion of Morano, that this castle did not lawfully belong to

him, and that he would not willingly leave another murder on his conscience.

‘Am I to be insulted at my own table, and by my own friends?’ said Montoni, with a countenance pale in anger. ‘Why are the words of that madman repeated to me?’ Verezzi, who had expected to hear Montoni’s indignation poured forth against Morano, and answered by thanks to himself, looked with astonishment at Cavigni, who enjoyed his confusion. ‘Can you be weak enough to credit the assertions of a madman?’ rejoined Montoni, ‘or, what is the same thing, a man possessed by the spirit of vengeance? But he has succeeded too well; you believe what he said.’

‘Signor,’ said Verezzi, ‘we believe only what we know.’— ‘How!’ interrupted Montoni, sternly: ‘produce your proof.’

‘We believe only what we know,’ repeated Verezzi, ‘and we know nothing of what Morano asserts.’ Montoni seemed to recover himself. ‘I am hasty, my friends,’ said he, ‘with respect to my honour; no man shall question it with impunity — you did not mean to question it. These foolish words are not worth your remembrance, or my resentment. Verezzi, here is to your first exploit.’

‘Success to your first exploit,’ re-echoed the whole company.

‘Noble Signor,’ replied Verezzi, glad to find he had escaped Montoni’s resentment, ‘with my good will, you shall build your ramparts of gold.’

‘Pass the goblet,’ cried Montoni. ‘We will drink to Signora St. Aubert,’ said Cavigni. ‘By your leave we will first drink to the lady of the castle.’ said Bertolini. — Montoni was silent. ‘To the lady of the castle,’ said his guests. He bowed his head.

‘It much surprises me, Signor,’ said Bertolini, ‘that you have so long neglected this castle; it is a noble edifice.’

‘It suits our purpose,’ replied Montoni, ‘and IS a noble edifice. You know not, it seems, by what mischance it came to me.’

‘It was a lucky mischance, be it what it may, Signor,’ replied Bertolini, smiling. ‘I would, that one so lucky had befallen me.’

Montoni looked gravely at him. ‘If you will attend to what I say,’ he resumed, ‘you shall hear the story.’

The countenances of Bertolini and Verezzi expressed something more than curiosity; Cavigni, who seemed to feel none, had probably heard the relation before.

‘It is now near twenty years,’ said Montoni, ‘since this castle came into my possession. I inherit it by the female line. The lady, my predecessor, was only distantly related to me; I am the last of her family. She was beautiful and rich; I wooed her; but her heart was fixed upon another, and she rejected me. It is probable, however, that she was herself rejected of the person, whoever he might be, on whom she bestowed her favour, for a deep and settled melancholy took possession of her; and I have reason to believe she put a period to her own life. I was not at the castle at the time; but, as there are some singular and mysterious circumstances attending that event, I shall repeat them.’

‘Repeat them!’ said a voice.

Montoni was silent; the guests looked at each other, to know who spoke; but they perceived, that each was making the same enquiry. Montoni, at length, recovered himself. ‘We are overheard,’ said he: ‘we will finish this subject another time. Pass the goblet.’

The cavaliers looked round the wide chamber.

‘Here is no person, but ourselves,’ said Verezzi: ‘pray, Signor, proceed.’

‘Did you hear any thing?’ said Montoni.

‘We did,’ said Bertolini.

‘It could be only fancy,’ said Verezzi, looking round again. ‘We see no person besides ourselves; and the sound I thought I heard seemed within the room. Pray, Signor, go on.’

Montoni paused a moment, and then proceeded in a lowered voice, while the cavaliers drew nearer to attend.

‘Ye are to know, Signors, that the Lady Laurentini had for some months shewn symptoms of a dejected mind, nay, of a disturbed imagination. Her mood was very unequal; sometimes she was sunk in calm melancholy, and, at others, as I have been told, she betrayed all the symptoms of frantic madness. It was one night in the month of October, after she had recovered from one of those fits of excess, and had sunk again into her usual melancholy, that she retired alone to her chamber, and forbade all interruption. It was the chamber at the end of the corridor, Signors, where we had the affray, last night. From that hour, she was seen no more.’

‘How! seen no more!’ said Bertolini, ‘was not her body found in the chamber?’

‘Were her remains never found?’ cried the rest of the company all together.

‘Never!’ replied Montoni.

‘What reasons were there to suppose she destroyed herself, then?’ said Bertolini.— ‘Aye, what reasons?’ said Verezzi.— ‘How happened it, that her remains were never found? Although she killed herself, she could not bury herself.’ Montoni looked indignantly at Verezzi, who began to apologize. ‘Your pardon, Signor,’ said he: ‘I did not consider, that the lady was your relative, when I spoke of her so lightly.’

Montoni accepted the apology.

‘But the Signor will oblige us with the reasons, which urged him to believe, that the lady committed suicide.’

‘Those I will explain hereafter,’ said Montoni: ‘at present let me relate a most extraordinary circumstance. This conversation goes no further, Signors. Listen, then, to what I am going to say.’

‘Listen!’ said a voice.

They were all again silent, and the countenance of Montoni changed. ‘This is no illusion of the fancy,’ said Cavigni, at length breaking the profound silence.— ‘No,’ said Bertolini; ‘I heard it myself, now. Yet here is no person in the room but ourselves!’

‘This is very extraordinary,’ said Montoni, suddenly rising. ‘This is not to be borne; here is some deception, some trick. I will know what it means.’

All the company rose from their chairs in confusion.

‘It is very odd!’ said Bertolini. ‘Here is really no stranger in the room. If it is a trick, Signor, you will do well to punish the author of it severely.’

‘A trick! what else can it be?’ said Cavigni, affecting a laugh.

The servants were now summoned, and the chamber was searched, but no person was found. The surprise and consternation of the company increased. Montoni was discomposed. ‘We will leave this room,’ said he, ‘and the subject of our conversation also; it is too solemn.’ His guests were equally ready to quit the apartment; but the subject had roused their curiosity, and they entreated Montoni to withdraw to another chamber, and finish it; no entreaties could, however, prevail with him. Notwithstanding his efforts to appear at ease, he was visibly and greatly disordered.

‘Why, Signor, you are not superstitious,’ cried Verezzi, jeeringly; ‘you, who have so often laughed at the credulity of others!’

‘I am not superstitious,’ replied Montoni, regarding him with stern displeasure, ‘though I know how to despise the commonplace sentences, which are frequently uttered against superstition. I will enquire further into this affair.’ He then left the room; and his guests, separating for the night, retired to their respective apartments.

CHAPTER VIII

He wears the rose of youth upon his cheek.

SHAKESPEARE

We now return to Valancourt, who, it may be remembered, remained at Tholouse, some time after the departure of Emily, restless and miserable. Each morrow that approached, he designed should carry him from thence; yet tomorrow and tomorrow came, and still saw him lingering in the scene of his former happiness. He could not immediately tear himself from the spot, where he had been accustomed to converse with Emily, or from the objects they had viewed together, which appeared to him memorials of her affection, as well as a kind of surety for its faithfulness; and, next to the pain of bidding her adieu, was that of leaving the scenes which so powerfully awakened her image. Sometimes he had bribed a servant, who had been left in the care of Madame Montoni's chateau, to permit him to visit the gardens, and there he would wander, for hours together, rapt in a melancholy, not unpleasing. The terrace, and the pavilion at the end of it, where he had taken leave of Emily, on the eve of her departure from Tholouse, were his most favourite haunts. There, as he walked, or leaned from the window of the building, he would endeavour to recollect all she had said, on that night; to catch the tones of her voice, as they faintly vibrated on his memory, and to remember the exact expression of her countenance, which sometimes came suddenly to his fancy, like a vision; that beautiful countenance, which awakened, as by instantaneous magic, all the tenderness of his heart, and seemed to tell with irresistible eloquence — that he had lost her forever! At these moments, his hurried steps would have discovered to a spectator the despair of his heart. The character of Montoni, such as he had received from hints, and such as his fears represented it, would rise to his view, together with all the dangers it seemed to threaten to Emily and to his love. He blamed himself, that he had not urged these more forcibly to her, while it might have been in his power to detain her, and that he had suffered an absurd and criminal delicacy, as he termed it, to conquer so soon the reasonable arguments he had opposed to this journey. Any evil, that might have attended their marriage, seemed so inferior to those, which now threatened their love, or even to the sufferings, that absence occasioned, that he wondered how he

could have ceased to urge his suit, till he had convinced her of its propriety; and he would certainly now have followed her to Italy, if he could have been spared from his regiment for so long a journey. His regiment, indeed, soon reminded him, that he had other duties to attend, than those of love.

A short time after his arrival at his brother's house, he was summoned to join his brother officers, and he accompanied a battalion to Paris; where a scene of novelty and gaiety opened upon him, such as, till then, he had only a faint idea of. But gaiety disgusted, and company fatigued, his sick mind; and he became an object of unceasing raillery to his companions, from whom, whenever he could steal an opportunity, he escaped, to think of Emily. The scenes around him, however, and the company with whom he was obliged to mingle, engaged his attention, though they failed to amuse his fancy, and thus gradually weakened the habit of yielding to lamentation, till it appeared less a duty to his love to indulge it. Among his brother-officers were many, who added to the ordinary character of a French soldier's gaiety some of those fascinating qualities, which too frequently throw a veil over folly, and sometimes even soften the features of vice into smiles. To these men the reserved and thoughtful manners of Valancourt were a kind of tacit censure on their own, for which they rallied him when present, and plotted against him when absent; they gloried in the thought of reducing him to their own level, and, considering it to be a spirited frolic, determined to accomplish it.

Valancourt was a stranger to the gradual progress of scheme and intrigue, against which he could not be on his guard. He had not been accustomed to receive ridicule, and he could ill endure its sting; he resented it, and this only drew upon him a louder laugh. To escape from such scenes, he fled into solitude, and there the image of Emily met him, and revived the pangs of love and despair. He then sought to renew those tasteful studies, which had been the delight of his early years; but his mind had lost the tranquillity, which is necessary for their enjoyment. To forget himself and the grief and anxiety, which the idea of her recalled, he would quit his solitude, and again mingle in the crowd — glad of a temporary relief, and rejoicing to snatch amusement for the moment.

Thus passed weeks after weeks, time gradually softening his sorrow, and habit strengthening his desire of amusement, till the scenes around him

seemed to awaken into a new character, and Valancourt, to have fallen among them from the clouds.

His figure and address made him a welcome visitor, wherever he had been introduced, and he soon frequented the most gay and fashionable circles of Paris. Among these, was the assembly of the Countess Lacleur, a woman of eminent beauty and captivating manners. She had passed the spring of youth, but her wit prolonged the triumph of its reign, and they mutually assisted the fame of each other; for those, who were charmed by her loveliness, spoke with enthusiasm of her talents; and others, who admired her playful imagination, declared, that her personal graces were unrivalled. But her imagination was merely playful, and her wit, if such it could be called, was brilliant, rather than just; it dazzled, and its fallacy escaped the detection of the moment; for the accents, in which she pronounced it, and the smile, that accompanied them, were a spell upon the judgment of the auditors. Her petits soupers were the most tasteful of any in Paris, and were frequented by many of the second class of literati. She was fond of music, was herself a scientific performer, and had frequently concerts at her house. Valancourt, who passionately loved music, and who sometimes assisted at these concerts, admired her execution, but remembered with a sigh the eloquent simplicity of Emily's songs and the natural expression of her manner, which waited not to be approved by the judgment, but found their way at once to the heart.

Madame La Comtesse had often deep play at her house, which she affected to restrain, but secretly encouraged; and it was well known among her friends, that the splendour of her establishment was chiefly supplied from the profits of her tables. But her petits soupers were the most charming imaginable! Here were all the delicacies of the four quarters of the world, all the wit and the lighter efforts of genius, all the graces of conversation — the smiles of beauty, and the charm of music; and Valancourt passed his pleasantest, as well as most dangerous hours in these parties.

His brother, who remained with his family in Gascony, had contented himself with giving him letters of introduction to such of his relations, residing at Paris, as the latter was not already known to. All these were persons of some distinction; and, as neither the person, mind, or manners of Valancourt the younger threatened to disgrace their alliance, they

received him with as much kindness as their nature, hardened by uninterrupted prosperity, would admit of; but their attentions did not extend to acts of real friendship; for they were too much occupied by their own pursuits, to feel any interest in his; and thus he was set down in the midst of Paris, in the pride of youth, with an open, unsuspicious temper and ardent affections, without one friend, to warn him of the dangers, to which he was exposed. Emily, who, had she been present, would have saved him from these evils by awakening his heart, and engaging him in worthy pursuits, now only increased his danger; — it was to lose the grief, which the remembrance of her occasioned, that he first sought amusement; and for this end he pursued it, till habit made it an object of abstract interest.

There was also a Marchioness Champfort, a young widow, at whose assemblies he passed much of his time. She was handsome, still more artful, gay and fond of intrigue. The society, which she drew round her, was less elegant and more vicious, than that of the Countess Lacleur: but, as she had address enough to throw a veil, though but a slight one, over the worst part of her character, she was still visited by many persons of what is called distinction. Valancourt was introduced to her parties by two of his brother officers, whose late ridicule he had now forgiven so far, that he could sometimes join in the laugh, which a mention of his former manners would renew.

The gaiety of the most splendid court in Europe, the magnificence of the palaces, entertainments, and equipages, that surrounded him — all conspired to dazzle his imagination, and reanimate his spirits, and the example and maxims of his military associates to delude his mind. Emily’s image, indeed, still lived there; but it was no longer the friend, the monitor, that saved him from himself, and to which he retired to weep the sweet, yet melancholy, tears of tenderness. When he had recourse to it, it assumed a countenance of mild reproach, that wrung his soul, and called forth tears of unmixed misery; his only escape from which was to forget the object of it, and he endeavoured, therefore, to think of Emily as seldom as he could.

Thus dangerously circumstanced was Valancourt, at the time, when Emily was suffering at Venice, from the persecuting addresses of Count

Morano, and the unjust authority of Montoni; at which period we leave him.

CHAPTER IX

The image of a wicked, heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does shew the mood of a much-troubled breast.

KING JOHN

Leaving the gay scenes of Paris, we return to those of the gloomy Apennine, where Emily's thoughts were still faithful to Valancourt. Looking to him as to her only hope, she recollected, with jealous exactness, every assurance and every proof she had witnessed of his affection; read again and again the letters she had received from him; weighed, with intense anxiety, the force of every word, that spoke of his attachment; and dried her tears, as she trusted in his truth.

Montoni, meanwhile, had made strict enquiry concerning the strange circumstance of his alarm, without obtaining information; and was, at length, obliged to account for it by the reasonable supposition, that it was a mischievous trick played off by one of his domestics. His disagreements with Madame Montoni, on the subject of her settlements, were now more frequent than ever; he even confined her entirely to her own apartment, and did not scruple to threaten her with much greater severity, should she persevere in a refusal.

Reason, had she consulted it, would now have perplexed her in the choice of a conduct to be adopted. It would have pointed out the danger of irritating by further opposition a man, such as Montoni had proved himself to be, and to whose power she had so entirely committed herself; and it would also have told her, of what extreme importance to her future comfort it was, to reserve for herself those possessions, which would enable her to live independently of Montoni, should she ever escape from his immediate controul. But she was directed by a more decisive guide than reason — the spirit of revenge, which urged her to oppose violence to violence, and obstinacy to obstinacy.

Wholly confined to the solitude of her apartment, she was now reduced to solicit the society she had lately rejected; for Emily was the only person, except Annette, with whom she was permitted to converse.

Generously anxious for her peace, Emily, therefore, tried to persuade, when she could not convince, and sought by every gentle means to induce her to forbear that asperity of reply, which so greatly irritated Montoni. The pride of her aunt did sometimes soften to the soothing voice of Emily,

and there even were moments, when she regarded her affectionate attentions with goodwill.

The scenes of terrible contention, to which Emily was frequently compelled to be witness, exhausted her spirits more than any circumstances, that had occurred since her departure from Tholouse. The gentleness and goodness of her parents, together with the scenes of her early happiness, often stole on her mind, like the visions of a higher world; while the characters and circumstances, now passing beneath her eye, excited both terror and surprise. She could scarcely have imagined, that passions so fierce and so various, as those which Montoni exhibited, could have been concentrated in one individual; yet what more surprised her, was, that, on great occasions, he could bend these passions, wild as they were, to the cause of his interest, and generally could disguise in his countenance their operation on his mind; but she had seen him too often, when he had thought it unnecessary to conceal his nature, to be deceived on such occasions.

Her present life appeared like the dream of a distempered imagination, or like one of those frightful fictions, in which the wild genius of the poets sometimes delighted. Reflection brought only regret, and anticipation terror. How often did she wish to ‘steal the lark’s wing, and mount the swiftest gale,’ that Languedoc and repose might once more be hers!

Of Count Morano’s health she made frequent enquiry; but Annette heard only vague reports of his danger, and that his surgeon had said he would never leave the cottage alive; while Emily could not but be shocked to think, that she, however innocently, might be the means of his death; and Annette, who did not fail to observe her emotion, interpreted it in her own way.

But a circumstance soon occurred, which entirely withdrew Annette’s attention from this subject, and awakened the surprise and curiosity so natural to her. Coming one day to Emily’s apartment, with a countenance full of importance, ‘What can all this mean, ma’amselle?’ said she. ‘Would I was once safe in Languedoc again, they should never catch me going on my travels any more! I must think it a fine thing, truly, to come abroad, and see foreign parts! I little thought I was coming to be catched

up in a old castle, among such dreary mountains, with the chance of being murdered, or, what is as good, having my throat cut!'

'What can all this mean, indeed, Annette?' said Emily, in astonishment.

'Aye, ma'amselle, you may look surprised; but you won't believe it, perhaps, till they have murdered you, too. You would not believe about the ghost I told you of, though I shewed you the very place, where it used to appear! — You will believe nothing, ma'amselle.'

'Not till you speak more reasonably, Annette; for Heaven's sake, explain your meaning. You spoke of murder!'

'Aye, ma'amselle, they are coming to murder us all, perhaps; but what signifies explaining? — you will not believe.'

Emily again desired her to relate what she had seen, or heard.

'O, I have seen enough, ma'am, and heard too much, as Ludovico can prove. Poor soul! they will murder him, too! I little thought, when he sung those sweet verses under my lattice, at Venice!' — Emily looked impatient and displeased. 'Well, ma'amselle, as I was saying, these preparations about the castle, and these strange-looking people, that are calling here every day, and the Signor's cruel usage of my lady, and his odd goings-on — all these, as I told Ludovico, can bode no good. And he bid me hold my tongue. So, says I, the Signor's strangely altered, Ludovico, in this gloomy castle, to what he was in France; there, all so gay! Nobody so gallant to my lady, then; and he could smile, too, upon a poor servant, sometimes, and jeer her, too, good-naturedly enough. I remember once, when he said to me, as I was going out of my lady's dressing-room — Annette, says he— '

'Never mind what the Signor said,' interrupted Emily; 'but tell me, at once, the circumstance, which has thus alarmed you.'

'Aye, ma'amselle,' rejoined Annette, 'that is just what Ludovico said: says he, Never mind what the Signor says to you. So I told him what I thought about the Signor. He is so strangely altered, said I: for now he is so haughty, and so commanding, and so sharp with my lady; and, if he meets one, he'll scarcely look at one, unless it be to frown. So much the better, says Ludovico, so much the better. And to tell you the truth, ma'amselle, I thought this was a very ill-natured speech of Ludovico: but I went on. And then, says I, he is always knitting his brows; and if one speaks to him, he does not hear; and then he sits up counselling so, of a night, with the other Signors — there they are, till long past midnight,

discoursing together! Aye, but says Ludovico, you don’t know what they are counselling about. No, said I, but I can guess — it is about my young lady. Upon that, Ludovico burst out a-laughing, quite loud; so he put me in a huff, for I did not like that either I or you, ma’amselle, should be laughed at; and I turned away quick, but he stopped me. “Don’t be affronted, Annette,” said he, “but I cannot help laughing;” and with that he laughed again. “What!” says he, “do you think the Signors sit up, night after night, only to counsel about thy young lady! No, no, there is something more in the wind than that. And these repairs about the castle, and these preparations about the ramparts — they are not making about young ladies.” Why, surely, said I, the Signor, my master, is not going to make war? “Make war!” said Ludovico, “what, upon the mountains and the woods? for here is no living soul to make war upon that I see.”

‘What are these preparations for, then? said I; why surely nobody is coming to take away my master’s castle! “Then there are so many ill-looking fellows coming to the castle every day,” says Ludovico, without answering my question, “and the Signor sees them all, and talks with them all, and they all stay in the neighbourhood! By holy St. Marco! some of them are the most cut-throat-looking dogs I ever set my eyes upon.”

‘I asked Ludovico again, if he thought they were coming to take away my master’s castle; and he said, No, he did not think they were, but he did not know for certain. “Then yesterday,” said he, but you must not tell this, ma’amselle, “yesterday, a party of these men came, and left all their horses in the castle stables, where, it seems, they are to stay, for the Signor ordered them all to be entertained with the best provender in the manger; but the men are, most of them, in the neighbouring cottages.”

‘So, ma’amselle, I came to tell you all this, for I never heard any thing so strange in my life. But what can these ill-looking men be come about, if it is not to murder us? And the Signor knows this, or why should he be so civil to them? And why should he fortify the castle, and counsel so much with the other Signors, and be so thoughtful?’

‘Is this all you have to tell, Annette?’ said Emily. ‘Have you heard nothing else, that alarms you?’

‘Nothing else, ma’amselle!’ said Annette; ‘why, is not this enough?’ ‘Quite enough for my patience, Annette, but not quite enough to convince me we are all to be murdered, though I acknowledge here is sufficient food

for curiosity.’ She forbore to speak her apprehensions, because she would not encourage Annette’s wild terrors; but the present circumstances of the castle both surprised, and alarmed her. Annette, having told her tale, left the chamber, on the wing for new wonders.

In the evening, Emily had passed some melancholy hours with Madame Montoni, and was retiring to rest, when she was alarmed by a strange and loud knocking at her chamber door, and then a heavy weight fell against it, that almost burst it open. She called to know who was there, and receiving no answer, repeated the call; but a chilling silence followed. It occurred to her — for, at this moment, she could not reason on the probability of circumstances — that some one of the strangers, lately arrived at the castle, had discovered her apartment, and was come with such intent, as their looks rendered too possible — to rob, perhaps to murder, her. The moment she admitted this possibility, terror supplied the place of conviction, and a kind of instinctive remembrance of her remote situation from the family heightened it to a degree, that almost overcame her senses. She looked at the door, which led to the staircase, expecting to see it open, and listening, in fearful silence, for a return of the noise, till she began to think it had proceeded from this door, and a wish of escaping through the opposite one rushed upon her mind. She went to the gallery door, and then, fearing to open it, lest some person might be silently lurking for her without, she stopped, but with her eyes fixed in expectation upon the opposite door of the staircase. As thus she stood, she heard a faint breathing near her, and became convinced, that some person was on the other side of the door, which was already locked. She sought for other fastening, but there was none.

While she yet listened, the breathing was distinctly heard, and her terror was not soothed, when, looking round her wide and lonely chamber, she again considered her remote situation. As she stood hesitating whether to call for assistance, the continuance of the stillness surprised her; and her spirits would have revived, had she not continued to hear the faint breathing, that convinced her, the person, whoever it was, had not quitted the door.

At length, worn out with anxiety, she determined to call loudly for assistance from her casement, and was advancing to it, when, whether the terror of her mind gave her ideal sounds, or that real ones did come, she

thought footsteps were ascending the private staircase; and, expecting to see its door unclose, she forgot all other cause of alarm, and retreated towards the corridor. Here she endeavoured to make her escape, but, on opening the door, was very near falling over a person, who lay on the floor without. She screamed, and would have passed, but her trembling frame refused to support her; and the moment, in which she leaned against the wall of the gallery, allowed her leisure to observe the figure before her, and to recognise the features of Annette. Fear instantly yielded to surprise. She spoke in vain to the poor girl, who remained senseless on the floor, and then, losing all consciousness of her own weakness, hurried to her assistance.

When Annette recovered, she was helped by Emily into the chamber, but was still unable to speak, and looked round her, as if her eyes followed some person in the room. Emily tried to sooth her disturbed spirits, and forbore, at present, to ask her any questions; but the faculty of speech was never long withheld from Annette, and she explained, in broken sentences, and in her tedious way, the occasion of her disorder. She affirmed, and with a solemnity of conviction, that almost staggered the incredulity of Emily, that she had seen an apparition, as she was passing to her bedroom, through the corridor.

‘I had heard strange stories of that chamber before,’ said Annette: ‘but as it was so near yours, ma’amselle, I would not tell them to you, because they would frighten you. The servants had told me, often and often, that it was haunted, and that was the reason why it was shut up: nay, for that matter, why the whole string of these rooms, here, are shut up. I quaked whenever I went by, and I must say, I did sometimes think I heard odd noises within it. But, as I said, as I was passing along the corridor, and not thinking a word about the matter, or even of the strange voice that the Signors heard the other night, all of a sudden comes a great light, and, looking behind me, there was a tall figure, (I saw it as plainly, ma’amselle, as I see you at this moment), a tall figure gliding along (Oh! I cannot describe how!) into the room, that is always shut up, and nobody has the key of it but the Signor, and the door shut directly.’

‘Then it doubtless was the Signor,’ said Emily.

‘O no, ma’amselle, it could not be him, for I left him busy a-quarrelling in my lady’s dressing-room!’

‘You bring me strange tales, Annette,’ said Emily: ‘it was but this morning, that you would have terrified me with the apprehension of murder; and now you would persuade me, you have seen a ghost! These wonderful stories come too quickly.’

‘Nay, ma’amselle, I will say no more, only, if I had not been frightened, I should not have fainted dead away, so. I ran as fast as I could, to get to your door; but, what was worst of all, I could not call out; then I thought something must be strangely the matter with me, and directly I dropt down.’

‘Was it the chamber where the black veil hangs?’ said Emily. ‘O! no, ma’amselle, it was one nearer to this. What shall I do, to get to my room? I would not go out into the corridor again, for the whole world!’ Emily, whose spirits had been severely shocked, and who, therefore, did not like the thought of passing the night alone, told her she might sleep where she was. ‘O, no, ma’amselle,’ replied Annette, ‘I would not sleep in the room, now, for a thousand sequins!’

Wearied and disappointed, Emily first ridiculed, though she shared, her fears, and then tried to sooth them; but neither attempt succeeded, and the girl persisted in believing and affirming, that what she had seen was nothing human. It was not till some time after Emily had recovered her composure, that she recollected the steps she had heard on the staircase — a remembrance, however, which made her insist that Annette should pass the night with her, and, with much difficulty, she, at length, prevailed, assisted by that part of the girl’s fear, which concerned the corridor.

Early on the following morning, as Emily crossed the hall to the ramparts, she heard a noisy bustle in the courtyard, and the clatter of horses’ hoofs. Such unusual sounds excited her curiosity; and, instead of going to the ramparts, she went to an upper casement, from whence she saw, in the court below, a large party of horsemen, dressed in a singular, but uniform, habit, and completely, though variously, armed. They wore a kind of short jacket, composed of black and scarlet, and several of them had a cloak, of plain black, which, covering the person entirely, hung down to the stirrups. As one of these cloaks glanced aside, she saw, beneath, daggers, apparently of different sizes, tucked into the horseman’s belt. She further observed, that these were carried, in the same manner, by many of the horsemen without cloaks, most of whom bore also pikes, or javelins.

On their heads, were the small Italian caps, some of which were distinguished by black feathers. Whether these caps gave a fierce air to the countenance, or that the countenances they surmounted had naturally such an appearance, Emily thought she had never, till then, seen an assemblage of faces so savage and terrific. While she gazed, she almost fancied herself surrounded by banditti; and a vague thought glanced athwart her fancy — that Montoni was the captain of the group before her, and that this castle was to be the place of rendezvous. The strange and horrible supposition was but momentary, though her reason could supply none more probable, and though she discovered, among the band, the strangers she had formerly noticed with so much alarm, who were now distinguished by the black plume.

While she continued gazing, Cavigni, Verezzi, and Bertolini came forth from the hall, habited like the rest, except that they wore hats, with a mixed plume of black and scarlet, and that their arms differed from those of the rest of the party. As they mounted their horses, Emily was struck with the exulting joy, expressed on the visage of Verezzi, while Cavigni was gay, yet with a shade of thought on his countenance; and, as he managed his horse with dexterity, his graceful and commanding figure, which exhibited the majesty of a hero, had never appeared to more advantage. Emily, as she observed him, thought he somewhat resembled Valancourt, in the spirit and dignity of his person; but she looked in vain for the noble, benevolent countenance — the soul’s intelligence, which overspread the features of the latter.

As she was hoping, she scarcely knew why, that Montoni would accompany the party, he appeared at the hall door, but un-accoutred. Having carefully observed the horsemen, conversed awhile with the cavaliers, and bidden them farewel, the band wheeled round the court, and, led by Verezzi, issued forth under the portcullis; Montoni following to the portal, and gazing after them for some time. Emily then retired from the casement, and, now certain of being unmolested, went to walk on the ramparts, from whence she soon after saw the party winding among the mountains to the west, appearing and disappearing between the woods, till distance confused their figures, consolidated their numbers, and only a dingy mass appeared moving along the heights.

Emily observed, that no workmen were on the ramparts, and that the repairs of the fortifications seemed to be completed. While she sauntered thoughtfully on, she heard distant footsteps, and, raising her eyes, saw several men lurking under the castle walls, who were evidently not workmen, but looked as if they would have accorded well with the party, which was gone. Wondering where Annette had hid herself so long, who might have explained some of the late circumstances, and then considering that Madame Montoni was probably risen, she went to her dressing-room, where she mentioned what had occurred; but Madame Montoni either would not, or could not, give any explanation of the event. The Signor's reserve to his wife, on this subject, was probably nothing more than usual; yet, to Emily, it gave an air of mystery to the whole affair, that seemed to hint, there was danger, if not villany, in his schemes.

Annette presently came, and, as usual, was full of alarm; to her lady's eager enquiries of what she had heard among the servants, she replied:

'Ah, madam! nobody knows what it is all about, but old Carlo; he knows well enough, I dare say, but he is as close as his master. Some say the Signor is going out to frighten the enemy, as they call it: but where is the enemy? Then others say, he is going to take away some body's castle: but I am sure he has room enough in his own, without taking other people's; and I am sure I should like it a great deal better, if there were more people to fill it.'

'Ah! you will soon have your wish, I fear,' replied Madame Montoni.

'No, madam, but such ill-looking fellows are not worth having. I mean such gallant, smart, merry fellows as Ludovico, who is always telling droll stories, to make one laugh. It was but yesterday, he told me such a HUMOURSOME tale! I can't help laughing at it now. — Says he— '

'Well, we can dispense with the story,' said her lady. 'Ah!' continued Annette, 'he sees a great way further than other people! Now he sees into all the Signor's meaning, without knowing a word about the matter!'

'How is that?' said Madame Montoni.

'Why he says — but he made me promise not to tell, and I would not disoblige him for the world.'

'What is it he made you promise not to tell?' said her lady, sternly. 'I insist upon knowing immediately — what is it he made you promise?'

‘O madam,’ cried Annette, ‘I would not tell for the universe!’ ‘I insist upon your telling this instant,’ said Madame Montoni. ‘O dear madam! I would not tell for a hundred sequins! You would not have me forswear myself madam!’ exclaimed Annette.

‘I will not wait another moment,’ said Madame Montoni. Annette was silent.

‘The Signor shall be informed of this directly,’ rejoined her mistress: ‘he will make you discover all.’

‘It is Ludovico, who has discovered,’ said Annette: ‘but for mercy’s sake, madam, don’t tell the Signor, and you shall know all directly.’ Madame Montoni said, that she would not.

‘Well then, madam, Ludovico says, that the Signor, my master, is — is — that is, he only thinks so, and any body, you know, madam, is free to think — that the Signor, my master, is — is— ‘

‘Is what?’ said her lady, impatiently.

‘That the Signor, my master, is going to be — a great robber — that is — he is going to rob on his own account; — to be, (but I am sure I don’t understand what he means) to be a — captain of — robbers.’

‘Art thou in thy senses, Annette?’ said Madame Montoni; ‘or is this a trick to deceive me? Tell me, this instant, what Ludovico DID say to thee; — no equivocation; — this instant.’

‘Nay, madam,’ cried Annette, ‘if this is all I am to get for having told the secret’ — Her mistress thus continued to insist, and Annette to protest, till Montoni, himself, appeared, who bade the latter leave the room, and she withdrew, trembling for the fate of her story. Emily also was retiring, but her aunt desired she would stay; and Montoni had so often made her a witness of their contention, that he no longer had scruples on that account.

‘I insist upon knowing this instant, Signor, what all this means:’ said his wife— ‘what are all these armed men, whom they tell me of, gone out about?’ Montoni answered her only with a look of scorn; and Emily whispered something to her. ‘It does not signify,’ said her aunt: ‘I will know; and I will know, too, what the castle has been fortified for.’

‘Come, come,’ said Montoni, ‘other business brought me here. I must be trifled with no longer. I have immediate occasion for what I demand — those estates must be given up, without further contention; or I may find a way— ‘

‘They never shall be given up,’ interrupted Madame Montoni: ‘they never shall enable you to carry on your wild schemes; — but what are these? I will know. Do you expect the castle to be attacked? Do you expect enemies? Am I to be shut up here, to be killed in a siege?’

‘Sign the writings,’ said Montoni, ‘and you shall know more.’

‘What enemy can be coming?’ continued his wife. ‘Have you entered into the service of the state? Am I to be blocked up here to die?’

‘That may possibly happen,’ said Montoni, ‘unless you yield to my demand: for, come what may, you shall not quit the castle till then.’ Madame Montoni burst into loud lamentation, which she as suddenly checked, considering, that her husband’s assertions might be only artifices, employed to extort her consent. She hinted this suspicion, and, in the next moment, told him also, that his designs were not so honourable as to serve the state, and that she believed he had only commenced a captain of banditti, to join the enemies of Venice, in plundering and laying waste the surrounding country.

Montoni looked at her for a moment with a steady and stern countenance; while Emily trembled, and his wife, for once, thought she had said too much. ‘You shall be removed, this night,’ said he, ‘to the east turret: there, perhaps, you may understand the danger of offending a man, who has an unlimited power over you.’

Emily now fell at his feet, and, with tears of terror, supplicated for her aunt, who sat, trembling with fear, and indignation; now ready to pour forth execrations, and now to join the intercessions of Emily. Montoni, however, soon interrupted these entreaties with an horrible oath; and, as he burst from Emily, leaving his cloak, in her hand, she fell to the floor, with a force, that occasioned her a severe blow on the forehead. But he quitted the room, without attempting to raise her, whose attention was called from herself, by a deep groan from Madame Montoni, who continued otherwise unmoved in her chair, and had not fainted. Emily, hastening to her assistance, saw her eyes rolling, and her features convulsed.

Having spoken to her, without receiving an answer, she brought water, and supported her head, while she held it to her lips; but the increasing convulsions soon compelled Emily to call for assistance. On her way through the hall, in search of Annette, she met Montoni, whom she told what had happened, and conjured to return and comfort her aunt; but he

turned silently away, with a look of indifference, and went out upon the ramparts. At length she found old Carlo and Annette, and they hastened to the dressing-room, where Madame Montoni had fallen on the floor, and was lying in strong convulsions. Having lifted her into the adjoining room, and laid her on the bed, the force of her disorder still made all their strength necessary to hold her, while Annette trembled and sobbed, and old Carlo looked silently and piteously on, as his feeble hands grasped those of his mistress, till, turning his eyes upon Emily, he exclaimed, ‘Good God! Signora, what is the matter?’

Emily looked calmly at him, and saw his enquiring eyes fixed on her: and Annette, looking up, screamed loudly; for Emily’s face was stained with blood, which continued to fall slowly from her forehead: but her attention had been so entirely occupied by the scene before her, that she had felt no pain from the wound. She now held an handkerchief to her face, and, notwithstanding her faintness, continued to watch Madame Montoni, the violence of whose convulsions was abating, till at length they ceased, and left her in a kind of stupor.

‘My aunt must remain quiet,’ said Emily. ‘Go, good Carlo; if we should want your assistance, I will send for you. In the mean time, if you have an opportunity, speak kindly of your mistress to your master.’

‘Alas!’ said Carlo, ‘I have seen too much! I have little influence with the Signor. But do, dear young lady, take some care of yourself; that is an ugly wound, and you look sadly.’

‘Thank you, my friend, for your consideration,’ said Emily, smiling kindly: ‘the wound is trifling, it came by a fall.’

Carlo shook his head, and left the room; and Emily, with Annette, continued to watch by her aunt. ‘Did my lady tell the Signor what Ludovico said, ma’amselle?’ asked Annette in a whisper; but Emily quieted her fears on the subject.

‘I thought what this quarrelling would come to,’ continued Annette: ‘I suppose the Signor has been beating my lady.’

‘No, no, Annette, you are totally mistaken, nothing extraordinary has happened.’

‘Why, extraordinary things happen here so often, ma’amselle, that there is nothing in them. Here is another legion of those ill-looking fellows, come to the castle, this morning.’

‘Hush! Annette, you will disturb my aunt; we will talk of that by and bye.’

They continued watching silently, till Madame Montoni uttered a low sigh, when Emily took her hand, and spoke soothingly to her; but the former gazed with unconscious eyes, and it was long before she knew her niece. Her first words then enquired for Montoni; to which Emily replied by an entreaty, that she would compose her spirits, and consent to be kept quiet, adding, that, if she wished any message to be conveyed to him, she would herself deliver it. ‘No,’ said her aunt faintly, ‘no — I have nothing new to tell him. Does he persist in saying I shall be removed from my chamber?’

Emily replied, that he had not spoken, on the subject, since Madame Montoni heard him; and then she tried to divert her attention to some other topic; but her aunt seemed to be inattentive to what she said, and lost in secret thoughts. Emily, having brought her some refreshment, now left her to the care of Annette, and went in search of Montoni, whom she found on a remote part of the rampart, conversing among a group of the men described by Annette. They stood round him with fierce, yet subjugated, looks, while he, speaking earnestly, and pointing to the walls, did not perceive Emily, who remained at some distance, waiting till he should be at leisure, and observing involuntarily the appearance of one man, more savage than his fellows, who stood resting on his pike, and looking, over the shoulders of a comrade, at Montoni, to whom he listened with uncommon earnestness. This man was apparently of low condition; yet his looks appeared not to acknowledge the superiority of Montoni, as did those of his companions; and sometimes they even assumed an air of authority, which the decisive manner of the Signor could not repress. Some few words of Montoni then passed in the wind; and, as the men were separating, she heard him say, ‘This evening, then, begin the watch at sun-set.’

‘At sun-set, Signor,’ replied one or two of them, and walked away; while Emily approached Montoni, who appeared desirous of avoiding her: but, though she observed this, she had courage to proceed. She endeavoured to intercede once more for her aunt, represented to him her sufferings, and urged the danger of exposing her to a cold apartment in her present state. ‘She suffers by her own folly,’ said Montoni, ‘and is not to be pitied; —

she knows how she may avoid these sufferings in future — if she is removed to the turret, it will be her own fault. Let her be obedient, and sign the writings you heard of, and I will think no more of it.'

When Emily ventured still to plead, he sternly silenced and rebuked her for interfering in his domestic affairs, but, at length, dismissed her with this concession — That he would not remove Madame Montoni, on the ensuing night, but allow her till the next to consider, whether she would resign her settlements, or be imprisoned in the east turret of the castle, 'where she shall find,' he added, 'a punishment she may not expect.'

Emily then hastened to inform her aunt of this short respite and of the alternative, that awaited her, to which the latter made no reply, but appeared thoughtful, while Emily, in consideration of her extreme languor, wished to sooth her mind by leading it to less interesting topics: and, though these efforts were unsuccessful, and Madame Montoni became peevish, her resolution, on the contended point, seemed somewhat to relax, and Emily recommended, as her only means of safety, that she should submit to Montoni's demand. 'You know not what you advise,' said her aunt. 'Do you understand, that these estates will descend to you at my death, if I persist in a refusal?'

'I was ignorant of that circumstance, madam,' replied Emily, 'but the knowledge of it cannot withhold me from advising you to adopt the conduct, which not only your peace, but, I fear, your safety requires, and I entreat, that you will not suffer a consideration comparatively so trifling, to make you hesitate a moment in resigning them.'

'Are you sincere, niece?' 'Is it possible you can doubt it, madam?' Her aunt appeared to be affected. 'You are not unworthy of these estates, niece,' said she: 'I would wish to keep them for your sake — you shew a virtue I did not expect.'

'How have I deserved this reproof, madam?' said Emily sorrowfully.

'Reproof!' replied Madame Montoni: 'I meant to praise your virtue.'

'Alas! here is no exertion of virtue,' rejoined Emily, 'for here is no temptation to be overcome.'

'Yet Monsieur Valancourt' — said her aunt. 'O, madam!' interrupted Emily, anticipating what she would have said, 'do not let me glance on that subject: do not let my mind be stained with a wish so shockingly self-

interested.’ She immediately changed the topic, and continued with Madame Montoni, till she withdrew to her apartment for the night.

At that hour, the castle was perfectly still, and every inhabitant of it, except herself, seemed to have retired to rest. As she passed along the wide and lonely galleries, dusky and silent, she felt forlorn and apprehensive of — she scarcely knew what; but when, entering the corridor, she recollected the incident of the preceding night, a dread seized her, lest a subject of alarm, similar to that, which had befallen Annette, should occur to her, and which, whether real, or ideal, would, she felt, have an almost equal effect upon her weakened spirits. The chamber, to which Annette had alluded, she did not exactly know, but understood it to be one of those she must pass in the way to her own; and, sending a fearful look forward into the gloom, she stepped lightly and cautiously along, till, coming to a door, from whence issued a low sound, she hesitated and paused; and, during the delay of that moment, her fears so much increased, that she had no power to move from the spot. Believing, that she heard a human voice within, she was somewhat revived; but, in the next moment, the door was opened, and a person, whom she conceived to be Montoni, appeared, who instantly started back, and closed it, though not before she had seen, by the light that burned in the chamber, another person, sitting in a melancholy attitude by the fire. Her terror vanished, but her astonishment only began, which was now roused by the mysterious secrecy of Montoni’s manner, and by the discovery of a person, whom he thus visited at midnight, in an apartment, which had long been shut up, and of which such extraordinary reports were circulated.

While she thus continued hesitating, strongly prompted to watch Montoni’s motions, yet fearing to irritate him by appearing to notice them, the door was again opened cautiously, and as instantly closed as before. She then stepped softly to her chamber, which was the next but one to this, but, having put down her lamp, returned to an obscure corner of the corridor, to observe the proceedings of this half-seen person, and to ascertain, whether it was indeed Montoni.

Having waited in silent expectation for a few minutes, with her eyes fixed on the door, it was again opened, and the same person appeared, whom she now knew to be Montoni. He looked cautiously round, without perceiving her, then, stepping forward, closed the door, and left the

corridor. Soon after, Emily heard the door fastened on the inside, and she withdrew to her chamber, wondering at what she had witnessed.

It was now twelve o’clock. As she closed her casement, she heard footsteps on the terrace below, and saw imperfectly, through the gloom, several persons advancing, who passed under the casement. She then heard the clink of arms, and, in the next moment, the watchword; when, recollecting the command she had overheard from Montoni, and the hour of the night, she understood, that these men were, for the first time, relieving guard in the castle. Having listened till all was again still, she retired to sleep.

CHAPTER X

And shall no lay of death
With pleasing murmur sooth
Her parted soul?
Shall no tear wet her grave?

SAYERS

On the following morning, Emily went early to the apartment of Madame Montoni, who had slept well, and was much recovered. Her spirits had also returned with her health, and her resolution to oppose Montoni's demands revived, though it yet struggled with her fears, which Emily, who trembled for the consequence of further opposition, endeavoured to confirm.

Her aunt, as has been already shewn, had a disposition, which delighted in contradiction, and which taught her, when unpleasant circumstances were offered to her understanding, not to enquire into their truth, but to seek for arguments, by which she might make them appear false. Long habit had so entirely confirmed this natural propensity, that she was not conscious of possessing it. Emily's remonstrances and representations, therefore, roused her pride, instead of alarming, or convincing her judgment, and she still relied upon the discovery of some means, by which she might yet avoid submitting to the demand of her husband. Considering, that, if she could once escape from his castle, she might defy his power, and, obtaining a decisive separation, live in comfort on the estates, that yet remained for her, she mentioned this to her niece, who accorded with her in the wish, but differed from her, as to the probability of its completion. She represented the impossibility of passing the gates, secured and guarded as they were, and the extreme danger of committing her design to the discretion of a servant, who might either purposely betray, or accidentally disclose it. — Montoni's vengeance would also disdain restraint, if her intention was detected: and, though Emily wished, as fervently as she could do, to regain her freedom, and return to France, she consulted only Madame Montoni's safety, and persevered in advising her to relinquish her settlement, without braving further outrage.

The struggle of contrary emotions, however, continued to rage in her aunt's bosom, and she still brooded over the chance of effecting an escape. While she thus sat, Montoni entered the room, and, without noticing his wife's indisposition, said, that he came to remind her of the impolicy of trifling with him, and that he gave her only till the evening to determine, whether she would consent to his demand, or compel him, by a refusal, to

remove her to the east turret. He added, that a party of cavaliers would dine with him, that day, and that he expected that she would sit at the head of the table, where Emily, also, must be present. Madame Montoni was now on the point of uttering an absolute refusal, but, suddenly considering, that her liberty, during this entertainment, though circumscribed, might favour her further plans, she acquiesced, with seeming reluctance, and Montoni, soon after, left the apartment. His command struck Emily with surprise and apprehension, who shrank from the thought of being exposed to the gaze of strangers, such as her fancy represented these to be, and the words of Count Morano, now again recollected, did not sooth her fears.

When she withdrew to prepare for dinner, she dressed herself with even more simplicity than usual, that she might escape observation — a policy, which did not avail her, for, as she re-passed to her aunt's apartment, she was met by Montoni, who censured what he called her prudish appearance, and insisted, that she should wear the most splendid dress she had, even that, which had been prepared for her intended nuptials with Count Morano, and which, it now appeared, her aunt had carefully brought with her from Venice. This was made, not in the Venetian, but, in the Neapolitan fashion, so as to set off the shape and figure, to the utmost advantage. In it, her beautiful chestnut tresses were negligently bound up in pearls, and suffered to fall back again on her neck. The simplicity of a better taste, than Madame Montoni's, was conspicuous in this dress, splendid as it was, and Emily's unaffected beauty never had appeared more captivatingly. She had now only to hope, that Montoni's order was prompted, not by any extraordinary design, but by an ostentation of displaying his family, richly attired, to the eyes of strangers; yet nothing less than his absolute command could have prevailed with her to wear a dress, that had been designed for such an offensive purpose, much less to have worn it on this occasion. As she descended to dinner, the emotion of her mind threw a faint blush over her countenance, and heightened its interesting expression; for timidity had made her linger in her apartment, till the utmost moment, and, when she entered the hall, in which a kind of state dinner was spread, Montoni and his guests were already seated at the table. She was then going to place herself by her aunt; but Montoni waved his hand, and two of the cavaliers rose, and seated her between them.

The eldest of these was a tall man, with strong Italian features, an aquiline nose, and dark penetrating eyes, that flashed with fire, when his mind was agitated, and, even in its state of rest, retained somewhat of the wildness of the passions. His visage was long and narrow, and his complexion of a sickly yellow.

The other, who appeared to be about forty, had features of a different cast, yet Italian, and his look was slow, subtle and penetrating; his eyes, of a dark grey, were small, and hollow; his complexion was a sun-burnt brown, and the contour of his face, though inclined to oval, was irregular and ill-formed.

Eight other guests sat round the table, who were all dressed in an uniform, and had all an expression, more or less, of wild fierceness, of subtle design, or of licentious passions. As Emily timidly surveyed them, she remembered the scene of the preceding morning, and again almost fancied herself surrounded by banditti; then, looking back to the tranquillity of her early life, she felt scarcely less astonishment, than grief, at her present situation. The scene, in which they sat, assisted the illusion; it was an antient hall, gloomy from the style of its architecture, from its great extent, and because almost the only light it received was from one large gothic window, and from a pair of folding doors, which, being open, admitted likewise a view of the west rampart, with the wild mountains of the Apennine beyond.

The middle compartment of this hall rose into a vaulted roof, enriched with fretwork, and supported, on three sides, by pillars of marble; beyond these, long colonnades retired in gloomy grandeur, till their extent was lost in twilight. The lightest footsteps of the servants, as they advanced through these, were returned in whispering echoes, and their figures, seen at a distance imperfectly through the dusk, frequently awakened Emily’s imagination. She looked alternately at Montoni, at his guests and on the surrounding scene; and then, remembering her dear native province, her pleasant home and the simplicity and goodness of the friends, whom she had lost, grief and surprise again occupied her mind.

When her thoughts could return from these considerations, she fancied she observed an air of authority towards his guests, such as she had never before seen him assume, though he had always been distinguished by an haughty carriage; there was something also in the manners of the

strangers, that seemed perfectly, though not servilely, to acknowledge his superiority.

During dinner, the conversation was chiefly on war and politics. They talked with energy of the state of Venice, its dangers, the character of the reigning Doge and of the chief senators; and then spoke of the state of Rome. When the repast was over, they rose, and, each filling his goblet with wine from the gilded ewer, that stood beside him, drank ‘Success to our exploits!’ Montoni was lifting his goblet to his lips to drink this toast, when suddenly the wine hissed, rose to the brim, and, as he held the glass from him, it burst into a thousand pieces.

To him, who constantly used that sort of Venice glass, which had the quality of breaking, upon receiving poisoned liquor, a suspicion, that some of his guests had endeavoured to betray him, instantly occurred, and he ordered all the gates to be closed, drew his sword, and, looking round on them, who stood in silent amazement, exclaimed, ‘Here is a traitor among us; let those, that are innocent, assist in discovering the guilty.’

Indignation flashed from the eyes of the cavaliers, who all drew their swords; and Madame Montoni, terrified at what might ensue, was hastening from the hall, when her husband commanded her to stay; but his further words could not now be distinguished, for the voice of every person rose together. His order, that all the servants should appear, was at length obeyed, and they declared their ignorance of any deceit — a protestation which could not be believed; for it was evident, that, as Montoni’s liquor, and his only, had been poisoned, a deliberate design had been formed against his life, which could not have been carried so far towards its accomplishment, without the connivance of the servant, who had the care of the wine ewers.

This man, with another, whose face betrayed either the consciousness of guilt, or the fear of punishment, Montoni ordered to be chained instantly, and confined in a strong room, which had formerly been used as a prison. Thither, likewise, he would have sent all his guests, had he not foreseen the consequence of so bold and unjustifiable a proceeding. As to those, therefore, he contented himself with swearing, that no man should pass the gates, till this extraordinary affair had been investigated, and then sternly bade his wife retire to her apartment, whither he suffered Emily to attend her.

In about half an hour, he followed to the dressing-room; and Emily observed, with horror, his dark countenance and quivering lip, and heard him denounce vengeance on her aunt.

‘It will avail you nothing,’ said he to his wife, ‘to deny the fact; I have proof of your guilt. Your only chance of mercy rests on a full confession; — there is nothing to hope from sullenness, or falsehood; your accomplice has confessed all.’

Emily’s fainting spirits were roused by astonishment, as she heard her aunt accused of a crime so atrocious, and she could not, for a moment, admit the possibility of her guilt. Meanwhile Madame Montoni’s agitation did not permit her to reply; alternately her complexion varied from livid paleness to a crimson flush; and she trembled, — but, whether with fear, or with indignation, it were difficult to decide.

‘Spare your words,’ said Montoni, seeing her about to speak, ‘your countenance makes full confession of your crime. — You shall be instantly removed to the east turret.’

‘This accusation,’ said Madame Montoni, speaking with difficulty, ‘is used only as an excuse for your cruelty; I disdain to reply to it. You do not believe me guilty.’

‘Signor!’ said Emily solemnly, ‘this dreadful charge, I would answer with my life, is false. Nay, Signor,’ she added, observing the severity of his countenance, ‘this is no moment for restraint, on my part; I do not scruple to tell you, that you are deceived — most wickedly deceived, by the suggestion of some person, who aims at the ruin of my aunt: — it is impossible, that you could yourself have imagined a crime so hideous.’

Montoni, his lips trembling more than before, replied only, ‘If you value your own safety,’ addressing Emily, ‘you will be silent. I shall know how to interpret your remonstrances, should you persevere in them.’

Emily raised her eyes calmly to heaven. ‘Here is, indeed, then, nothing to hope!’ said she.

‘Peace!’ cried Montoni, ‘or you shall find there is something to fear.’

He turned to his wife, who had now recovered her spirits, and who vehemently and wildly remonstrated upon this mysterious suspicion: but Montoni’s rage heightened with her indignation, and Emily, dreading the event of it, threw herself between them, and clasped his knees in silence, looking up in his face with an expression, that might have softened the

heart of a fiend. Whether his was hardened by a conviction of Madame Montoni's guilt, or that a bare suspicion of it made him eager to exercise vengeance, he was totally and alike insensible to the distress of his wife, and to the pleading looks of Emily, whom he made no attempt to raise, but was vehemently menacing both, when he was called out of the room by some person at the door. As he shut the door, Emily heard him turn the lock and take out the key; so that Madame Montoni and herself were now prisoners; and she saw that his designs became more and more terrible. Her endeavours to explain his motives for this circumstance were almost as ineffectual as those to sooth the distress of her aunt, whose innocence she could not doubt; but she, at length, accounted for Montoni's readiness to suspect his wife by his own consciousness of cruelty towards her, and for the sudden violence of his present conduct against both, before even his suspicions could be completely formed, by his general eagerness to effect suddenly whatever he was led to desire and his carelessness of justice, or humanity, in accomplishing it.

Madame Montoni, after some time, again looked round, in search of a possibility of escape from the castle, and conversed with Emily on the subject, who was now willing to encounter any hazard, though she forbore to encourage a hope in her aunt, which she herself did not admit. How strongly the edifice was secured, and how vigilantly guarded, she knew too well; and trembled to commit their safety to the caprice of the servant, whose assistance they must solicit. Old Carlo was compassionate, but he seemed to be too much in his master's interest to be trusted by them; Annette could of herself do little, and Emily knew Ludovico only from her report. At present, however, these considerations were useless, Madame Montoni and her niece being shut up from all intercourse, even with the persons, whom there might be these reasons to reject.

In the hall, confusion and tumult still reigned. Emily, as she listened anxiously to the murmur, that sounded along the gallery, sometimes fancied she heard the clashing of swords, and, when she considered the nature of the provocation, given by Montoni, and his impetuosity, it appeared probable, that nothing less than arms would terminate the contention. Madame Montoni, having exhausted all her expressions of indignation, and Emily, hers of comfort, they remained silent, in that kind of breathless stillness, which, in nature, often succeeds to the uproar of

conflicting elements; a stillness, like the morning, that dawns upon the ruins of an earthquake.

An uncertain kind of terror pervaded Emily's mind; the circumstances of the past hour still came dimly and confusedly to her memory; and her thoughts were various and rapid, though without tumult.

From this state of waking visions she was recalled by a knocking at the chamber-door, and, enquiring who was there, heard the whispering voice of Annette.

'Dear madam, let me come in, I have a great deal to say,' said the poor girl.

'The door is locked,' answered the lady.

'Yes, ma'am, but do pray open it.'

'The Signor has the key,' said Madame Montoni.

'O blessed Virgin! what will become of us?' exclaimed Annette.

'Assist us to escape,' said her mistress. 'Where is Ludovico?'

'Below in the hall, ma'am, amongst them all, fighting with the best of them!'

'Fighting! Who are fighting?' cried Madame Montoni.

'Why the Signor, ma'am, and all the Signors, and a great many more.'

'Is any person much hurt?' said Emily, in a tremulous voice. 'Hurt! Yes, ma'amselle, — there they lie bleeding, and the swords are clashing, and — O holy saints! Do let me in, ma'am, they are coming this way — I shall be murdered!'

'Fly!' cried Emily, 'fly! we cannot open the door.'

Annette repeated, that they were coming, and in the same moment fled.

'Be calm, madam,' said Emily, turning to her aunt, 'I entreat you to be calm, I am not frightened — not frightened in the least, do not you be alarmed.'

'You can scarcely support yourself,' replied her aunt; 'Merciful God! what is it they mean to do with us?'

'They come, perhaps, to liberate us,' said Emily, 'Signor Montoni perhaps is — is conquered.'

The belief of his death gave her spirits a sudden shock, and she grew faint as she saw him in imagination, expiring at her feet.

'They are coming!' cried Madame Montoni— 'I hear their steps — they are at the door!'

Emily turned her languid eyes to the door, but terror deprived her of utterance. The key sounded in the lock; the door opened, and Montoni appeared, followed by three ruffian-like men. ‘Execute your orders,’ said he, turning to them, and pointing to his wife, who shrieked, but was immediately carried from the room; while Emily sunk, senseless, on a couch, by which she had endeavoured to support herself. When she recovered, she was alone, and recollected only, that Madame Montoni had been there, together with some unconnected particulars of the preceding transaction, which were, however, sufficient to renew all her terror. She looked wildly round the apartment, as if in search of some means of intelligence, concerning her aunt, while neither her own danger, or an idea of escaping from the room, immediately occurred.

When her recollection was more complete, she raised herself and went, but with only a faint hope, to examine whether the door was unfastened. It was so, and she then stepped timidly out into the gallery, but paused there, uncertain which way she should proceed. Her first wish was to gather some information, as to her aunt, and she, at length, turned her steps to go to the lesser hall, where Annette and the other servants usually waited.

Every where, as she passed, she heard, from a distance, the uproar of contention, and the figures and faces, which she met, hurrying along the passages, struck her mind with dismay. Emily might now have appeared, like an angel of light, encompassed by fiends. At length, she reached the lesser hall, which was silent and deserted, but, panting for breath, she sat down to recover herself. The total stillness of this place was as awful as the tumult, from which she had escaped: but she had now time to recall her scattered thoughts, to remember her personal danger, and to consider of some means of safety. She perceived, that it was useless to seek Madame Montoni, through the wide extent and intricacies of the castle, now, too, when every avenue seemed to be beset by ruffians; in this hall she could not resolve to stay, for she knew not how soon it might become their place of rendezvous; and, though she wished to go to her chamber, she dreaded again to encounter them on the way.

Thus she sat, trembling and hesitating, when a distant murmur broke on the silence, and grew louder and louder, till she distinguished voices and steps approaching. She then rose to go, but the sounds came along the only passage, by which she could depart, and she was compelled to await in the

hall, the arrival of the persons, whose steps she heard. As these advanced, she distinguished groans, and then saw a man borne slowly along by four others. Her spirits faltered at the sight, and she leaned against the wall for support. The bearers, meanwhile, entered the hall, and, being too busily occupied to detain, or even notice Emily, she attempted to leave it, but her strength failed, and she again sat down on the bench. A damp chillness came over her; her sight became confused; she knew not what had passed, or where she was, yet the groans of the wounded person still vibrated on her heart. In a few moments, the tide of life seemed again to flow; she began to breathe more freely, and her senses revived. She had not fainted, nor had ever totally lost her consciousness, but had contrived to support herself on the bench; still without courage to turn her eyes upon the unfortunate object, which remained near her, and about whom the men were yet too much engaged to attend to her.

When her strength returned, she rose, and was suffered to leave the hall, though her anxiety, having produced some vain enquiries, concerning Madame Montoni, had thus made a discovery of herself. Towards her chamber she now hastened, as fast as her steps would bear her, for she still perceived, upon her passage, the sounds of confusion at a distance, and she endeavoured, by taking her way through some obscure rooms, to avoid encountering the persons, whose looks had terrified her before, as well as those parts of the castle, where the tumult might still rage.

At length, she reached her chamber, and, having secured the door of the corridor, felt herself, for a moment, in safety. A profound stillness reigned in this remote apartment, which not even the faint murmur of the most distant sounds now reached. She sat down, near one of the casements, and, as she gazed on the mountain-view beyond, the deep repose of its beauty struck her with all the force of contrast, and she could scarcely believe herself so near a scene of savage discord. The contending elements seemed to have retired from their natural spheres, and to have collected themselves into the minds of men, for there alone the tempest now reigned.

Emily tried to tranquillize her spirits, but anxiety made her constantly listen for some sound, and often look out upon the ramparts, where all, however, was lonely and still. As a sense of her own immediate danger had decreased, her apprehension concerning Madame Montoni heightened,

who, she remembered, had been fiercely threatened with confinement in the east turret, and it was possible, that her husband had satisfied his present vengeance with this punishment. She, therefore, determined, when night should return, and the inhabitants of the castle should be asleep, to explore the way to the turret, which, as the direction it stood in was mentioned, appeared not very difficult to be done. She knew, indeed, that although her aunt might be there, she could afford her no effectual assistance, but it might give her some comfort even to know, that she was discovered, and to hear the sound of her niece's voice; for herself, any certainty, concerning Madame Montoni's fate, appeared more tolerable, than this exhausting suspense.

Meanwhile, Annette did not appear, and Emily was surprised, and somewhat alarmed for her, whom, in the confusion of the late scene, various accidents might have befallen, and it was improbable, that she would have failed to come to her apartment, unless something unfortunate had happened.

Thus the hours passed in solitude, in silence, and in anxious conjecturing. Being not once disturbed by a message, or a sound, it appeared, that Montoni had wholly forgotten her, and it gave her some comfort to find, that she could be so unnoticed. She endeavoured to withdraw her thoughts from the anxiety, that preyed upon them, but they refused controul; she could neither read, or draw, and the tones of her lute were so utterly discordant with the present state of her feelings, that she could not endure them for a moment.

The sun, at length, set behind the western mountains; his fiery beams faded from the clouds, and then a dun melancholy purple drew over them, and gradually involved the features of the country below. Soon after, the sentinels passed on the rampart to commence the watch.

Twilight had now spread its gloom over every object; the dismal obscurity of her chamber recalled fearful thoughts, but she remembered, that to procure a light she must pass through a great extent of the castle, and, above all, through the halls, where she had already experienced so much horror. Darkness, indeed, in the present state of her spirits, made silence and solitude terrible to her; it would also prevent the possibility of her finding her way to the turret, and condemn her to remain in suspense,

concerning the fate of her aunt; yet she dared not to venture forth for a lamp.

Continuing at the casement, that she might catch the last lingering gleam of evening, a thousand vague images of fear floated on her fancy. ‘What if some of these ruffians,’ said she, ‘should find out the private staircase, and in the darkness of night steal into my chamber!’ Then, recollecting the mysterious inhabitant of the neighbouring apartment, her terror changed its object. ‘He is not a prisoner,’ said she, ‘though he remains in one chamber, for Montoni did not fasten the door, when he left it; the unknown person himself did this; it is certain, therefore, he can come out when he pleases.’

She paused, for, notwithstanding the terrors of darkness, she considered it to be very improbable, whoever he was, that he could have any interest in intruding upon her retirement; and again the subject of her emotion changed, when, remembering her nearness to the chamber, where the veil had formerly disclosed a dreadful spectacle, she doubted whether some passage might not communicate between it and the insecure door of the staircase.

It was now entirely dark, and she left the casement. As she sat with her eyes fixed on the hearth, she thought she perceived there a spark of light; it twinkled and disappeared, and then again was visible. At length, with much care, she fanned the embers of a wood fire, that had been lighted in the morning, into flame, and, having communicated it to a lamp, which always stood in her room, felt a satisfaction not to be conceived, without a review of her situation. Her first care was to guard the door of the staircase, for which purpose she placed against it all the furniture she could move, and she was thus employed, for some time, at the end of which she had another instance how much more oppressive misfortune is to the idle, than to the busy; for, having then leisure to think over all the circumstances of her present afflictions, she imagined a thousand evils for futurity, and these real and ideal subjects of distress alike wounded her mind.

Thus heavily moved the hours till midnight, when she counted the sullen notes of the great clock, as they rolled along the rampart, unmingled with any sound, except the distant foot-fall of a sentinel, who came to relieve guard. She now thought she might venture towards the turret, and, having

gently opened the chamber door to examine the corridor, and to listen if any person was stirring in the castle, found all around in perfect stillness. Yet no sooner had she left the room, than she perceived a light flash on the walls of the corridor, and, without waiting to see by whom it was carried, she shrunk back, and closed her door. No one approaching, she conjectured, that it was Montoni going to pay his midnight visit to her unknown neighbour, and she determined to wait, till he should have retired to his own apartment.

When the chimes had tolled another half hour, she once more opened the door, and, perceiving that no person was in the corridor, hastily crossed into a passage, that led along the south side of the castle towards the staircase, whence she believed she could easily find her way to the turret. Often pausing on her way, listening apprehensively to the murmurs of the wind, and looking fearfully onward into the gloom of the long passages, she, at length, reached the staircase; but there her perplexity began. Two passages appeared, of which she knew not how to prefer one, and was compelled, at last, to decide by chance, rather than by circumstances. That she entered, opened first into a wide gallery, along which she passed lightly and swiftly; for the lonely aspect of the place awed her, and she started at the echo of her own steps.

On a sudden, she thought she heard a voice, and, not distinguishing from whence it came, feared equally to proceed, or to return. For some moments, she stood in an attitude of listening expectation, shrinking almost from herself and scarcely daring to look round her. The voice came again, but, though it was now near her, terror did not allow her to judge exactly whence it proceeded. She thought, however, that it was the voice of complaint, and her belief was soon confirmed by a low moaning sound, that seemed to proceed from one of the chambers, opening into the gallery. It instantly occurred to her, that Madame Montoni might be there confined, and she advanced to the door to speak, but was checked by considering, that she was, perhaps, going to commit herself to a stranger, who might discover her to Montoni; for, though this person, whoever it was, seemed to be in affliction, it did not follow, that he was a prisoner.

While these thoughts passed over her mind, and left her still in hesitation, the voice spoke again, and, calling ‘Ludovico,’ she then

perceived it to be that of Annette; on which, no longer hesitating, she went in joy to answer her.

‘Ludovico!’ cried Annette, sobbing— ‘Ludovico!’

‘It is not Ludovico, it is I — Mademoiselle Emily.’

Annette ceased sobbing, and was silent.

‘If you can open the door, let me in,’ said Emily, ‘here is no person to hurt you.’

‘Ludovico! — O, Ludovico!’ cried Annette.

Emily now lost her patience, and her fear of being overheard increasing, she was even nearly about to leave the door, when she considered, that Annette might, possibly, know something of the situation of Madame Montoni, or direct her to the turret. At length, she obtained a reply, though little satisfactory, to her questions, for Annette knew nothing of Madame Montoni, and only conjured Emily to tell her what was become of Ludovico. Of him she had no information to give, and she again asked who had shut Annette up.

‘Ludovico,’ said the poor girl, ‘Ludovico shut me up. When I ran away from the dressing-room door to-day, I went I scarcely knew where, for safety; and, in this gallery, here, I met Ludovico, who hurried me into this chamber, and locked me up to keep me out of harm, as he said. But he was in such a hurry himself, he hardly spoke ten words, but he told me he would come, and let me out, when all was quiet, and he took away the key with him. Now all these hours are passed, and I have neither seen, or heard a word of him; they have murdered him — I know they have!’

Emily suddenly remembered the wounded person, whom she had seen borne into the servants’ hall, and she scarcely doubted, that he was Ludovico, but she concealed the circumstance from Annette, and endeavoured to comfort her. Then, impatient to learn something of her aunt, she again enquired the way to the turret.

‘O! you are not going, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘for Heaven’s sake, do not go, and leave me here by myself.’

‘Nay, Annette, you do not think I can wait in the gallery all night,’ replied Emily. ‘Direct me to the turret; in the morning I will endeavour to release you.’

‘O holy Mary!’ exclaimed Annette, ‘am I to stay here by myself all night! I shall be frightened out of my senses, and I shall die of hunger; I

have had nothing to eat since dinner!’

Emily could scarcely forbear smiling at the heterogeneous distresses of Annette, though she sincerely pitied them, and said what she could to sooth her. At length, she obtained something like a direction to the east turret, and quitted the door, from whence, after many intricacies and perplexities, she reached the steep and winding stairs of the turret, at the foot of which she stopped to rest, and to reanimate her courage with a sense of her duty. As she surveyed this dismal place, she perceived a door on the opposite side of the staircase, and, anxious to know whether it would lead her to Madame Montoni, she tried to undraw the bolts, which fastened it. A fresher air came to her face, as she unclosed the door, which opened upon the east rampart, and the sudden current had nearly extinguished her light, which she now removed to a distance; and again, looking out upon the obscure terrace, she perceived only the faint outline of the walls and of some towers, while, above, heavy clouds, borne along the wind, seemed to mingle with the stars, and wrap the night in thicker darkness. As she gazed, now willing to defer the moment of certainty, from which she expected only confirmation of evil, a distant footstep reminded her, that she might be observed by the men on watch, and, hastily closing the door, she took her lamp, and passed up the staircase. Trembling came upon her, as she ascended through the gloom. To her melancholy fancy this seemed to be a place of death, and the chilling silence, that reigned, confirmed its character. Her spirits faltered. ‘Perhaps,’ said she, ‘I am come hither only to learn a dreadful truth, or to witness some horrible spectacle; I feel that my senses would not survive such an addition of horror.’

The image of her aunt murdered — murdered, perhaps, by the hand of Montoni, rose to her mind; she trembled, gasped for breath — repented that she had dared to venture hither, and checked her steps. But, after she had paused a few minutes, the consciousness of her duty returned, and she went on. Still all was silent. At length a track of blood, upon a stair, caught her eye; and instantly she perceived, that the wall and several other steps were stained. She paused, again struggled to support herself, and the lamp almost fell from her trembling hand. Still no sound was heard, no living being seemed to inhabit the turret; a thousand times she wished herself again in her chamber; dreaded to enquire farther — dreaded to encounter

some horrible spectacle, and yet could not resolve, now that she was so near the termination of her efforts, to desist from them. Having again collected courage to proceed, after ascending about half way up the turret, she came to another door, but here again she stopped in hesitation; listened for sounds within, and then, summoning all her resolution, unclosed it, and entered a chamber, which, as her lamp shot its feeble rays through the darkness, seemed to exhibit only dew-stained and deserted walls. As she stood examining it, in fearful expectation of discovering the remains of her unfortunate aunt, she perceived something lying in an obscure corner of the room, and, struck with an horrible conviction, she became, for an instant, motionless and nearly insensible. Then, with a kind of desperate resolution, she hurried towards the object that excited her terror, when, perceiving the clothes of some person, on the floor, she caught hold of them, and found in her grasp the old uniform of a soldier, beneath which appeared a heap of pikes and other arms. Scarcely daring to trust her sight, she continued, for some moments, to gaze on the object of her late alarm, and then left the chamber, so much comforted and occupied by the conviction, that her aunt was not there, that she was going to descend the turret, without enquiring farther; when, on turning to do so, she observed upon some steps on the second flight an appearance of blood, and remembering, that there was yet another chamber to be explored, she again followed the windings of the ascent. Still, as she ascended, the track of blood glared upon the stairs.

It led her to the door of a landing-place, that terminated them, but she was unable to follow it farther. Now that she was so near the sought-for certainty, she dreaded to know it, even more than before, and had not fortitude sufficient to speak, or to attempt opening the door.

Having listened, in vain, for some sound, that might confirm, or destroy her fears, she, at length, laid her hand on the lock, and, finding it fastened, called on Madame Montoni; but only a chilling silence ensued.

‘She is dead!’ she cried,— ‘murdered! — her blood is on the stairs!’

Emily grew very faint; could support herself no longer, and had scarcely presence of mind to set down the lamp, and place herself on a step.

When her recollection returned, she spoke again at the door, and again attempted to open it, and, having lingered for some time, without receiving any answer, or hearing a sound, she descended the turret, and,

with all the swiftness her feebleness would permit, sought her own apartment.

As she turned into the corridor, the door of a chamber opened, from whence Montoni came forth; but Emily, more terrified than ever to behold him, shrunk back into the passage soon enough to escape being noticed, and heard him close the door, which she had perceived was the same she formerly observed. Having here listened to his departing steps, till their faint sound was lost in distance, she ventured to her apartment, and, securing it once again, retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the hearth. But sleep was fled from her harassed mind, to which images of horror alone occurred. She endeavoured to think it possible, that Madame Montoni had not been taken to the turret; but, when she recollected the former menaces of her husband and the terrible spirit of vengeance, which he had displayed on a late occasion; when she remembered his general character, the looks of the men, who had forced Madame Montoni from her apartment, and the written traces on the stairs of the turret — she could not doubt, that her aunt had been carried thither, and could scarcely hope, that she had not been carried to be murdered.

The grey of morning had long dawned through her casements, before Emily closed her eyes in sleep; when wearied nature, at length, yielded her a respite from suffering.

CHAPTER XI

Who rears the bloody hand?

SAYERS

Emily remained in her chamber, on the following morning, without receiving any notice from Montoni, or seeing a human being, except the armed men, who sometimes passed on the terrace below. Having tasted no food since the dinner of the preceding day, extreme faintness made her feel the necessity of quitting the asylum of her apartment to obtain refreshment, and she was also very anxious to procure liberty for Annette. Willing, however, to defer venturing forth, as long as possible, and considering, whether she should apply to Montoni, or to the compassion of some other person, her excessive anxiety concerning her aunt, at length, overcame her abhorrence of his presence, and she determined to go to him, and to entreat, that he would suffer her to see Madame Montoni.

Meanwhile, it was too certain, from the absence of Annette, that some accident had befallen Ludovico, and that she was still in confinement; Emily, therefore, resolved also to visit the chamber, where she had spoken to her, on the preceding night, and, if the poor girl was yet there, to inform Montoni of her situation.

It was near noon, before she ventured from her apartment, and went first to the south gallery, whither she passed without meeting a single person, or hearing a sound, except, now and then, the echo of a distant footstep.

It was unnecessary to call Annette, whose lamentations were audible upon the first approach to the gallery, and who, bewailing her own and Ludovico’s fate, told Emily, that she should certainly be starved to death, if she was not let out immediately. Emily replied, that she was going to beg her release of Montoni; but the terrors of hunger now yielded to those of the Signor, and, when Emily left her, she was loudly entreating, that her place of refuge might be concealed from him.

As Emily drew near the great hall, the sounds she heard and the people she met in the passages renewed her alarm. The latter, however, were peaceable, and did not interrupt her, though they looked earnestly at her, as she passed, and sometimes spoke. On crossing the hall towards the cedar room, where Montoni usually sat, she perceived, on the pavement, fragments of swords, some tattered garments stained with blood, and

almost expected to have seen among them a dead body; but from such a spectacle she was, at present, spared. As she approached the room, the sound of several voices issued from within, and a dread of appearing before many strangers, as well as of irritating Montoni by such an intrusion, made her pause and falter from her purpose. She looked up through the long arcades of the hall, in search of a servant, who might bear a message, but no one appeared, and the urgency of what she had to request made her still linger near the door. The voices within were not in contention, though she distinguished those of several of the guests of the preceding day; but still her resolution failed, whenever she would have tapped at the door, and she had determined to walk in the hall, till some person should appear, who might call Montoni from the room, when, as she turned from the door, it was suddenly opened by himself. Emily trembled, and was confused, while he almost started with surprise, and all the terrors of his countenance unfolded themselves. She forgot all she would have said, and neither enquired for her aunt, or entreated for Annette, but stood silent and embarrassed.

After closing the door he reproved her for a meanness, of which she had not been guilty, and sternly questioned her what she had overheard; an accusation, which revived her recollection so far, that she assured him she had not come thither with an intention to listen to his conversation, but to entreat his compassion for her aunt, and for Annette. Montoni seemed to doubt this assertion, for he regarded her with a scrutinizing look; and the doubt evidently arose from no trifling interest. Emily then further explained herself, and concluded with entreating him to inform her, where her aunt was placed, and to permit, that she might visit her; but he looked upon her only with a malignant smile, which instantaneously confirmed her worst fears for her aunt, and, at that moment, she had not courage to renew her entreaties.

‘For Annette,’ said he,— ‘if you go to Carlo, he will release the girl; the foolish fellow, who shut her up, died yesterday.’ Emily shuddered.— ‘But my aunt, Signor’ — said she, ‘O tell me of my aunt!’

‘She is taken care of,’ replied Montoni hastily, ‘I have no time to answer idle questions.’

He would have passed on, but Emily, in a voice of agony, that could not be wholly resisted, conjured him to tell her, where Madame Montoni was;

while he paused, and she anxiously watched his countenance, a trumpet sounded, and, in the next moment, she heard the heavy gates of the portal open, and then the clattering of horses' hoofs in the court, with the confusion of many voices. She stood for a moment hesitating whether she should follow Montoni, who, at the sound of the trumpet, had passed through the hall, and, turning her eyes whence it came, she saw through the door, that opened beyond a long perspective of arches into the courts, a party of horsemen, whom she judged, as well as the distance and her embarrassment would allow, to be the same she had seen depart, a few days before. But she staid not to scrutinize, for, when the trumpet sounded again, the chevaliers rushed out of the cedar room, and men came running into the hall from every quarter of the castle. Emily once more hurried for shelter to her own apartment. Thither she was still pursued by images of horror. She re-considered Montoni's manner and words, when he had spoken of his wife, and they served only to confirm her most terrible suspicions. Tears refused any longer to relieve her distress, and she had sat for a considerable time absorbed in thought, when a knocking at the chamber door aroused her, on opening which she found old Carlo.

'Dear young lady,' said he, 'I have been so flurried, I never once thought of you till just now. I have brought you some fruit and wine, and I am sure you must stand in need of them by this time.'

'Thank you, Carlo,' said Emily, 'this is very good of you Did the Signor remind you of me?'

'No, Signora,' replied Carlo, 'his excellenza has business enough on his hands.' Emily then renewed her enquiries, concerning Madame Montoni, but Carlo had been employed at the other end of the castle, during the time, that she was removed, and he had heard nothing since, concerning her.

While he spoke, Emily looked steadily at him, for she scarcely knew whether he was really ignorant, or concealed his knowledge of the truth from a fear of offending his master. To several questions, concerning the contentions of yesterday, he gave very limited answers; but told, that the disputes were now amicably settled, and that the Signor believed himself to have been mistaken in his suspicions of his guests. 'The fighting was about that, Signora,' said Carlo; 'but I trust I shall never see such another day in this castle, though strange things are about to be done.'

On her enquiring his meaning, ‘Ah, Signora!’ added he, ‘it is not for me to betray secrets, or tell all I think, but time will tell.’

She then desired him to release Annette, and, having described the chamber in which the poor girl was confined, he promised to obey her immediately, and was departing, when she remembered to ask who were the persons just arrived. Her late conjecture was right; it was Verezzi, with his party.

Her spirits were somewhat soothed by this short conversation with Carlo; for, in her present circumstances, it afforded some comfort to hear the accents of compassion, and to meet the look of sympathy.

An hour passed before Annette appeared, who then came weeping and sobbing. ‘O Ludovico — Ludovico!’ cried she.

‘My poor Annette!’ said Emily, and made her sit down.

‘Who could have foreseen this, ma’amselle? O miserable, wretched, day — that ever I should live to see it!’ and she continued to moan and lament, till Emily thought it necessary to check her excess of grief. ‘We are continually losing dear friends by death,’ said she, with a sigh, that came from her heart. ‘We must submit to the will of Heaven — our tears, alas! cannot recall the dead!’

Annette took the handkerchief from her face.

‘You will meet Ludovico in a better world, I hope,’ added Emily.

‘Yes — yes, — ma’amselle,’ sobbed Annette, ‘but I hope I shall meet him again in this — though he is so wounded!’

‘Wounded!’ exclaimed Emily, ‘does he live?’

‘Yes, ma’am, but — but he has a terrible wound, and could not come to let me out. They thought him dead, at first, and he has not been rightly himself, till within this hour.’

‘Well, Annette, I rejoice to hear he lives.’

‘Lives! Holy Saints! why he will not die, surely!’

Emily said she hoped not, but this expression of hope Annette thought implied fear, and her own increased in proportion, as Emily endeavoured to encourage her. To enquiries, concerning Madame Montoni, she could give no satisfactory answers.

‘I quite forgot to ask among the servants, ma’amselle,’ said she, ‘for I could think of nobody but poor Ludovico.’

Annette’s grief was now somewhat assuaged, and Emily sent her to make enquiries, concerning her lady, of whom, however, she could obtain no intelligence, some of the people she spoke with being really ignorant of her fate, and others having probably received orders to conceal it.

This day passed with Emily in continued grief and anxiety for her aunt; but she was unmolested by any notice from Montoni; and, now that Annette was liberated, she obtained food, without exposing herself to danger, or impertinence.

Two following days passed in the same manner, unmarked by any occurrence, during which she obtained no information of Madame Montoni. On the evening of the second, having dismissed Annette, and retired to bed, her mind became haunted by the most dismal images, such as her long anxiety, concerning her aunt, suggested; and, unable to forget herself, for a moment, or to vanquish the phantoms, that tormented her, she rose from her bed, and went to one of the casements of her chamber, to breathe a freer air.

All without was silent and dark, unless that could be called light, which was only the faint glimmer of the stars, shewing imperfectly the outline of the mountains, the western towers of the castle and the ramparts below, where a solitary sentinel was pacing. What an image of repose did this scene present! The fierce and terrible passions, too, which so often agitated the inhabitants of this edifice, seemed now hushed in sleep; — those mysterious workings, that rouse the elements of man’s nature into tempest — were calm. Emily’s heart was not so; but her sufferings, though deep, partook of the gentle character of her mind. Hers was a silent anguish, weeping, yet enduring; not the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers of reason and living in a world of its own.

The air refreshed her, and she continued at the casement, looking on the shadowy scene, over which the planets burned with a clear light, amid the deep blue aether, as they silently moved in their destined course. She remembered how often she had gazed on them with her dear father, how often he had pointed out their way in the heavens, and explained their laws; and these reflections led to others, which, in an almost equal degree, awakened her grief and astonishment.

They brought a retrospect of all the strange and mournful events, which had occurred since she lived in peace with her parents. And to Emily, who had been so tenderly educated, so tenderly loved, who once knew only goodness and happiness — to her, the late events and her present situation — in a foreign land — in a remote castle — surrounded by vice and violence — seemed more like the visions of a distempered imagination, than the circumstances of truth. She wept to think of what her parents would have suffered, could they have foreseen the events of her future life.

While she raised her streaming eyes to heaven, she observed the same planet, which she had seen in Languedoc, on the night, preceding her father's death, rise above the eastern towers of the castle, while she remembered the conversation, which has passed, concerning the probable state of departed souls; remembered, also, the solemn music she had heard, and to which the tenderness of her spirits had, in spite of her reason, given a superstitious meaning. At these recollections she wept again, and continued musing, when suddenly the notes of sweet music passed on the air. A superstitious dread stole over her; she stood listening, for some moments, in trembling expectation, and then endeavoured to recollect her thoughts, and to reason herself into composure; but human reason cannot establish her laws on subjects, lost in the obscurity of imagination, any more than the eye can ascertain the form of objects, that only glimmer through the dimness of night.

Her surprise, on hearing such soothing and delicious sounds, was, at least, justifiable; for it was long — very long, since she had listened to any thing like melody. The fierce trumpet and the shrill fife were the only instruments she had heard, since her arrival at Udolpho.

When her mind was somewhat more composed, she tried to ascertain from what quarter the sounds proceeded, and thought they came from below; but whether from a room of the castle, or from the terrace, she could not with certainty judge. Fear and surprise now yielded to the enchantment of a strain, that floated on the silent night, with the most soft and melancholy sweetness. Suddenly, it seemed removed to a distance, trembled faintly, and then entirely ceased.

She continued to listen, sunk in that pleasing repose, which soft music leaves on the mind — but it came no more. Upon this strange circumstance her thoughts were long engaged, for strange it certainly was

to hear music at midnight, when every inhabitant of the castle had long since retired to rest, and in a place, where nothing like harmony had been heard before, probably, for many years. Long-suffering had made her spirits peculiarly sensible to terror, and liable to be affected by the illusions of superstition. — It now seemed to her, as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain, to inspire her with comfort and confidence, on the subject, which had then occupied her mind. Yet reason told her, that this was a wild conjecture, and she was inclined to dismiss it; but, with the inconsistency so natural, when imagination guides the thoughts, she then wavered towards a belief as wild. She remembered the singular event, connected with the castle, which had given it into the possession of its present owner; and, when she considered the mysterious manner, in which its late possessor had disappeared, and that she had never since been heard of, her mind was impressed with an high degree of solemn awe; so that, though there appeared no clue to connect that event with the late music, she was inclined fancifully to think they had some relation to each other. At this conjecture, a sudden chillness ran through her frame; she looked fearfully upon the duskiness of her chamber, and the dead silence, that prevailed there, heightened to her fancy its gloomy aspect.

At length, she left the casement, but her steps faltered, as she approached the bed, and she stopped and looked round. The single lamp, that burned in her spacious chamber, was expiring; for a moment, she shrunk from the darkness beyond; and then, ashamed of the weakness, which, however, she could not wholly conquer, went forward to the bed, where her mind did not soon know the soothings of sleep. She still mused on the late occurrence, and looked with anxiety to the next night, when, at the same hour, she determined to watch whether the music returned. ‘If those sounds were human,’ said she, ‘I shall probably hear them again.’

CHAPTER XII

Then, oh, you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience; and, in ripen’d time,
Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up
In countenance.

SHAKESPEARE

Annette came almost breathless to Emily's apartment in the morning. 'O ma'amselle!' said she, in broken sentences, 'what news I have to tell! I have found out who the prisoner is — but he was no prisoner, neither; — he that was shut up in the chamber I told you of. I must think him a ghost, forsooth!'

'Who was the prisoner?' enquired Emily, while her thoughts glanced back to the circumstance of the preceding night.

'You mistake, ma'am,' said Annette; 'he was not a prisoner, after all.'

'Who is the person, then?'

'Holy Saints!' rejoined Annette; 'How I was surprised! I met him just now, on the rampart below, there. I never was so surprised in my life! Ah! ma'amselle! this is a strange place! I should never have done wondering, if I was to live here an hundred years. But, as I was saying, I met him just now on the rampart, and I was thinking of nobody less than of him.'

'This trifling is insupportable,' said Emily; 'prythee, Annette, do not torture my patience any longer.'

'Nay, ma'amselle, guess — guess who it was; it was somebody you know very well.'

'I cannot guess,' said Emily impatiently.

'Nay, ma'amselle, I'll tell you something to guess by — A tall Signor, with a longish face, who walks so stately, and used to wear such a high feather in his hat; and used often to look down upon the ground, when people spoke to him; and to look at people from under his eyebrows, as it were, all so dark and frowning. You have seen him, often and often, at Venice, ma'am. Then he was so intimate with the Signor, too. And, now I think of it, I wonder what he could be afraid of in this lonely old castle, that he should shut himself up for. But he is come abroad now, for I met him on the rampart just this minute. I trembled when I saw him, for I always was afraid of him, somehow; but I determined I would not let him see it; so I went up to him, and made him a low curtesy, "You are welcome to the castle, Signor Orsino," said I.'

'O, it was Signor Orsino, then!' said Emily.

‘Yes, ma’amselle, Signor Orsino, himself, who caused that Venetian gentleman to be killed, and has been popping about from place to place, ever since, as I hear.’

‘Good God!’ exclaimed Emily, recovering from the shock of this intelligence; ‘and is HE come to Udolpho! He does well to endeavour to conceal himself.’

‘Yes, ma’amselle, but if that was all, this desolate place would conceal him, without his shutting himself up in one room. Who would think of coming to look for him here? I am sure I should as soon think of going to look for any body in the other world.’

‘There is some truth in that,’ said Emily, who would now have concluded it was Orsino’s music, which she had heard, on the preceding night, had she not known, that he had neither taste, or skill in the art. But, though she was unwilling to add to the number of Annette’s surprises, by mentioning the subject of her own, she enquired, whether any person in the castle played on a musical instrument?

‘O yes, ma’amselle! there is Benedetto plays the great drum to admiration; and then, there is Launcelot the trumpeter; nay, for that matter, Ludovico himself can play on the trumpet; — but he is ill now. I remember once’ —

Emily interrupted her; ‘Have you heard no other music since you came to the castle — none last night?’

‘Why, did YOU hear any last night, ma’amselle?’

Emily evaded this question, by repeating her own.

‘Why, no, ma’am,’ replied Annette; ‘I never heard any music here, I must say, but the drums and the trumpet; and, as for last night, I did nothing but dream I saw my late lady’s ghost.’

‘Your LATE lady’s,’ said Emily in a tremulous voice; ‘you have heard more, then. Tell me — tell me all, Annette, I entreat; tell me the worst at once.’

‘Nay, ma’amselle, you know the worst already.’

‘I know nothing,’ said Emily.

‘Yes, you do, ma’amselle; you know, that nobody knows any thing about her; and it is plain, therefore, she is gone, the way of the first lady of the castle — nobody ever knew any thing about her.’

Emily leaned her head upon her hand, and was, for some time, silent; then, telling Annette she wished to be alone, the latter left the room.

The remark of Annette had revived Emily's terrible suspicion, concerning the fate of Madame Montoni; and she resolved to make another effort to obtain certainty on this subject, by applying to Montoni once more.

When Annette returned, a few hours after, she told Emily, that the porter of the castle wished very much to speak with her, for that he had something of importance to say; her spirits had, however, of late been so subject to alarm, that any new circumstance excited it; and this message from the porter, when her first surprise was over, made her look round for some lurking danger, the more suspiciously, perhaps, because she had frequently remarked the unpleasant air and countenance of this man. She now hesitated, whether to speak with him, doubting even, that this request was only a pretext to draw her into some danger; but a little reflection shewed her the improbability of this, and she blushed at her weak fears.

'I will speak to him, Annette,' said she; 'desire him to come to the corridor immediately.'

Annette departed, and soon after returned.

'Barnardine, ma'amselle,' said she, 'dare not come to the corridor, lest he should be discovered, it is so far from his post; and he dare not even leave the gates for a moment now; but, if you will come to him at the portal, through some roundabout passages he told me of, without crossing the courts, he has that to tell, which will surprise you. But you must not come through the courts, lest the Signor should see you.'

Emily, neither approving these 'roundabout passage,' nor the other part of the request, now positively refused to go. 'Tell him,' said she, 'if he has any thing of consequence to impart, I will hear him in the corridor, whenever he has an opportunity of coming thither.'

Annette went to deliver this message, and was absent a considerable time. When she returned, 'It won't do, ma'amselle,' said she. 'Barnardine has been considering all this time what can be done, for it is as much as his place is worth to leave his post now. But, if you will come to the east rampart in the dusk of the evening, he can, perhaps, steal away, and tell you all he has to say.'

Emily was surprised and alarmed, at the secrecy which this man seemed to think so necessary, and hesitated whether to meet him, till, considering, that he might mean to warn her of some serious danger, she resolved to go.

‘Soon after sun-set,’ said she, ‘I will be at the end of the east rampart. But then the watch will be set,’ she added, recollecting herself, ‘and how can Barnardine pass unobserved?’

‘That is just what I said to him, ma’am, and he answered me, that he had the key of the gate, at the end of the rampart, that leads towards the courts, and could let himself through that way; and as for the sentinels, there were none at this end of the terrace, because the place is guarded enough by the high walls of the castle, and the east turret; and he said those at the other end were too far off to see him, if it was pretty duskyish.’

‘Well,’ said Emily, ‘I must hear what he has to tell; and, therefore, desire you will go with me to the terrace, this evening.’

‘He desired it might be pretty duskyish, ma’amselle,’ repeated Annette, ‘because of the watch.’

Emily paused, and then said she would be on the terrace, an hour after sun-set;— ‘and tell Barnardine,’ she added, ‘to be punctual to the time; for that I, also, may be observed by Signor Montoni. Where is the Signor? I would speak with him.’

‘He is in the cedar chamber, ma’am, counselling with the other Signors. He is going to give them a sort of treat to-day, to make up for what passed at the last, I suppose; the people are all very busy in the kitchen.’

Emily now enquired, if Montoni expected any new guests? and Annette believed that he did not. ‘Poor Ludovico!’ added she, ‘he would be as merry as the best of them, if he was well; but he may recover yet. Count Morano was wounded as bad, as he, and he is got well again, and is gone back to Venice.’

‘Is he so?’ said Emily, ‘when did you hear this?’

‘I heard it, last night, ma’amselle, but I forgot to tell it.’

Emily asked some further questions, and then, desiring Annette would observe and inform her, when Montoni was alone, the girl went to deliver her message to Barnardine.

Montoni was, however, so much engaged, during the whole day, that Emily had no opportunity of seeking a release from her terrible suspense, concerning her aunt. Annette was employed in watching his steps, and in

attending upon Ludovico, whom she, assisted by Caterina, nursed with the utmost care; and Emily was, of course, left much alone. Her thoughts dwelt often on the message of the porter, and were employed in conjecturing the subject, that occasioned it, which she sometimes imagined concerned the fate of Madame Montoni; at others, that it related to some personal danger, which threatened herself. The cautious secrecy which Barnardine observed in his conduct, inclined her to believe the latter.

As the hour of appointment drew near, her impatience increased. At length, the sun set; she heard the passing steps of the sentinels going to their posts; and waited only for Annette to accompany her to the terrace, who, soon after, came, and they descended together. When Emily expressed apprehensions of meeting Montoni, or some of his guests, ‘O, there is no fear of that, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘they are all set in to feasting yet, and that Barnardine knows.’

They reached the first terrace, where the sentinels demanded who passed; and Emily, having answered, walked on to the east rampart, at the entrance of which they were again stopped; and, having again replied, were permitted to proceed. But Emily did not like to expose herself to the discretion of these men, at such an hour; and, impatient to withdraw from the situation, she stepped hastily on in search of Barnardine. He was not yet come. She leaned pensively on the wall of the rampart, and waited for him. The gloom of twilight sat deep on the surrounding objects, blending in soft confusion the valley, the mountains, and the woods, whose tall heads, stirred by the evening breeze, gave the only sounds, that stole on silence, except a faint, faint chorus of distant voices, that arose from within the castle.

‘What voices are those?’ said Emily, as she fearfully listened.

‘It is only the Signor and his guests, carousing,’ replied Annette.

‘Good God!’ thought Emily, ‘can this man’s heart be so gay, when he has made another being so wretched; if, indeed, my aunt is yet suffered to feel her wretchedness? O! whatever are my own sufferings, may my heart never, never be hardened against those of others!’

She looked up, with a sensation of horror, to the east turret, near which she then stood; a light glimmered through the grates of the lower chamber, but those of the upper one were dark. Presently, she perceived a person

moving with a lamp across the lower room; but this circumstance revived no hope, concerning Madame Montoni, whom she had vainly sought in that apartment, which had appeared to contain only soldiers' accoutrements. Emily, however, determined to attempt the outer door of the turret, as soon as Barnardine should withdraw; and, if it was unfastened, to make another effort to discover her aunt.

The moments passed, but still Barnardine did not appear; and Emily, becoming uneasy, hesitated whether to wait any longer. She would have sent Annette to the portal to hasten him, but feared to be left alone, for it was now almost dark, and a melancholy streak of red, that still lingered in the west, was the only vestige of departed day. The strong interest, however, which Barnardine's message had awakened, overcame other apprehensions, and still detained her.

While she was conjecturing with Annette what could thus occasion his absence, they heard a key turn in the lock of the gate near them, and presently saw a man advancing. It was Barnardine, of whom Emily hastily enquired what he had to communicate, and desired, that he would tell her quickly, 'for I am chilled with this evening air,' said she.

'You must dismiss your maid, lady,' said the man in a voice, the deep tone of which shocked her, 'what I have to tell is to you only.'

Emily, after some hesitation, desired Annette to withdraw to a little distance. 'Now, my friend, what would you say?'

He was silent a moment, as if considering, and then said, —

'That which would cost me my place, at least, if it came to the Signor's ears. You must promise, lady, that nothing shall ever make you tell a syllable of the matter; I have been trusted in this affair, and, if it was known, that I betrayed my trust, my life, perhaps, might answer it. But I was concerned for you, lady, and I resolved to tell you.' He paused. —

Emily thanked him, assured him that he might repose on her discretion, and entreated him to dispatch.

'Annette told us in the hall how unhappy you was about Signora Montoni, and how much you wished to know what was become of her.'

'Most true,' said Emily eagerly, 'and you can inform me. I conjure you tell me the worst, without hesitation.' She rested her trembling arm upon the wall.

'I can tell you,' said Barnardine, and paused. —

Emily had no power to enforce her entreaties.

‘I CAN tell you,’ resumed Barnardine,— ‘but’ —

‘But what?’ exclaimed Emily, recovering her resolution.

‘Here I am, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, who, having heard the eager tone, in which Emily pronounced these words, came running towards her.

‘Retire!’ said Barnardine, sternly; ‘you are not wanted;’ and, as Emily said nothing, Annette obeyed.

‘I CAN tell you,’ repeated the porter,— ‘but I know not how — you was afflicted before.’ —

‘I am prepared for the worst, my friend,’ said Emily, in a firm and solemn voice. ‘I can support any certainty better than this suspense.’

‘Well, Signora, if that is the case, you shall hear. — You know, I suppose, that the Signor and his lady used sometimes to disagree. It is none of my concerns to enquire what it was about, but I believe you know it was so.’

‘Well,’ said Emily, ‘proceed.’

‘The Signor, it seems, had lately been very wrath against her. I saw all, and heard all, — a great deal more than people thought for; but it was none of my business, so I said nothing. A few days ago, the Signor sent for me. “Barnardine,” says he, “you are — an honest man, I think I can trust you.” I assured his excellenza that he could. “Then,” says he, as near as I can remember, “I have an affair in hand, which I want you to assist me in.” — Then he told me what I was to do; but that I shall say nothing about — it concerned only the Signora.’

‘O Heavens!’ exclaimed Emily— ‘what have you done?’

Barnardine hesitated, and was silent.

‘What fiend could tempt him, or you, to such an act!’ cried Emily, chilled with horror, and scarcely able to support her fainting spirits.

‘It was a fiend,’ said Barnardine in a gloomy tone of voice. They were now both silent; — Emily had not courage to enquire further, and Barnardine seemed to shrink from telling more. At length he said, ‘It is of no use to think of the past; the Signor was cruel enough, but he would be obeyed. What signified my refusing? He would have found others, who had no scruples.’

‘You have murdered her, then!’ said Emily, in a hollow and inward voice — ‘I am talking with a murderer!’ Barnardine stood silent; while Emily

turned from him, and attempted to leave the place.

‘Stay, lady!’ said he, ‘You deserve to think so still — since you can believe me capable of such a deed.’

‘If you are innocent, tell me quickly,’ said Emily, in faint accents, ‘for I feel I shall not be able to hear you long.’

‘I will tell you no more,’ said he, and walked away. Emily had just strength enough to bid him stay, and then to call Annette, on whose arm she leaned, and they walked slowly up the rampart, till they heard steps behind them. It was Barnardine again.

‘Send away the girl,’ said he, ‘and I will tell you more.’

‘She must not go,’ said Emily; ‘what you have to say, she may hear.’

‘May she so, lady?’ said he. ‘You shall know no more, then;’ and he was going, though slowly, when Emily’s anxiety, overcoming the resentment and fear, which the man’s behaviour had roused, she desired him to stay, and bade Annette retire.

‘The Signora is alive,’ said he, ‘for me. She is my prisoner, though; his excellenza has shut her up in the chamber over the great gates of the court, and I have the charge of her. I was going to have told you, you might see her — but now— ‘

Emily, relieved from an unutterable load of anguish by this speech, had now only to ask Barnardine’s forgiveness, and to conjure, that he would let her visit her aunt.

He complied with less reluctance, than she expected, and told her, that, if she would repair, on the following night, when the Signor was retired to rest, to the postern-gate of the castle, she should, perhaps, see Madame Montoni.

Amid all the thankfulness, which Emily felt for this concession, she thought she observed a malicious triumph in his manner, when he pronounced the last words; but, in the next moment, she dismissed the thought, and, having again thanked him, commended her aunt to his pity, and assured him, that she would herself reward him, and would be punctual to her appointment, she bade him good night, and retired, unobserved, to her chamber. It was a considerable time, before the tumult of joy, which Barnardine’s unexpected intelligence had occasioned, allowed Emily to think with clearness, or to be conscious of the real dangers, that still surrounded Madame Montoni and herself. When this

agitation subsided, she perceived, that her aunt was yet the prisoner of a man, to whose vengeance, or avarice, she might fall a sacrifice; and, when she further considered the savage aspect of the person, who was appointed to guard Madame Montoni, her doom appeared to be already sealed, for the countenance of Barnardine seemed to bear the stamp of a murderer; and, when she had looked upon it, she felt inclined to believe, that there was no deed, however black, which he might not be prevailed upon to execute. These reflections brought to her remembrance the tone of voice, in which he had promised to grant her request to see his prisoner; and she mused upon it long in uneasiness and doubt. Sometimes, she even hesitated, whether to trust herself with him at the lonely hour he had appointed; and once, and only once, it struck her, that Madame Montoni might be already murdered, and that this ruffian was appointed to decoy herself to some secret place, where her life also was to be sacrificed to the avarice of Montoni, who then would claim securely the contested estates in Languedoc. The consideration of the enormity of such guilt did, at length, relieve her from the belief of its probability, but not from all the doubts and fears, which a recollection of Barnardine's manner had occasioned. From these subjects, her thoughts, at length, passed to others; and, as the evening advanced, she remembered, with somewhat more than surprise, the music she had heard, on the preceding night, and now awaited its return, with more than curiosity.

She distinguished, till a late hour, the distant carousals of Montoni and his companions — the loud contest, the dissolute laugh and the choral song, that made the halls re-echo. At length, she heard the heavy gates of the castle shut for the night, and those sounds instantly sunk into a silence, which was disturbed only by the whispering steps of persons, passing through the galleries to their remote rooms. Emily now judging it to be about the time, when she had heard the music, on the preceding night, dismissed Annette, and gently opened the casement to watch for its return. The planet she had so particularly noticed, at the recurrence of the music, was not yet risen; but, with superstitious weakness, she kept her eyes fixed on that part of the hemisphere, where it would rise, almost expecting, that, when it appeared, the sounds would return. At length, it came, serenely bright, over the eastern towers of the castle. Her heart trembled, when she perceived it, and she had scarcely courage to remain at the casement, lest

the returning music should confirm her terror, and subdue the little strength she yet retained. The clock soon after struck one, and, knowing this to be about the time, when the sounds had occurred, she sat down in a chair, near the casement, and endeavoured to compose her spirits; but the anxiety of expectation yet disturbed them. Every thing, however, remained still; she heard only the solitary step of a sentinel, and the lulling murmur of the woods below, and she again leaned from the casement, and again looked, as if for intelligence, to the planet, which was now risen high above the towers.

Emily continued to listen, but no music came. ‘Those were surely no mortal sounds!’ said she, recollecting their entrancing melody. ‘No inhabitant of this castle could utter such; and, where is the feeling, that could modulate such exquisite expression? We all know, that it has been affirmed celestial sounds have sometimes been heard on earth. Father Pierre and Father Antoine declared, that they had sometimes heard them in the stillness of night, when they alone were waking to offer their orisons to heaven. Nay, my dear father himself, once said, that, soon after my mother’s death, as he lay watchful in grief, sounds of uncommon sweetness called him from his bed; and, on opening his window, he heard lofty music pass along the midnight air. It soothed him, he said; he looked up with confidence to heaven, and resigned her to his God.’

Emily paused to weep at this recollection. ‘Perhaps,’ resumed she, ‘perhaps, those strains I heard were sent to comfort, — to encourage me! Never shall I forget those I heard, at this hour, in Languedoc! Perhaps, my father watches over me, at this moment!’ She wept again in tenderness. Thus passed the hour in watchfulness and solemn thought; but no sounds returned; and, after remaining at the casement, till the light tint of dawn began to edge the mountain-tops and steal upon the nightshade, she concluded, that they would not return, and retired reluctantly to repose.

VOLUME 3

CHAPTER I

I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night.

MACBETH

Emily was somewhat surprised, on the following day, to find that Annette had heard of Madame Montoni's confinement in the chamber over the portal, as well as of her purposed visit there, on the approaching night. That the circumstance, which Barnardine had so solemnly enjoined her to conceal, he had himself told to so indiscreet an hearer as Annette, appeared very improbable, though he had now charged her with a message, concerning the intended interview. He requested, that Emily would meet him, unattended, on the terrace, at a little after midnight, when he himself would lead her to the place he had promised; a proposal, from which she immediately shrunk, for a thousand vague fears darted athwart her mind, such as had tormented her on the preceding night, and which she neither knew how to trust, or to dismiss. It frequently occurred to her, that Barnardine might have deceived her, concerning Madame Montoni, whose murderer, perhaps, he really was; and that he had deceived her by order of Montoni, the more easily to draw her into some of the desperate designs of the latter. The terrible suspicion, that Madame Montoni no longer lived, thus came, accompanied by one not less dreadful for herself. Unless the crime, by which the aunt had suffered, was instigated merely by resentment, unconnected with profit, a motive, upon which Montoni did not appear very likely to act, its object must be unattained, till the niece was also dead, to whom Montoni knew that his wife's estates must descend. Emily remembered the words, which had informed her, that the contested estates in France would devolve to her, if Madame Montoni died, without consigning them to her husband, and the former obstinate perseverance of her aunt made it too probable, that she had, to the last, withheld them. At this instant, recollecting Barnardine's manner, on the preceding night, she now believed, what she had then fancied, that it expressed malignant triumph. She shuddered at the recollection, which confirmed her fears, and determined not to meet him on the terrace. Soon after, she was inclined to consider these suspicions as the extravagant exaggerations of a timid and harassed mind, and could not believe Montoni liable to such preposterous depravity as that of destroying, from

one motive, his wife and her niece. She blamed herself for suffering her romantic imagination to carry her so far beyond the bounds of probability, and determined to endeavour to check its rapid flights, lest they should sometimes extend into madness. Still, however, she shrunk from the thought of meeting Barnardine, on the terrace, at midnight; and still the wish to be relieved from this terrible suspense, concerning her aunt, to see her, and to sooth her sufferings, made her hesitate what to do.

'Yet how is it possible, Annette, I can pass to the terrace at that hour?' said she, recollecting herself, 'the sentinels will stop me, and Signor Montoni will hear of the affair.'

'O ma'amselle! that is well thought of,' replied Annette. 'That is what Barnardine told me about. He gave me this key, and bade me say it unlocks the door at the end of the vaulted gallery, that opens near the end of the east rampart, so that you need not pass any of the men on watch. He bade me say, too, that his reason for requesting you to come to the terrace was, because he could take you to the place you want to go to, without opening the great doors of the hall, which grate so heavily.'

Emily's spirits were somewhat calmed by this explanation, which seemed to be honestly given to Annette. 'But why did he desire I would come alone, Annette?' said she.

'Why that was what I asked him myself, ma'amselle. Says I, Why is my young lady to come alone? — Surely I may come with her! — What harm can I do? But he said "No — no — I tell you not," in his gruff way. Nay, says I, I have been trusted in as great affairs as this, I warrant, and it's a hard matter if *I* can't keep a secret now. Still he would say nothing but— "No — no — no." Well, says I, if you will only trust me, I will tell you a great secret, that was told me a month ago, and I have never opened my lips about it yet — so you need not be afraid of telling me. But all would not do. Then, ma'amselle, I went so far as to offer him a beautiful new sequin, that Ludovico gave me for a keep sake, and I would not have parted with it for all St. Marco's Place; but even that would not do! Now what can be the reason of this? But I know, you know, ma'am, who you are going to see.'

'Pray did Barnardine tell you this?'

'He! No, ma'amselle, that he did not.'

Emily enquired who did, but Annette shewed, that she COULD keep a secret.

During the remainder of the day, Emily's mind was agitated with doubts and fears and contrary determinations, on the subject of meeting this Barnardine on the rampart, and submitting herself to his guidance, she scarcely knew whither. Pity for her aunt and anxiety for herself alternately swayed her determination, and night came, before she had decided upon her conduct. She heard the castle clock strike eleven — twelve — and yet her mind wavered. The time, however, was now come, when she could hesitate no longer: and then the interest she felt for her aunt overcame other considerations, and, bidding Annette follow her to the outer door of the vaulted gallery, and there await her return, she descended from her chamber. The castle was perfectly still, and the great hall, where so lately she had witnessed a scene of dreadful contention, now returned only the whispering footsteps of the two solitary figures gliding fearfully between the pillars, and gleamed only to the feeble lamp they carried. Emily, deceived by the long shadows of the pillars and by the catching lights between, often stopped, imagining she saw some person, moving in the distant obscurity of the perspective; and, as she passed these pillars, she feared to turn her eyes toward them, almost expecting to see a figure start out from behind their broad shaft. She reached, however, the vaulted gallery, without interruption, but unclosed its outer door with a trembling hand, and, charging Annette not to quit it and to keep it a little open, that she might be heard if she called, she delivered to her the lamp, which she did not dare to take herself because of the men on watch, and, alone, stepped out upon the dark terrace. Every thing was so still, that she feared, lest her own light steps should be heard by the distant sentinels, and she walked cautiously towards the spot, where she had before met Barnardine, listening for a sound, and looking onward through the gloom in search of him. At length, she was startled by a deep voice, that spoke near her, and she paused, uncertain whether it was his, till it spoke again, and she then recognized the hollow tones of Barnardine, who had been punctual to the moment, and was at the appointed place, resting on the rampart wall. After chiding her for not coming sooner, and saying, that he had been waiting nearly half an hour, he desired Emily, who made no reply, to follow him to the door, through which he had entered the terrace.

While he unlocked it, she looked back to that she had left, and, observing the rays of the lamp stream through a small opening, was certain, that Annette was still there. But her remote situation could little befriend Emily, after she had quitted the terrace; and, when Barnardine unclosed the gate, the dismal aspect of the passage beyond, shewn by a torch burning on the pavement, made her shrink from following him alone, and she refused to go, unless Annette might accompany her. This, however, Barnardine absolutely refused to permit, mingling at the same time with his refusal such artful circumstances to heighten the pity and curiosity of Emily towards her aunt, that she, at length, consented to follow him alone to the portal.

He then took up the torch, and led her along the passage, at the extremity of which he unlocked another door, whence they descended, a few steps, into a chapel, which, as Barnardine held up the torch to light her, Emily observed to be in ruins, and she immediately recollected a former conversation of Annette, concerning it, with very unpleasant emotions. She looked fearfully on the almost roofless walls, green with damps, and on the gothic points of the windows, where the ivy and the briony had long supplied the place of glass, and ran mantling among the broken capitals of some columns, that had once supported the roof. Barnardine stumbled over the broken pavement, and his voice, as he uttered a sudden oath, was returned in hollow echoes, that made it more terrific. Emily's heart sunk; but she still followed him, and he turned out of what had been the principal aisle of the chapel. 'Down these steps, lady,' said Barnardine, as he descended a flight, which appeared to lead into the vaults; but Emily paused on the top, and demanded, in a tremulous tone, whither he was conducting her.

'To the portal,' said Barnardine.

'Cannot we go through the chapel to the portal?' said Emily.

'No, Signora, that leads to the inner court, which I don't choose to unlock. This way, and we shall reach the outer court presently.'

Emily still hesitated; fearing not only to go on, but, since she had gone thus far, to irritate Barnardine by refusing to go further.

'Come, lady,' said the man, who had nearly reached the bottom of the flight, 'make a little haste; I cannot wait here all night.'

'Whither do these steps lead?' said Emily, yet pausing.

‘To the portal,’ repeated Barnardine, in an angry tone, ‘I will wait no longer.’ As he said this, he moved on with the light, and Emily, fearing to provoke him by further delay, reluctantly followed. From the steps, they proceeded through a passage, adjoining the vaults, the walls of which were dropping with unwholesome dews, and the vapours, that crept along the ground, made the torch burn so dimly, that Emily expected every moment to see it extinguished, and Barnardine could scarcely find his way. As they advanced, these vapours thickened, and Barnardine, believing the torch was expiring, stopped for a moment to trim it. As he then rested against a pair of iron gates, that opened from the passage, Emily saw, by uncertain flashes of light, the vaults beyond, and, near her, heaps of earth, that seemed to surround an open grave. Such an object, in such a scene, would, at any time, have disturbed her; but now she was shocked by an instantaneous presentiment, that this was the grave of her unfortunate aunt, and that the treacherous Barnardine was leading herself to destruction. The obscure and terrible place, to which he had conducted her, seemed to justify the thought; it was a place suited for murder, a receptacle for the dead, where a deed of horror might be committed, and no vestige appear to proclaim it. Emily was so overwhelmed with terror, that, for a moment, she was unable to determine what conduct to pursue. She then considered, that it would be vain to attempt an escape from Barnardine, by flight, since the length and the intricacy of the way she had passed would soon enable him to overtake her, who was unacquainted with the turnings, and whose feebleness would not suffer her to run long with swiftness. She feared equally to irritate him by a disclosure of her suspicions, which a refusal to accompany him further certainly would do; and, since she was already as much in his power as it was possible she could be, if she proceeded, she, at length, determined to suppress, as far as she could, the appearance of apprehension, and to follow silently whither he designed to lead her. Pale with horror and anxiety, she now waited till Barnardine had trimmed the torch, and, as her sight glanced again upon the grave, she could not forbear enquiring, for whom it was prepared. He took his eyes from the torch, and fixed them upon her face without speaking. She faintly repeated the question, but the man, shaking the torch, passed on; and she followed, trembling, to a second flight of steps, having ascended which, a door delivered them into the first court of the castle. As

they crossed it, the light shewed the high black walls around them, fringed with long grass and dank weeds, that found a scanty soil among the mouldering stones; the heavy buttresses, with, here and there, between them, a narrow grate, that admitted a freer circulation of air to the court, the massy iron gates, that led to the castle, whose clustering turrets appeared above, and, opposite, the huge towers and arch of the portal itself. In this scene the large, uncouth person of Barnardine, bearing the torch, formed a characteristic figure. This Barnardine was wrapt in a long dark cloak, which scarcely allowed the kind of half-boots, or sandals, that were laced upon his legs, to appear, and shewed only the point of a broad sword, which he usually wore, slung in a belt across his shoulders. On his head was a heavy flat velvet cap, somewhat resembling a turban, in which was a short feather; the visage beneath it shewed strong features, and a countenance furrowed with the lines of cunning and darkened by habitual discontent.

The view of the court, however, reanimated Emily, who, as she crossed silently towards the portal, began to hope, that her own fears, and not the treachery of Barnardine, had deceived her. She looked anxiously up at the first casement, that appeared above the lofty arch of the portcullis; but it was dark, and she enquired, whether it belonged to the chamber, where Madame Montoni was confined. Emily spoke low, and Barnardine, perhaps, did not hear her question, for he returned no answer; and they, soon after, entered the postern door of the gateway, which brought them to the foot of a narrow staircase, that wound up one of the towers.

‘Up this staircase the Signora lies,’ said Barnardine.

‘Lies!’ repeated Emily faintly, as she began to ascend.

‘She lies in the upper chamber,’ said Barnardine.

As they passed up, the wind, which poured through the narrow cavities in the wall, made the torch flare, and it threw a stronger gleam upon the grim and sallow countenance of Barnardine, and discovered more fully the desolation of the place — the rough stone walls, the spiral stairs, black with age, and a suit of antient armour, with an iron visor, that hung upon the walls, and appeared a trophy of some former victory.

Having reached a landing-place, ‘You may wait here, lady,’ said he, applying a key to the door of a chamber, ‘while I go up, and tell the Signora you are coming.’

‘That ceremony is unnecessary,’ replied Emily, ‘my aunt will rejoice to see me.’

‘I am not so sure of that,’ said Barnardine, pointing to the room he had opened: ‘Come in here, lady, while I step up.’

Emily, surprised and somewhat shocked, did not dare to oppose him further, but, as he was turning away with the torch, desired he would not leave her in darkness. He looked around, and, observing a tripod lamp, that stood on the stairs, lighted and gave it to Emily, who stepped forward into a large old chamber, and he closed the door. As she listened anxiously to his departing steps, she thought he descended, instead of ascending, the stairs; but the gusts of wind, that whistled round the portal, would not allow her to hear distinctly any other sound. Still, however, she listened, and, perceiving no step in the room above, where he had affirmed Madame Montoni to be, her anxiety increased, though she considered, that the thickness of the floor in this strong building might prevent any sound reaching her from the upper chamber. The next moment, in a pause of the wind, she distinguished Barnardine’s step descending to the court, and then thought she heard his voice; but, the rising gust again overcoming other sounds, Emily, to be certain on this point, moved softly to the door, which, on attempting to open it, she discovered was fastened. All the horrid apprehensions, that had lately assailed her, returned at this instant with redoubled force, and no longer appeared like the exaggerations of a timid spirit, but seemed to have been sent to warn her of her fate. She now did not doubt, that Madame Montoni had been murdered, perhaps in this very chamber; or that she herself was brought hither for the same purpose. The countenance, the manners and the recollected words of Barnardine, when he had spoken of her aunt, confirmed her worst fears. For some moments, she was incapable of considering of any means, by which she might attempt an escape. Still she listened, but heard footsteps neither on the stairs, or in the room above; she thought, however, that she again distinguished Barnardine’s voice below, and went to a grated window, that opened upon the court, to enquire further. Here, she plainly heard his hoarse accents, mingling with the blast, that swept by, but they were lost again so quickly, that their meaning could not be interpreted; and then the light of a torch, which seemed to issue from the portal below, flashed across the court, and the long shadow of a man, who was under the

archway, appeared upon the pavement. Emily, from the hugeness of this sudden portrait, concluded it to be that of Barnardine; but other deep tones, which passed in the wind, soon convinced her he was not alone, and that his companion was not a person very liable to pity.

When her spirits had overcome the first shock of her situation, she held up the lamp to examine, if the chamber afforded a possibility of an escape. It was a spacious room, whose walls, wainscoted with rough oak, shewed no casement but the grated one, which Emily had left, and no other door than that, by which she had entered. The feeble rays of the lamp, however, did not allow her to see at once its full extent; she perceived no furniture, except, indeed, an iron chair, fastened in the centre of the chamber, immediately over which, depending on a chain from the ceiling, hung an iron ring. Having gazed upon these, for some time, with wonder and horror, she next observed iron bars below, made for the purpose of confining the feet, and on the arms of the chair were rings of the same metal. As she continued to survey them, she concluded, that they were instruments of torture, and it struck her, that some poor wretch had once been fastened in this chair, and had there been starved to death. She was chilled by the thought; but, what was her agony, when, in the next moment, it occurred to her, that her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next! An acute pain seized her head, she was scarcely able to hold the lamp, and, looking round for support, was seating herself, unconsciously, in the iron chair itself; but suddenly perceiving where she was, she started from it in horror, and sprung towards a remote end of the room. Here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceived only a dark curtain, which, descending from the ceiling to the floor, was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it, in wonder and apprehension.

It seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled: twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring hand had formerly unveiled in an apartment of the castle, till, suddenly conjecturing, that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt, she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside. Beyond, appeared a corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the

floor beneath. The features, deformed by death, were ghastly and horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch.

When her senses returned, she found herself surrounded by men, among whom was Barnardine, who were lifting her from the floor, and then bore her along the chamber. She was sensible of what passed, but the extreme languor of her spirits did not permit her to speak, or move, or even to feel any distinct fear. They carried her down the staircase, by which she had ascended; when, having reached the archway, they stopped, and one of the men, taking the torch from Barnardine, opened a small door, that was cut in the great gate, and, as he stepped out upon the road, the light he bore shewed several men on horseback, in waiting. Whether it was the freshness of the air, that revived Emily, or that the objects she now saw roused the spirit of alarm, she suddenly spoke, and made an ineffectual effort to disengage herself from the grasp of the ruffians, who held her.

Barnardine, meanwhile, called loudly for the torch, while distant voices answered, and several persons approached, and, in the same instant, a light flashed upon the court of the castle. Again he vociferated for the torch, and the men hurried Emily through the gate. At a short distance, under the shelter of the castle walls, she perceived the fellow, who had taken the light from the porter, holding it to a man, busily employed in altering the saddle of a horse, round which were several horsemen, looking on, whose harsh features received the full glare of the torch; while the broken ground beneath them, the opposite walls, with the tufted shrubs, that overhung their summits, and an embattled watchtower above, were reddened with the gleam, which, fading gradually away, left the remoter ramparts and the woods below to the obscurity of night.

‘What do you waste time for, there?’ said Barnardine with an oath, as he approached the horsemen. ‘Dispatch — dispatch!’

‘The saddle will be ready in a minute,’ replied the man who was buckling it, at whom Barnardine now swore again, for his negligence, and Emily, calling feebly for help, was hurried towards the horses, while the ruffians disputed on which to place her, the one designed for her not being ready. At this moment a cluster of lights issued from the great gates, and

she immediately heard the shrill voice of Annette above those of several other persons, who advanced. In the same moment, she distinguished Montoni and Cavigni, followed by a number of ruffian-faced fellows, to whom she no longer looked with terror, but with hope, for, at this instant, she did not tremble at the thought of any dangers, that might await her within the castle, whence so lately, and so anxiously she had wished to escape. Those, which threatened her from without, had engrossed all her apprehensions.

A short contest ensued between the parties, in which that of Montoni, however, were presently victors, and the horsemen, perceiving that numbers were against them, and being, perhaps, not very warmly interested in the affair they had undertaken, galloped off, while Barnardine had run far enough to be lost in the darkness, and Emily was led back into the castle. As she re-passed the courts, the remembrance of what she had seen in the portal-chamber came, with all its horror, to her mind; and when, soon after, she heard the gate close, that shut her once more within the castle walls, she shuddered for herself, and, almost forgetting the danger she had escaped, could scarcely think, that any thing less precious than liberty and peace was to be found beyond them.

Montoni ordered Emily to await him in the cedar parlour, whither he soon followed, and then sternly questioned her on this mysterious affair. Though she now viewed him with horror, as the murderer of her aunt, and scarcely knew what she said in reply to his impatient enquiries, her answers and her manner convinced him, that she had not taken a voluntary part in the late scheme, and he dismissed her upon the appearance of his servants, whom he had ordered to attend, that he might enquire further into the affair, and discover those, who had been accomplices in it.

Emily had been some time in her apartment, before the tumult of her mind allowed her to remember several of the past circumstances. Then, again, the dead form, which the curtain in the portal-chamber had disclosed, came to her fancy, and she uttered a groan, which terrified Annette the more, as Emily forbore to satisfy her curiosity, on the subject of it, for she feared to trust her with so fatal a secret, lest her indiscretion should call down the immediate vengeance of Montoni on herself.

Thus compelled to bear within her own mind the whole horror of the secret, that oppressed it, her reason seemed to totter under the intolerable

weight. She often fixed a wild and vacant look on Annette, and, when she spoke, either did not hear her, or answered from the purpose. Long fits of abstraction succeeded; Annette spoke repeatedly, but her voice seemed not to make any impression on the sense of the long agitated Emily, who sat fixed and silent, except that, now and then, she heaved a heavy sigh, but without tears.

Terrified at her condition, Annette, at length, left the room, to inform Montoni of it, who had just dismissed his servants, without having made any discoveries on the subject of his enquiry. The wild description, which this girl now gave of Emily, induced him to follow her immediately to the chamber.

At the sound of his voice, Emily turned her eyes, and a gleam of recollection seemed to shoot athwart her mind, for she immediately rose from her seat, and moved slowly to a remote part of the room. He spoke to her in accents somewhat softened from their usual harshness, but she regarded him with a kind of half curious, half terrified look, and answered only ‘yes,’ to whatever he said. Her mind still seemed to retain no other impression, than that of fear.

Of this disorder Annette could give no explanation, and Montoni, having attempted, for some time, to persuade Emily to talk, retired, after ordering Annette to remain with her, during the night, and to inform him, in the morning, of her condition.

When he was gone, Emily again came forward, and asked who it was, that had been there to disturb her. Annette said it was the Signor-Signor Montoni. Emily repeated the name after her, several times, as if she did not recollect it, and then suddenly groaned, and relapsed into abstraction.

With some difficulty, Annette led her to the bed, which Emily examined with an eager, frenzied eye, before she lay down, and then, pointing, turned with shuddering emotion, to Annette, who, now more terrified, went towards the door, that she might bring one of the female servants to pass the night with them; but Emily, observing her going, called her by name, and then in the naturally soft and plaintive tone of her voice, begged, that she, too, would not forsake her.— ‘For since my father died,’ added she, sighing, ‘every body forsakes me.’

‘Your father, ma’amselle!’ said Annette, ‘he was dead before you knew me.’

‘He was, indeed!’ rejoined Emily, and her tears began to flow. She now wept silently and long, after which, becoming quite calm, she at length sunk to sleep, Annette having had discretion enough not to interrupt her tears. This girl, as affectionate as she was simple, lost in these moments all her former fears of remaining in the chamber, and watched alone by Emily, during the whole night.

CHAPTER II

unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions, hold
Th’ immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook!

IL PENSEROSO

Emily’s mind was refreshed by sleep. On waking in the morning, she looked with surprise on Annette, who sat sleeping in a chair beside the bed, and then endeavoured to recollect herself; but the circumstances of the preceding night were swept from her memory, which seemed to retain no trace of what had passed, and she was still gazing with surprise on Annette, when the latter awoke.

‘O dear ma’amselle! do you know me?’ cried she.

‘Know you! Certainly,’ replied Emily, ‘you are Annette; but why are you sitting by me thus?’

‘O you have been very ill, ma’amselle, — very ill indeed! and I am sure I thought— ‘

‘This is very strange!’ said Emily, still trying to recollect the past.— ‘But I think I do remember, that my fancy has been haunted by frightful dreams. Good God!’ she added, suddenly starting— ‘surely it was nothing more than a dream!’

She fixed a terrified look upon Annette, who, intending to quiet her, said ‘Yes, ma’amselle, it was more than a dream, but it is all over now.’

‘She IS murdered, then!’ said Emily in an inward voice, and shuddering instantaneously. Annette screamed; for, being ignorant of the circumstance to which Emily referred, she attributed her manner to a disordered fancy; but, when she had explained to what her own speech alluded, Emily, recollecting the attempt that had been made to carry her off, asked if the contriver of it had been discovered. Annette replied, that he had not, though he might easily be guessed at; and then told Emily she might thank her for her deliverance, who, endeavouring to command the emotion, which the remembrance of her aunt had occasioned, appeared calmly to listen to Annette, though, in truth, she heard scarcely a word that was said.

‘And so, ma’amselle,’ continued the latter, ‘I was determined to be even with Barnardine for refusing to tell me the secret, by finding it out myself; so I watched you, on the terrace, and, as soon as he had opened the door at the end, I stole out from the castle, to try to follow you; for, says I, I am sure no good can be planned, or why all this secrecy? So, sure enough, he

had not bolted the door after him, and, when I opened it, I saw, by the glimmer of the torch, at the other end of the passage, which way you were going. I followed the light, at a distance, till you came to the vaults of the chapel, and there I was afraid to go further, for I had heard strange things about these vaults. But then, again, I was afraid to go back, all in darkness, by myself; so by the time Barnardine had trimmed the light, I had resolved to follow you, and I did so, till you came to the great court, and there I was afraid he would see me; so I stopped at the door again, and watched you across to the gates, and, when you was gone up the stairs, I whipt after. There, as I stood under the gateway, I heard horses' feet without, and several men talking; and I heard them swearing at Barnardine for not bringing you out, and just then, he had like to have caught me, for he came down the stairs again, and I had hardly time to get out of his way. But I had heard enough of his secret now, and I determined to be even with him, and to save you, too, ma'amselle, for I guessed it to be some new scheme of Count Morano, though he was gone away. I ran into the castle, but I had hard work to find my way through the passage under the chapel, and what is very strange, I quite forgot to look for the ghosts they had told me about, though I would not go into that place again by myself for all the world! Luckily the Signor and Signor Cavigni were up, so we had soon a train at our heels, sufficient to frighten that Barnardine and his rogues, all together.'

Annette ceased to speak, but Emily still appeared to listen. At length she said, suddenly, 'I think I will go to him myself; — where is he?'

Annette asked who was meant.

'Signor Montoni,' replied Emily. 'I would speak with him;' and Annette, now remembering the order he had given, on the preceding night, respecting her young lady, rose, and said she would seek him herself.

This honest girl's suspicions of Count Morano were perfectly just; Emily, too, when she thought on the scheme, had attributed it to him; and Montoni, who had not a doubt on this subject, also, began to believe, that it was by the direction of Morano, that poison had formerly been mingled with his wine.

The professions of repentance, which Morano had made to Emily, under the anguish of his wound, was sincere at the moment he offered them; but he had mistaken the subject of his sorrow, for, while he thought he was

condemning the cruelty of his late design, he was lamenting only the state of suffering, to which it had reduced him. As these sufferings abated, his former views revived, till, his health being re-established, he again found himself ready for enterprise and difficulty. The porter of the castle, who had served him, on a former occasion, willingly accepted a second bribe; and, having concerted the means of drawing Emily to the gates, Morano publicly left the hamlet, whither he had been carried after the affray, and withdrew with his people to another at several miles distance. From thence, on a night agreed upon by Barnardine, who had discovered from the thoughtless prattle of Annette, the most probable means of decoying Emily, the Count sent back his servants to the castle, while he awaited her arrival at the hamlet, with an intention of carrying her immediately to Venice. How this, his second scheme, was frustrated, has already appeared; but the violent, and various passions with which this Italian lover was now agitated, on his return to that city, can only be imagined.

Annette having made her report to Montoni of Emily's health and of her request to see him, he replied, that she might attend him in the cedar room, in about an hour. It was on the subject, that pressed so heavily on her mind, that Emily wished to speak to him, yet she did not distinctly know what good purpose this could answer, and sometimes she even recoiled in horror from the expectation of his presence. She wished, also, to petition, though she scarcely dared to believe the request would be granted, that he would permit her, since her aunt was no more, to return to her native country.

As the moment of interview approached, her agitation increased so much, that she almost resolved to excuse herself under what could scarcely be called a pretence of illness; and, when she considered what could be said, either concerning herself, or the fate of her aunt, she was equally hopeless as to the event of her entreaty, and terrified as to its effect upon the vengeful spirit of Montoni. Yet, to pretend ignorance of her death, appeared, in some degree, to be sharing its criminality, and, indeed, this event was the only ground, on which Emily could rest her petition for leaving Udolpho.

While her thoughts thus wavered, a message was brought, importing, that Montoni could not see her, till the next day; and her spirits were then relieved, for a moment, from an almost intolerable weight of

apprehension. Annette said, she fancied the Chevaliers were going out to the wars again, for the courtyard was filled with horses, and she heard, that the rest of the party, who went out before, were expected at the castle. ‘And I heard one of the soldiers, too,’ added she, ‘say to his comrade, that he would warrant they’d bring home a rare deal of booty. — So, thinks I, if the Signor can, with a safe conscience, send his people out a-robbing — why it is no business of mine. I only wish I was once safe out of this castle; and, if it had not been for poor Ludovico’s sake, I would have let Count Morano’s people run away with us both, for it would have been serving you a good turn, ma’amselle, as well as myself.’

Annette might have continued thus talking for hours for any interruption she would have received from Emily, who was silent, inattentive, absorbed in thought, and passed the whole of this day in a kind of solemn tranquillity, such as is often the result of faculties overstrained by suffering.

When night returned, Emily recollected the mysterious strains of music, that she had lately heard, in which she still felt some degree of interest, and of which she hoped to hear again the soothing sweetness. The influence of superstition now gained on the weakness of her long-harassed mind; she looked, with enthusiastic expectation, to the guardian spirit of her father, and, having dismissed Annette for the night, determined to watch alone for their return. It was not yet, however, near the time when she had heard the music on a former night, and anxious to call off her thoughts from distressing subjects, she sat down with one of the few books, that she had brought from France; but her mind, refusing controul, became restless and agitated, and she went often to the casement to listen for a sound. Once, she thought she heard a voice, but then, every thing without the casement remaining still, she concluded, that her fancy had deceived her.

Thus passed the time, till twelve o’clock, soon after which the distant sounds, that murmured through the castle, ceased, and sleep seemed to reign over all. Emily then seated herself at the casement, where she was soon recalled from the reverie, into which she sunk, by very unusual sounds, not of music, but like the low mourning of some person in distress. As she listened, her heart faltered in terror, and she became convinced, that the former sound was more than imaginary. Still, at

intervals, she heard a kind of feeble lamentation, and sought to discover whence it came. There were several rooms underneath, adjoining the rampart, which had been long shut up, and, as the sound probably rose from one of these, she leaned from the casement to observe, whether any light was visible there. The chambers, as far as she could perceive, were quite dark, but, at a little distance, on the rampart below, she thought she saw something moving.

The faint twilight, which the stars shed, did not enable her to distinguish what it was; but she judged it to be a sentinel, on watch, and she removed her light to a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice, during her further observation.

The same object still appeared. Presently, it advanced along the rampart, towards her window, and she then distinguished something like a human form, but the silence, with which it moved, convinced her it was no sentinel. As it drew near, she hesitated whether to retire; a thrilling curiosity inclined her to stay, but a dread of she scarcely knew what warned her to withdraw.

While she paused, the figure came opposite to her casement, and was stationary. Every thing remained quiet; she had not heard even a foot-fall; and the solemnity of this silence, with the mysterious form she saw, subdued her spirits, so that she was moving from the casement, when, on a sudden, she observed the figure start away, and glide down the rampart, after which it was soon lost in the obscurity of night. Emily continued to gaze, for some time, on the way it had passed, and then retired within her chamber, musing on this strange circumstance, and scarcely doubting, that she had witnessed a supernatural appearance.

When her spirits recovered composure, she looked round for some other explanation. Remembering what she had heard of the daring enterprises of Montoni, it occurred to her, that she had just seen some unhappy person, who, having been plundered by his banditti, was brought hither a captive; and that the music she had formerly heard, came from him. Yet, if they had plundered him, it still appeared improbable, that they should have brought him to the castle, and it was also more consistent with the manners of banditti to murder those they rob, than to make them prisoners. But what, more than any other circumstance, contradicted the supposition,

that it was a prisoner, was that it wandered on the terrace, without a guard: a consideration, which made her dismiss immediately her first surmise.

Afterwards, she was inclined to believe, that Count Morano had obtained admittance into the castle; but she soon recollected the difficulties and dangers, that must have opposed such an enterprise, and that, if he had so far succeeded, to come alone and in silence to her casement at midnight was not the conduct he would have adopted, particularly since the private staircase, communicating with her apartment, was known to him; neither would he have uttered the dismal sounds she had heard.

Another suggestion represented, that this might be some person, who had designs upon the castle; but the mournful sounds destroyed, also, that probability. Thus, enquiry only perplexed her. Who, or what, it could be that haunted this lonely hour, complaining in such doleful accents and in such sweet music (for she was still inclined to believe, that the former strains and the late appearance were connected,) she had no means of ascertaining; and imagination again assumed her empire, and roused the mysteries of superstition.

She determined, however, to watch on the following night, when her doubts might, perhaps, be cleared up; and she almost resolved to address the figure, if it should appear again.

CHAPTER III

Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering, and sitting, by a new-made grave.

MILTON

On the following day, Montoni sent a second excuse to Emily, who was surprised at the circumstance. ‘This is very strange!’ said she to herself. ‘His conscience tells him the purport of my visit, and he defers it, to avoid an explanation.’ She now almost resolved to throw herself in his way, but terror checked the intention, and this day passed, as the preceding one, with Emily, except that a degree of awful expectation, concerning the approaching night, now somewhat disturbed the dreadful calmness that had pervaded her mind.

Towards evening, the second part of the band, which had made the first excursion among the mountains, returned to the castle, where, as they entered the courts, Emily, in her remote chamber, heard their loud shouts and strains of exultation, like the orgies of furies over some horrid sacrifice. She even feared they were about to commit some barbarous deed; a conjecture from which, however, Annette soon relieved her, by telling, that the people were only exulting over the plunder they had brought with them. This circumstance still further confirmed her in the belief, that Montoni had really commenced to be a captain of banditti, and meant to retrieve his broken fortunes by the plunder of travellers! Indeed, when she considered all the circumstances of his situation — in an armed, and almost inaccessible castle, retired far among the recesses of wild and solitary mountains, along whose distant skirts were scattered towns, and cities, whither wealthy travellers were continually passing — this appeared to be the situation of all others most suited for the success of schemes of rapine, and she yielded to the strange thought, that Montoni was become a captain of robbers. His character also, unprincipled, dauntless, cruel and enterprising, seemed to fit him for the situation. Delighting in the tumult and in the struggles of life, he was equally a stranger to pity and to fear; his very courage was a sort of animal ferocity; not the noble impulse of a principle, such as inspirits the mind against the oppressor, in the cause of the oppressed; but a constitutional hardiness of nerve, that cannot feel, and that, therefore, cannot fear.

Emily’s supposition, however natural, was in part erroneous, for she was a stranger to the state of this country and to the circumstances, under which its frequent wars were partly conducted. The revenues of the many states of Italy being, at that time, insufficient to the support of standing armies, even during the short periods, which the turbulent habits both of the governments and the people permitted to pass in peace, an order of men arose not known in our age, and but faintly described in the history of their own. Of the soldiers, disbanded at the end of every war, few returned to the safe, but unprofitable occupations, then usual in peace. Sometimes they passed into other countries, and mingled with armies, which still kept the field. Sometimes they formed themselves into bands of robbers, and occupied remote fortresses, where their desperate character, the weakness of the governments which they offended, and the certainty, that they could be recalled to the armies, when their presence should be again wanted, prevented them from being much pursued by the civil power; and, sometimes, they attached themselves to the fortunes of a popular chief, by whom they were led into the service of any state, which could settle with him the price of their valour. From this latter practice arose their name — CONDOTTIERI; a term formidable all over Italy, for a period, which concluded in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, but of which it is not so easy to ascertain the commencement.

Contests between the smaller states were then, for the most part, affairs of enterprize alone, and the probabilities of success were estimated, not from the skill, but from the personal courage of the general, and the soldiers. The ability, which was necessary to the conduct of tedious operations, was little valued. It was enough to know how a party might be led towards their enemies, with the greatest secrecy, or conducted from them in the compactest order. The officer was to precipitate himself into a situation, where, but for his example, the soldiers might not have ventured; and, as the opposed parties knew little of each other’s strength, the event of the day was frequently determined by the boldness of the first movements. In such services the condottieri were eminent, and in these, where plunder always followed success, their characters acquired a mixture of intrepidity and profligacy, which awed even those whom they served.

When they were not thus engaged, their chief had usually his own fortress, in which, or in its neighbourhood, they enjoyed an irksome rest; and, though their wants were, at one time, partly supplied from the property of the inhabitants, the lavish distribution of their plunder at others, prevented them from being obnoxious; and the peasants of such districts gradually shared the character of their warlike visitors. The neighbouring governments sometimes professed, but seldom endeavoured, to suppress these military communities; both because it was difficult to do so, and because a disguised protection of them ensured, for the service of their wars, a body of men, who could not otherwise be so cheaply maintained, or so perfectly qualified. The commanders sometimes even relied so far upon this policy of the several powers, as to frequent their capitals; and Montoni, having met them in the gaming parties of Venice and Padua, conceived a desire to emulate their characters, before his ruined fortunes tempted him to adopt their practices. It was for the arrangement of his present plan of life, that the midnight councils were held at his mansion in Venice, and at which Orsino and some other members of the present community then assisted with suggestions, which they had since executed with the wreck of their fortunes.

On the return of night, Emily resumed her station at the casement. There was now a moon; and, as it rose over the tufted woods, its yellow light served to shew the lonely terrace and the surrounding objects, more distinctly, than the twilight of the stars had done, and promised Emily to assist her observations, should the mysterious form return. On this subject, she again wavered in conjecture, and hesitated whether to speak to the figure, to which a strong and almost irresistible interest urged her; but terror, at intervals, made her reluctant to do so.

‘If this is a person who has designs upon the castle,’ said she, ‘my curiosity may prove fatal to me; yet the mysterious music, and the lamentations I heard, must surely have proceeded from him: if so, he cannot be an enemy.’

She then thought of her unfortunate aunt, and, shuddering with grief and horror, the suggestions of imagination seized her mind with all the force of truth, and she believed, that the form she had seen was supernatural. She trembled, breathed with difficulty, an icy coldness touched her cheeks, and

her fears for a while overcame her judgment. Her resolution now forsook her, and she determined, if the figure should appear, not to speak to it.

Thus the time passed, as she sat at her casement, awed by expectation, and by the gloom and stillness of midnight; for she saw obscurely in the moonlight only the mountains and woods, a cluster of towers, that formed the west angle of the castle, and the terrace below; and heard no sound, except, now and then, the lonely watchword, passed by the centinels on duty, and afterwards the steps of the men who came to relieve guard, and whom she knew at a distance on the rampart by their pikes, that glittered in the moonbeam, and then, by the few short words, in which they hailed their fellows of the night. Emily retired within her chamber, while they passed the casement. When she returned to it, all was again quiet. It was now very late, she was wearied with watching, and began to doubt the reality of what she had seen on the preceding night; but she still lingered at the window, for her mind was too perturbed to admit of sleep. The moon shone with a clear lustre, that afforded her a complete view of the terrace; but she saw only a solitary centinel, pacing at one end of it; and, at length, tired with expectation, she withdrew to seek rest.

Such, however, was the impression, left on her mind by the music, and the complaining she had formerly heard, as well as by the figure, which she fancied she had seen, that she determined to repeat the watch, on the following night.

Montoni, on the next day, took no notice of Emily's appointed visit, but she, more anxious than before to see him, sent Annette to enquire, at what hour he would admit her. He mentioned eleven o'clock, and Emily was punctual to the moment; at which she called up all her fortitude to support the shock of his presence and the dreadful recollections it enforced. He was with several of his officers, in the cedar room; on observing whom she paused; and her agitation increased, while he continued to converse with them, apparently not observing her, till some of his officers, turning round, saw Emily, and uttered an exclamation. She was hastily retiring, when Montoni's voice arrested her, and, in a faultering accent, she said,— 'I would speak with you, Signor Montoni, if you are at leisure.'

'These are my friends,' he replied, 'whatever you would say, they may hear.'

Emily, without replying, turned from the rude gaze of the chevaliers, and Montoni then followed her to the hall, whence he led her to a small room, of which he shut the door with violence. As she looked on his dark countenance, she again thought she saw the murderer of her aunt; and her mind was so convulsed with horror, that she had not power to recall thought enough to explain the purport of her visit; and to trust herself with the mention of Madame Montoni was more than she dared.

Montoni at length impatiently enquired what she had to say? ‘I have no time for trifling,’ he added, ‘my moments are important.’

Emily then told him, that she wished to return to France, and came to beg, that he would permit her to do so. — But when he looked surprised, and enquired for the motive of the request, she hesitated, became paler than before, trembled, and had nearly sunk at his feet. He observed her emotion, with apparent indifference, and interrupted the silence by telling her, he must be gone. Emily, however, recalled her spirits sufficiently to enable her to repeat her request. And, when Montoni absolutely refused it, her slumbering mind was roused.

‘I can no longer remain here with propriety, sir,’ said she, ‘and I may be allowed to ask, by what right you detain me.’

‘It is my will that you remain here,’ said Montoni, laying his hand on the door to go; ‘let that suffice you.’

Emily, considering that she had no appeal from this will, forbore to dispute his right, and made a feeble effort to persuade him to be just. ‘While my aunt lived, sir,’ said she, in a tremulous voice, ‘my residence here was not improper; but now, that she is no more, I may surely be permitted to depart. My stay cannot benefit you, sir, and will only distress me.’

‘Who told you, that Madame Montoni was dead?’ said Montoni, with an inquisitive eye. Emily hesitated, for nobody had told her so, and she did not dare to avow the having seen that spectacle in the portal-chamber, which had compelled her to the belief.

‘Who told you so?’ he repeated, more sternly.

‘Alas! I know it too well,’ replied Emily: ‘spare me on this terrible subject!’

She sat down on a bench to support herself.

‘If you wish to see her,’ said Montoni, ‘you may; she lies in the east turret.’

He now left the room, without awaiting her reply, and returned to the cedar chamber, where such of the chevaliers as had not before seen Emily, began to rally him, on the discovery they had made; but Montoni did not appear disposed to bear this mirth, and they changed the subject.

Having talked with the subtle Orsino, on the plan of an excursion, which he meditated for a future day, his friend advised, that they should lie in wait for the enemy, which Verezzi impetuously opposed, reproached Orsino with want of spirit, and swore, that, if Montoni would let him lead on fifty men, he would conquer all that should oppose him.

Orsino smiled contemptuously; Montoni smiled too, but he also listened. Verezzi then proceeded with vehement declamation and assertion, till he was stopped by an argument of Orsino, which he knew not how to answer better than by invective. His fierce spirit detested the cunning caution of Orsino, whom he constantly opposed, and whose inveterate, though silent, hatred he had long ago incurred. And Montoni was a calm observer of both, whose different qualifications he knew, and how to bend their opposite character to the perfection of his own designs. But Verezzi, in the heat of opposition, now did not scruple to accuse Orsino of cowardice, at which the countenance of the latter, while he made no reply, was overspread with a livid paleness; and Montoni, who watched his lurking eye, saw him put his hand hastily into his bosom. But Verezzi, whose face, glowing with crimson, formed a striking contrast to the complexion of Orsino, remarked not the action, and continued boldly declaiming against cowards to Cavigni, who was slily laughing at his vehemence, and at the silent mortification of Orsino, when the latter, retiring a few steps behind, drew forth a stilletto to stab his adversary in the back. Montoni arrested his half-extended arm, and, with a significant look, made him return the poinard into his bosom, unseen by all except himself; for most of the party were disputing at a distant window, on the situation of a dell where they meant to form an ambuscade.

When Verezzi had turned round, the deadly hatred, expressed on the features of his opponent, raising, for the first time, a suspicion of his intention, he laid his hand on his sword, and then, seeming to recollect himself, strode up to Montoni.

‘Signor,’ said he, with a significant look at Orsino, ‘we are not a band of assassins; if you have business for brave men employ me on this expedition: you shall have the last drop of my blood; if you have only work for cowards — keep him,’ pointing to Orsino, ‘and let me quit Udolpho.’

Orsino, still more incensed, again drew forth his stilletto, and rushed towards Verezzi, who, at the same instant, advanced with his sword, when Montoni and the rest of the party interfered and separated them.

‘This is the conduct of a boy,’ said Montoni to Verezzi, ‘not of a man: be more moderate in your speech.’

‘Moderation is the virtue of cowards,’ retorted Verezzi; ‘they are moderate in every thing — but in fear.’

‘I accept your words,’ said Montoni, turning upon him with a fierce and haughty look, and drawing his sword out of the scabbard.

‘With all my heart,’ cried Verezzi, ‘though I did not mean them for you.’

He directed a pass at Montoni; and, while they fought, the villain Orsino made another attempt to stab Verezzi, and was again prevented.

The combatants were, at length, separated; and, after a very long and violent dispute, reconciled. Montoni then left the room with Orsino, whom he detained in private consultation for a considerable time.

Emily, meanwhile, stunned by the last words of Montoni, forgot, for the moment, his declaration, that she should continue in the castle, while she thought of her unfortunate aunt, who, he had said, was laid in the east turret. In suffering the remains of his wife to lie thus long unburied, there appeared a degree of brutality more shocking than she had suspected even Montoni could practise.

After a long struggle, she determined to accept his permission to visit the turret, and to take a last look of her ill-fated aunt: with which design she returned to her chamber, and, while she waited for Annette to accompany her, endeavoured to acquire fortitude sufficient to support her through the approaching scene; for, though she trembled to encounter it, she knew that to remember the performance of this last act of duty would hereafter afford her consoling satisfaction.

Annette came, and Emily mentioned her purpose, from which the former endeavoured to dissuade her, though without effect, and Annette

was, with much difficulty, prevailed upon to accompany her to the turret; but no consideration could make her promise to enter the chamber of death.

They now left the corridor, and, having reached the foot of the staircase, which Emily had formerly ascended, Annette declared she would go no further, and Emily proceeded alone. When she saw the track of blood, which she had before observed, her spirits fainted, and, being compelled to rest on the stairs, she almost determined to proceed no further. The pause of a few moments restored her resolution, and she went on.

As she drew near the landing-place, upon which the upper chamber opened, she remembered, that the door was formerly fastened, and apprehended, that it might still be so. In this expectation, however, she was mistaken; for the door opened at once, into a dusky and silent chamber, round which she fearfully looked, and then slowly advanced, when a hollow voice spoke. Emily, who was unable to speak, or to move from the spot, uttered no sound of terror. The voice spoke again; and, then, thinking that it resembled that of Madame Montoni, Emily's spirits were instantly roused; she rushed towards a bed, that stood in a remote part of the room, and drew aside the curtains. Within, appeared a pale and emaciated face. She started back, then again advanced, shuddered as she took up the skeleton hand, that lay stretched upon the quilt; then let it drop, and then viewed the face with a long, unsettled gaze. It was that of Madame Montoni, though so changed by illness, that the resemblance of what it had been, could scarcely be traced in what it now appeared. She was still alive, and, raising her heavy eyes, she turned them on her niece.

'Where have you been so long?' said she, in the same tone, 'I thought you had forsaken me.'

'Do you indeed live,' said Emily, at length, 'or is this but a terrible apparition?' she received no answer, and again she snatched up the hand. 'This is substance,' she exclaimed, 'but it is cold — cold as marble!' She let it fall. 'O, if you really live, speak!' said Emily, in a voice of desperation, 'that I may not lose my senses — say you know me!'

'I do live,' replied Madame Montoni, 'but — I feel that I am about to die.'

Emily clasped the hand she held, more eagerly, and groaned. They were both silent for some moments. Then Emily endeavoured to soothe her, and

enquired what had reduced her to this present deplorable state.

Montoni, when he removed her to the turret under the improbable suspicion of having attempted his life, had ordered the men employed on the occasion, to observe a strict secrecy concerning her. To this he was influenced by a double motive. He meant to debar her from the comfort of Emily's visits, and to secure an opportunity of privately dispatching her, should any new circumstances occur to confirm the present suggestions of his suspecting mind. His consciousness of the hatred he deserved it was natural enough should at first led him to attribute to her the attempt that had been made upon his life; and, though there was no other reason to believe that she was concerned in that atrocious design, his suspicions remained; he continued to confine her in the turret, under a strict guard; and, without pity or remorse, had suffered her to lie, forlorn and neglected, under a raging fever, till it had reduced her to the present state.

The track of blood, which Emily had seen on the stairs, had flowed from the unbound wound of one of the men employed to carry Madame Montoni, and which he had received in the late affray. At night these men, having contented themselves with securing the door of their prisoner's room, had retired from guard; and then it was, that Emily, at the time of her first enquiry, had found the turret so silent and deserted.

When she had attempted to open the door of the chamber, her aunt was sleeping, and this occasioned the silence, which had contributed to delude her into a belief, that she was no more; yet had her terror permitted her to persevere longer in the call, she would probably have awakened Madame Montoni, and have been spared much suffering. The spectacle in the portal-chamber, which afterwards confirmed Emily's horrible suspicion, was the corpse of a man, who had fallen in the affray, and the same which had been borne into the servants' hall, where she took refuge from the tumult. This man had lingered under his wounds for some days; and, soon after his death, his body had been removed on the couch, on which he died, for interment in the vault beneath the chapel, through which Emily and Barnardine had passed to the chamber.

Emily, after asking Madame Montoni a thousand questions concerning herself, left her, and sought Montoni; for the more solemn interest she felt for her aunt, made her now regardless of the resentment her remonstrances

might draw upon herself, and of the improbability of his granting what she meant to entreat.

‘Madame Montoni is now dying, sir,’ said Emily, as soon as she saw him— ‘Your resentment, surely will not pursue her to the last moment! Suffer her to be removed from that forlorn room to her own apartment, and to have necessary comforts administered.’

‘Of what service will that be, if she is dying?’ said Montoni, with apparent indifference.

‘The service, at leave, of saving you, sir, from a few of those pangs of conscience you must suffer, when you shall be in the same situation,’ said Emily, with imprudent indignation, of which Montoni soon made her sensible, by commanding her to quit his presence. Then, forgetting her resentment, and impressed only by compassion for the piteous state of her aunt, dying without succour, she submitted to humble herself to Montoni, and to adopt every persuasive means, that might induce him to relent towards his wife.

For a considerable time he was proof against all she said, and all she looked; but at length the divinity of pity, beaming in Emily’s eyes, seemed to touch his heart. He turned away, ashamed of his better feelings, half sullen and half relenting; but finally consented, that his wife should be removed to her own apartment, and that Emily should attend her. Dreading equally, that this relief might arrive too late, and that Montoni might retract his concession, Emily scarcely staid to thank him for it, but, assisted by Annette, she quickly prepared Madame Montoni’s bed, and they carried her a cordial, that might enable her feeble frame to sustain the fatigue of a removal.

Madame was scarcely arrived in her own apartment, when an order was given by her husband, that she should remain in the turret; but Emily, thankful that she had made such dispatch, hastened to inform him of it, as well as that a second removal would instantly prove fatal, and he suffered his wife to continue where she was.

During this day, Emily never left Madame Montoni, except to prepare such little nourishing things as she judged necessary to sustain her, and which Madame Montoni received with quiet acquiescence, though she seemed sensible that they could not save her from approaching dissolution, and scarcely appeared to wish for life. Emily meanwhile

watched over her with the most tender solicitude, no longer seeing her imperious aunt in the poor object before her, but the sister of her late beloved father, in a situation that called for all her compassion and kindness. When night came, she determined to sit up with her aunt, but this the latter positively forbade, commanding her to retire to rest, and Annette alone to remain in her chamber. Rest was, indeed, necessary to Emily, whose spirits and frame were equally wearied by the occurrences and exertions of the day; but she would not leave Madame Montoni, till after the turn of midnight, a period then thought so critical by the physicians.

Soon after twelve, having enjoined Annette to be wakeful, and to call her, should any change appear for the worse, Emily sorrowfully bade Madame Montoni good night, and withdrew to her chamber. Her spirits were more than usually depressed by the piteous condition of her aunt, whose recovery she scarcely dared to expect. To her own misfortunes she saw no period, inclosed as she was, in a remote castle, beyond the reach of any friends, had she possessed such, and beyond the pity even of strangers; while she knew herself to be in the power of a man capable of any action, which his interest, or his ambition, might suggest.

Occupied by melancholy reflections and by anticipations as sad, she did not retire immediately to rest, but leaned thoughtfully on her open casement. The scene before her of woods and mountains, reposing in the moonlight, formed a regretted contrast with the state of her mind; but the lonely murmur of these woods, and the view of this sleeping landscape, gradually soothed her emotions and softened her to tears.

She continued to weep, for some time, lost to every thing, but to a gentle sense of her misfortunes. When she, at length, took the handkerchief from her eyes, she perceived, before her, on the terrace below, the figure she had formerly observed, which stood fixed and silent, immediately opposite to her casement. On perceiving it, she started back, and terror for some time overcame curiosity; — at length, she returned to the casement, and still the figure was before it, which she now compelled herself to observe, but was utterly unable to speak, as she had formerly intended. The moon shone with a clear light, and it was, perhaps, the agitation of her mind, that prevented her distinguishing, with any degree of accuracy, the form before

her. It was still stationary, and she began to doubt, whether it was really animated.

Her scattered thoughts were now so far returned as to remind her, that her light exposed her to dangerous observation, and she was stepping back to remove it, when she perceived the figure move, and then wave what seemed to be its arm, as if to beckon her; and, while she gazed, fixed in fear, it repeated the action. She now attempted to speak, but the words died on her lips, and she went from the casement to remove her light; as she was doing which, she heard, from without, a faint groan. Listening, but not daring to return, she presently heard it repeated.

‘Good God! — what can this mean!’ said she.

Again she listened, but the sound came no more; and, after a long interval of silence, she recovered courage enough to go to the casement, when she again saw the same appearance! It beckoned again, and again uttered a low sound.

‘That groan was surely human!’ said she. ‘I WILL speak.’ ‘Who is it,’ cried Emily in a faint voice, ‘that wanders at this late hour?’

The figure raised its head but suddenly started away, and glided down the terrace. She watched it, for a long while, passing swiftly in the moonlight, but heard no footstep, till a sentinel from the other extremity of the rampart walked slowly along. The man stopped under her window, and, looking up, called her by name. She was retiring precipitately, but, a second summons inducing her to reply, the soldier then respectfully asked if she had seen any thing pass. On her answering, that she had; he said no more, but walked away down the terrace, Emily following him with her eyes, till he was lost in the distance. But, as he was on guard, she knew he could not go beyond the rampart, and, therefore, resolved to await his return.

Soon after, his voice was heard, at a distance, calling loudly; and then a voice still more distant answered, and, in the next moment, the watchword was given, and passed along the terrace. As the soldiers moved hastily under the casement, she called to enquire what had happened, but they passed without regarding her.

Emily’s thoughts returning to the figure she had seen, ‘It cannot be a person, who has designs upon the castle,’ said she; ‘such an one would conduct himself very differently. He would not venture where sentinels

were on watch, nor fix himself opposite to a window, where he perceived he must be observed; much less would he beckon, or utter a sound of complaint. Yet it cannot be a prisoner, for how could he obtain the opportunity to wander thus?'

If she had been subject to vanity, she might have supposed this figure to be some inhabitant of the castle, who wandered under her casement in the hope of seeing her, and of being allowed to declare his admiration; but this opinion never occurred to Emily, and, if it had, she would have dismissed it as improbable, on considering, that, when the opportunity of speaking had occurred, it had been suffered to pass in silence; and that, even at the moment in which she had spoken, the form had abruptly quitted the place.

While she mused, two sentinels walked up the rampart in earnest conversation, of which she caught a few words, and learned from these, that one of their comrades had fallen down senseless. Soon after, three other soldiers appeared slowly advancing from the bottom of the terrace, but she heard only a low voice, that came at intervals. As they drew near, she perceived this to be the voice of him, who walked in the middle, apparently supported by his comrades; and she again called to them, enquiring what had happened. At the sound of her voice, they stopped, and looked up, while she repeated her question, and was told, that Roberto, their fellow of the watch, had been seized with a fit, and that his cry, as he fell, had caused a false alarm.

'Is he subject to fits?' said Emily.

'Yes, Signora,' replied Roberto; 'but if I had not, what I saw was enough to have frightened the Pope himself.'

'What was it?' enquired Emily, trembling.

'I cannot tell what it was, lady, or what I saw, or how it vanished,' replied the soldier, who seemed to shudder at the recollection.

'Was it the person, whom you followed down the rampart, that has occasioned you this alarm?' said Emily, endeavouring to conceal her own.

'Person!' exclaimed the man,— 'it was the devil, and this is not the first time I have seen him!'

'Nor will it be the last,' observed one of his comrades, laughing.

'No, no, I warrant not,' said another.

'Well,' rejoined Roberto, 'you may be as merry now, as you please; you was none so jocose the other night, Sebastian, when you was on watch with

Launcelot.’

‘Launcelot need not talk of that,’ replied Sebastian, ‘let him remember how he stood trembling, and unable to give the WORD, till the man was gone, If the man had not come so silently upon us, I would have seized him, and soon made him tell who he was.’

‘What man?’ enquired Emily.

‘It was no man, lady,’ said Launcelot, who stood by, ‘but the devil himself, as my comrade says. What man, who does not live in the castle, could get within the walls at midnight? Why, I might just as well pretend to march to Venice, and get among all the Senators, when they are counselling; and I warrant I should have more chance of getting out again alive, than any fellow, that we should catch within the gates after dark. So I think I have proved plainly enough, that this can be nobody that lives out of the castle; and now I will prove, that it can be nobody that lives in the castle — for, if he did — why should he be afraid to be seen? So after this, I hope nobody will pretend to tell me it was anybody. No, I say again, by holy Pope! it was the devil, and Sebastian, there, knows this is not the first time we have seen him.’

‘When did you see the figure, then, before?’ said Emily half smiling, who, though she thought the conversation somewhat too much, felt an interest, which would not permit her to conclude it.

‘About a week ago, lady,’ said Sebastian, taking up the story.

‘And where?’

‘On the rampart, lady, higher up.’

‘Did you pursue it, that it fled?’

‘No, Signora. Launcelot and I were on watch together, and every thing was so still, you might have heard a mouse stir, when, suddenly, Launcelot says — Sebastian! do you see nothing? I turned my head a little to the left, as it might be — thus. No, says I. Hush! said Launcelot, — look yonder — just by the last cannon on the rampart! I looked, and then thought I did see something move; but there being no light, but what the stars gave, I could not be certain. We stood quite silent, to watch it, and presently saw something pass along the castle wall just opposite to us!’

‘Why did you not seize it, then?’ cried a soldier, who had scarcely spoken till now.

‘Aye, why did you not seize it?’ said Roberto.

‘You should have been there to have done that,’ replied Sebastian. ‘You would have been bold enough to have taken it by the throat, though it had been the devil himself; we could not take such a liberty, perhaps, because we are not so well acquainted with him, as you are. But, as I was saying, it stole by us so quickly, that we had not time to get rid of our surprise, before it was gone. Then, we knew it was in vain to follow. We kept constant watch all that night, but we saw it no more. Next morning, we told some of our comrades, who were on duty on other parts of the ramparts, what we had seen; but they had seen nothing, and laughed at us, and it was not till to-night, that the same figure walked again.’

‘Where did you lose it, friend?’ said Emily to Roberto.

‘When I left you, lady,’ replied the man, ‘you might see me go down the rampart, but it was not till I reached the east terrace, that I saw any thing. Then, the moon shining bright, I saw something like a shadow flitting before me, as it were, at some distance. I stopped, when I turned the corner of the east tower, where I had seen this figure not a moment before, — but it was gone! As I stood, looking through the old arch, which leads to the east rampart, and where I am sure it had passed, I heard, all of a sudden, such a sound! — it was not like a groan, or a cry, or a shout, or any thing I ever heard in my life. I heard it only once, and that was enough for me; for I know nothing that happened after, till I found my comrades, here, about me.’

‘Come,’ said Sebastian, ‘let us go to our posts — the moon is setting. Good night, lady!’

‘Aye, let us go,’ rejoined Roberto. ‘Good night, lady.’

‘Good night; the holy mother guard you!’ said Emily, as she closed her casement and retired to reflect upon the strange circumstance that had just occurred, connecting which with what had happened on former nights, she endeavoured to derive from the whole something more positive, than conjecture. But her imagination was inflamed, while her judgment was not enlightened, and the terrors of superstition again pervaded her mind.

CHAPTER IV

There is one within,
Besides the things, that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights, seen by the watch.

JULIUS CAESAR

In the morning, Emily found Madame Montoni nearly in the same condition, as on the preceding night; she had slept little, and that little had not refreshed her; she smiled on her niece, and seemed cheered by her presence, but spoke only a few words, and never named Montoni, who, however, soon after, entered the room. His wife, when she understood that he was there, appeared much agitated, but was entirely silent, till Emily rose from a chair at the bedside, when she begged, in a feeble voice, that she would not leave her.

The visit of Montoni was not to sooth his wife, whom he knew to be dying, or to console, or to ask her forgiveness, but to make a last effort to procure that signature, which would transfer her estates in Languedoc, after her death, to him rather than to Emily. This was a scene, that exhibited, on his part, his usual inhumanity, and, on that of Madame Montoni, a persevering spirit, contending with a feeble frame; while Emily repeatedly declared to him her willingness to resign all claim to those estates, rather than that the last hours of her aunt should be disturbed by contention. Montoni, however, did not leave the room, till his wife, exhausted by the obstinate dispute, had fainted, and she lay so long insensible, that Emily began to fear that the spark of life was extinguished. At length, she revived, and, looking feebly up at her niece, whose tears were falling over her, made an effort to speak, but her words were unintelligible, and Emily again apprehended she was dying. Afterwards, however, she recovered her speech, and, being somewhat restored by a cordial, conversed for a considerable time, on the subject of her estates in France, with clearness and precision. She directed her niece where to find some papers relative to them, which she had hitherto concealed from the search of Montoni, and earnestly charged her never to suffer these papers to escape her.

Soon after this conversation, Madame Montoni sunk into a dose, and continued slumbering, till evening, when she seemed better than she had been since her removal from the turret. Emily never left her, for a moment, till long after midnight, and even then would not have quitted the

room, had not her aunt entreated, that she would retire to rest. She then obeyed, the more willingly, because her patient appeared somewhat recruited by sleep; and, giving Annette the same injunction, as on the preceding night, she withdrew to her own apartment. But her spirits were wakeful and agitated, and, finding it impossible to sleep, she determined to watch, once more, for the mysterious appearance, that had so much interested and alarmed her.

It was now the second watch of the night, and about the time when the figure had before appeared. Emily heard the passing steps of the sentinels, on the rampart, as they changed guard; and, when all was again silent, she took her station at the casement, leaving her lamp in a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice from without. The moon gave a faint and uncertain light, for heavy vapours surrounded it, and, often rolling over the disk, left the scene below in total darkness. It was in one of these moments of obscurity, that she observed a small and lambent flame, moving at some distance on the terrace. While she gazed, it disappeared, and, the moon again emerging from the lurid and heavy thunder clouds, she turned her attention to the heavens, where the vivid lightnings darted from cloud to cloud, and flashed silently on the woods below. She loved to catch, in the momentary gleam, the gloomy landscape. Sometimes, a cloud opened its light upon a distant mountain, and, while the sudden splendour illumined all its recesses of rock and wood, the rest of the scene remained in deep shadow; at others, partial features of the castle were revealed by the glimpse — the antient arch leading to the east rampart, the turret above, or the fortifications beyond; and then, perhaps, the whole edifice with all its towers, its dark massy walls and pointed casements would appear, and vanish in an instant.

Emily, looking again upon the rampart, perceived the flame she had seen before; it moved onward; and, soon after, she thought she heard a footstep. The light appeared and disappeared frequently, while, as she watched, it glided under her casements, and, at the same instant, she was certain, that a footstep passed, but the darkness did not permit her to distinguish any object except the flame. It moved away, and then, by a gleam of lightning, she perceived some person on the terrace. All the anxieties of the preceding night returned. This person advanced, and the playing flame alternately appeared and vanished. Emily wished to speak, to end her

doubts, whether this figure were human or supernatural; but her courage failed as often as she attempted utterance, till the light moved again under the casement, and she faintly demanded, who passed.

‘A friend,’ replied a voice.

‘What friend?’ said Emily, somewhat encouraged ‘who are you, and what is that light you carry?’

‘I am Anthonio, one of the Signor’s soldiers,’ replied the voice.

‘And what is that tapering light you bear?’ said Emily, ‘see how it darts upwards, — and now it vanishes!’

‘This light, lady,’ said the soldier, ‘has appeared to-night as you see it, on the point of my lance, ever since I have been on watch; but what it means I cannot tell.’

‘This is very strange!’ said Emily.

‘My fellow-guard,’ continued the man, ‘has the same flame on his arms; he says he has sometimes seen it before. I never did; I am but lately come to the castle, for I have not been long a soldier.’

‘How does your comrade account for it?’ said Emily.

‘He says it is an omen, lady, and bodes no good.’

‘And what harm can it bode?’ rejoined Emily.

‘He knows not so much as that, lady.’

Whether Emily was alarmed by this omen, or not, she certainly was relieved from much terror by discovering this man to be only a soldier on duty, and it immediately occurred to her, that it might be he, who had occasioned so much alarm on the preceding night. There were, however, some circumstances, that still required explanation. As far as she could judge by the faint moonlight, that had assisted her observation, the figure she had seen did not resemble this man either in shape or size; besides, she was certain it had carried no arms. The silence of its steps, if steps it had, the moaning sounds, too, which it had uttered, and its strange disappearance, were circumstances of mysterious import, that did not apply, with probability, to a soldier engaged in the duty of his guard.

She now enquired of the sentinel, whether he had seen any person besides his fellow watch, walking on the terrace, about midnight; and then briefly related what she had herself observed.

‘I was not on guard that night, lady,’ replied the man, ‘but I heard of what happened. There are amongst us, who believe strange things. Strange

stories, too, have long been told of this castle, but it is no business of mine to repeat them; and, for my part, I have no reason to complain; our Chief does nobly by us.'

'I commend your prudence,' said Emily. 'Good night, and accept this from me,' she added, throwing him a small piece of coin, and then closing the casement to put an end to the discourse.

When he was gone, she opened it again, listened with a gloomy pleasure to the distant thunder, that began to murmur among the mountains, and watched the arrowy lightnings, which broke over the remoter scene. The pealing thunder rolled onward, and then, reverbed by the mountains, other thunder seemed to answer from the opposite horizon; while the accumulating clouds, entirely concealing the moon, assumed a red sulphureous tinge, that foretold a violent storm.

Emily remained at her casement, till the vivid lightning, that now, every instant, revealed the wide horizon and the landscape below, made it no longer safe to do so, and she went to her couch; but, unable to compose her mind to sleep, still listened in silent awe to the tremendous sounds, that seemed to shake the castle to its foundation.

She had continued thus for a considerable time, when, amidst the uproar of the storm, she thought she heard a voice, and, raising herself to listen, saw the chamber door open, and Annette enter with a countenance of wild affright.

'She is dying, ma'amselle, my lady is dying!' said she.

Emily started up, and ran to Madame Montoni's room. When she entered, her aunt appeared to have fainted, for she was quite still, and insensible; and Emily with a strength of mind, that refused to yield to grief, while any duty required her activity, applied every means that seemed likely to restore her. But the last struggle was over — she was gone for ever.

When Emily perceived, that all her efforts were ineffectual, she interrogated the terrified Annette, and learned, that Madame Montoni had fallen into a doze soon after Emily's departure, in which she had continued, until a few minutes before her death.

'I wondered, ma'amselle,' said Annette, 'what was the reason my lady did not seem frightened at the thunder, when I was so terrified, and I went

often to the bed to speak to her, but she appeared to be asleep; till presently I heard a strange noise, and, on going to her, saw she was dying.'

Emily, at this recital, shed tears. She had no doubt but that the violent change in the air, which the tempest produced, had effected this fatal one, on the exhausted frame of Madame Montoni.

After some deliberation, she determined that Montoni should not be informed of this event till the morning, for she considered, that he might, perhaps, utter some inhuman expressions, such as in the present temper of her spirits she could not bear. With Annette alone, therefore, whom she encouraged by her own example, she performed some of the last solemn offices for the dead, and compelled herself to watch during the night, by the body of her deceased aunt. During this solemn period, rendered more awful by the tremendous storm that shook the air, she frequently addressed herself to Heaven for support and protection, and her pious prayers, we may believe, were accepted of the God, that giveth comfort.

CHAPTER V

The midnight clock has toll’d; and hark, the bell
Of Death beats slow! heard ye the note profound?
It pauses now; and now, with rising knell,
Flings to the hollow gale its sullen sound.

MASON

When Montoni was informed of the death of his wife, and considered that she had died without giving him the signature so necessary to the accomplishment of his wishes, no sense of decency restrained the expression of his resentment. Emily anxiously avoided his presence, and watched, during two days and two nights, with little intermission, by the corpse of her late aunt. Her mind deeply impressed with the unhappy fate of this object, she forgot all her faults, her unjust and imperious conduct to herself; and, remembering only her sufferings, thought of her only with tender compassion. Sometimes, however, she could not avoid musing upon the strange infatuation that had proved so fatal to her aunt, and had involved herself in a labyrinth of misfortune, from which she saw no means of escaping, — the marriage with Montoni. But, when she considered this circumstance, it was ‘more in sorrow than in anger,’ — more for the purpose of indulging lamentation, than reproach.

In her pious cares she was not disturbed by Montoni, who not only avoided the chamber, where the remains of his wife were laid, but that part of the castle adjoining to it, as if he had apprehended a contagion in death. He seemed to have given no orders respecting the funeral, and Emily began to fear he meant to offer a new insult to the memory of Madame Montoni; but from this apprehension she was relieved, when, on the evening of the second day, Annette informed her, that the interment was to take place that night. She knew, that Montoni would not attend; and it was so very grievous to her to think that the remains of her unfortunate aunt would pass to the grave without one relative, or friend to pay them the last decent rites, that she determined to be deterred by no considerations for herself, from observing this duty. She would otherwise have shrunk from the circumstance of following them to the cold vault, to which they were to be carried by men, whose air and countenances seemed to stamp them for murderers, at the midnight hour of silence and privacy, which Montoni had chosen for committing, if possible, to oblivion the reliques of a woman, whom his harsh conduct had, at least, contributed to destroy.

Emily, shuddering with emotions of horror and grief, assisted by Annette, prepared the corpse for interment; and, having wrapt it in cerements, and covered it with a winding-sheet, they watched beside it, till past midnight, when they heard the approaching footsteps of the men, who were to lay it in its earthy bed. It was with difficulty, that Emily overcame her emotion, when, the door of the chamber being thrown open, their gloomy countenances were seen by the glare of the torch they carried, and two of them, without speaking, lifted the body on their shoulders, while the third preceding them with the light, descended through the castle towards the grave, which was in the lower vault of the chapel within the castle walls.

They had to cross two courts, towards the east wing of the castle, which, adjoining the chapel, was, like it, in ruins: but the silence and gloom of these courts had now little power over Emily's mind, occupied as it was, with more mournful ideas; and she scarcely heard the low and dismal hooting of the night-birds, that roosted among the ivyed battlements of the ruin, or perceived the still flittings of the bat, which frequently crossed her way. But, when, having entered the chapel, and passed between the mouldering pillars of the aisles, the bearers stopped at a flight of steps, that led down to a low arched door, and, their comrade having descended to unlock it, she saw imperfectly the gloomy abyss beyond; — saw the corpse of her aunt carried down these steps, and the ruffian-like figure, that stood with a torch at the bottom to receive it — all her fortitude was lost in emotions of inexpressible grief and terror. She turned to lean upon Annette, who was cold and trembling like herself, and she lingered so long on the summit of the flight, that the gleam of the torch began to die away on the pillars of the chapel, and the men were almost beyond her view. Then, the gloom around her awakening other fears, and a sense of what she considered to be her duty overcoming her reluctance, she descended to the vaults, following the echo of footsteps and the faint ray, that pierced the darkness, till the harsh grating of a distant door, that was opened to receive the corpse, again appalled her.

After the pause of a moment, she went on, and, as she entered the vaults, saw between the arches, at some distance, the men lay down the body near the edge of an open grave, where stood another of Montoni's men and a priest, whom she did not observe, till he began the burial service; then,

lifting her eyes from the ground, she saw the venerable figure of the friar, and heard him in a low voice, equally solemn and affecting, perform the service for the dead. At the moment, in which they let down the body into the earth, the scene was such as only the dark pencil of a Domenichino, perhaps, could have done justice to. The fierce features and wild dress of the condottieri, bending with their torches over the grave, into which the corpse was descending, were contrasted by the venerable figure of the monk, wrapt in long black garments, his cowl thrown back from his pale face, on which the light gleaming strongly shewed the lines of affliction softened by piety, and the few grey locks, which time had spared on his temples: while, beside him, stood the softer form of Emily, who leaned for support upon Annette; her face half averted, and shaded by a thin veil, that fell over her figure; and her mild and beautiful countenance fixed in grief so solemn as admitted not of tears, while she thus saw committed untimely to the earth her last relative and friend. The gleams, thrown between the arches of the vaults, where, here and there, the broken ground marked the spots in which other bodies had been recently interred, and the general obscurity beyond were circumstances, that alone would have led on the imagination of a spectator to scenes more horrible, than even that, which was pictured at the grave of the misguided and unfortunate Madame Montoni.

When the service was over, the friar regarded Emily with attention and surprise, and looked as if he wished to speak to her, but was restrained by the presence of the condottieri, who, as they now led the way to the courts, amused themselves with jokes upon his holy order, which he endured in silence, demanding only to be conducted safely to his convent, and to which Emily listened with concern and even horror. When they reached the court, the monk gave her his blessing, and, after a lingering look of pity, turned away to the portal, whither one of the men carried a torch; while Annette, lighting another, preceded Emily to her apartment. The appearance of the friar and the expression of tender compassion, with which he had regarded her, had interested Emily, who, though it was at her earnest supplication, that Montoni had consented to allow a priest to perform the last rites for his deceased wife, knew nothing concerning this person, till Annette now informed her, that he belonged to a monastery, situated among the mountains at a few miles distance. The Superior, who

regarded Montoni and his associates, not only with aversion, but with terror, had probably feared to offend him by refusing his request, and had, therefore, ordered a monk to officiate at the funeral, who, with the meek spirit of a christian, had overcome his reluctance to enter the walls of such a castle, by the wish of performing what he considered to be his duty, and, as the chapel was built on consecrated ground, had not objected to commit to it the remains of the late unhappy Madame Montoni.

Several days passed with Emily in total seclusion, and in a state of mind partaking both of terror for herself, and grief for the departed. She, at length, determined to make other efforts to persuade Montoni to permit her return to France. Why he should wish to detain her, she could scarcely dare to conjecture; but it was too certain that he did so, and the absolute refusal he had formerly given to her departure allowed her little hope, that he would now consent to it. But the horror, which his presence inspired, made her defer, from day to day, the mention of this subject; and at last she was awakened from her inactivity only by a message from him, desiring her attendance at a certain hour. She began to hope he meant to resign, now that her aunt was no more, the authority he had usurped over her; till she recollected, that the estates, which had occasioned so much contention, were now hers, and she then feared Montoni was about to employ some stratagem for obtaining them, and that he would detain her his prisoner, till he succeeded. This thought, instead of overcoming her with despondency, roused all the latent powers of her fortitude into action; and the property, which she would willingly have resigned to secure the peace of her aunt, she resolved, that no common sufferings of her own should ever compel her to give to Montoni. For Valancourt’s sake also she determined to preserve these estates, since they would afford that competency, by which she hoped to secure the comfort of their future lives. As she thought of this, she indulged the tenderness of tears, and anticipated the delight of that moment, when, with affectionate generosity, she might tell him they were his own. She saw the smile, that lighted up his features — the affectionate regard, which spoke at once his joy and thanks; and, at this instant, she believed she could brave any suffering, which the evil spirit of Montoni might be preparing for her. Remembering then, for the first time since her aunt’s death, the papers relative to the

estates in question, she determined to search for them, as soon as her interview with Montoni was over.

With these resolutions she met him at the appointed time, and waited to hear his intention before she renewed her request. With him were Orsino and another officer, and both were standing near a table, covered with papers, which he appeared to be examining.

‘I sent for you, Emily,’ said Montoni, raising his head, ‘that you might be a witness in some business, which I am transacting with my friend Orsino. All that is required of you will be to sign your name to this paper:’ he then took one up, hurried unintelligibly over some lines, and, laying it before her on the table, offered her a pen. She took it, and was going to write — when the design of Montoni came upon her mind like a flash of lightning; she trembled, let the pen fall, and refused to sign what she had not read. Montoni affected to laugh at her scruples, and, taking up the paper, again pretended to read; but Emily, who still trembled on perceiving her danger, and was astonished, that her own credulity had so nearly betrayed her, positively refused to sign any paper whatever. Montoni, for some time, persevered in affecting to ridicule this refusal; but, when he perceived by her steady perseverance, that she understood his design, he changed his manner, and bade her follow him to another room. There he told her, that he had been willing to spare himself and her the trouble of useless contest, in an affair, where his will was justice, and where she should find it law; and had, therefore, endeavoured to persuade, rather than to compel, her to the practice of her duty.

‘I, as the husband of the late Signora Montoni,’ he added, ‘am the heir of all she possessed; the estates, therefore, which she refused to me in her lifetime, can no longer be withheld, and, for your own sake, I would undeceive you, respecting a foolish assertion she once made to you in my hearing — that these estates would be yours, if she died without resigning them to me. She knew at that moment, she had no power to withhold them from me, after her decease; and I think you have more sense, than to provoke my resentment by advancing an unjust claim. I am not in the habit of flattering, and you will, therefore, receive, as sincere, the praise I bestow, when I say, that you possess an understanding superior to that of your sex; and that you have none of those contemptible foibles, that frequently mark the female character — such as avarice and the love of

power, which latter makes women delight to contradict and to tease, when they cannot conquer. If I understand your disposition and your mind, you hold in sovereign contempt these common failings of your sex.'

Montoni paused; and Emily remained silent and expecting; for she knew him too well, to believe he would condescend to such flattery, unless he thought it would promote his own interest; and, though he had forborne to name vanity among the foibles of women, it was evident, that he considered it to be a predominant one, since he designed to sacrifice to hers the character and understanding of her whole sex.

'Judging as I do,' resumed Montoni, 'I cannot believe you will oppose, where you know you cannot conquer, or, indeed, that you would wish to conquer, or be avaricious of any property, when you have not justice on your side. I think it proper, however, to acquaint you with the alternative. If you have a just opinion of the subject in question, you shall be allowed a safe conveyance to France, within a short period; but, if you are so unhappy as to be misled by the late assertion of the Signora, you shall remain my prisoner, till you are convinced of your error.'

Emily calmly said,

'I am not so ignorant, Signor, of the laws on this subject, as to be misled by the assertion of any person. The law, in the present instance, gives me the estates in question, and my own hand shall never betray my right.'

'I have been mistaken in my opinion of you, it appears,' rejoined Montoni, sternly. 'You speak boldly, and presumptuously, upon a subject, which you do not understand. For once, I am willing to pardon the conceit of ignorance; the weakness of your sex, too, from which, it seems, you are not exempt, claims some allowance; but, if you persist in this strain — you have every thing to fear from my justice.'

'From your justice, Signor,' rejoined Emily, 'I have nothing to fear — I have only to hope.'

Montoni looked at her with vexation, and seemed considering what to say. 'I find that you are weak enough,' he resumed, 'to credit the idle assertion I alluded to! For your own sake I lament this; as to me, it is of little consequence. Your credulity can punish only yourself; and I must pity the weakness of mind, which leads you to so much suffering as you are compelling me to prepare for you.'

‘You may find, perhaps, Signor,’ said Emily, with mild dignity, ‘that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression.’

‘You speak like a heroine,’ said Montoni, contemptuously; ‘we shall see whether you can suffer like one.’

Emily was silent, and he left the room.

Recollecting, that it was for Valancourt’s sake she had thus resisted, she now smiled complacently upon the threatened sufferings, and retired to the spot, which her aunt had pointed out as the repository of the papers, relative to the estates, where she found them as described; and, since she knew of no better place of concealment, than this, returned them, without examining their contents, being fearful of discovery, while she should attempt a perusal.

To her own solitary chamber she once more returned, and there thought again of the late conversation with Montoni, and of the evil she might expect from opposition to his will. But his power did not appear so terrible to her imagination, as it was wont to do: a sacred pride was in her heart, that taught it to swell against the pressure of injustice, and almost to glory in the quiet sufferance of ills, in a cause, which had also the interest of Valancourt for its object. For the first time, she felt the full extent of her own superiority to Montoni, and despised the authority, which, till now, she had only feared.

As she sat musing, a peal of laughter rose from the terrace, and, on going to the casement, she saw, with inexpressible surprise, three ladies, dressed in the gala habit of Venice, walking with several gentlemen below. She gazed in an astonishment that made her remain at the window, regardless of being observed, till the group passed under it; and, one of the strangers looking up, she perceived the features of Signora Livona, with whose manners she had been so much charmed, the day after her arrival at Venice, and who had been there introduced at the table of Montoni. This discovery occasioned her an emotion of doubtful joy; for it was matter of joy and comfort to know, that a person, of a mind so gentle, as that of Signora Livona seemed to be, was near her; yet there was something so extraordinary in her being at this castle, circumstanced as it now was, and evidently, by the gaiety of her air, with her own consent, that a very painful surmise arose, concerning her character. But the thought was so

shocking to Emily, whose affection the fascinating manners of the Signora had won, and appeared so improbable, when she remembered these manners, that she dismissed it almost instantly.

On Annette's appearance, however, she enquired, concerning these strangers; and the former was as eager to tell, as Emily was to learn.

'They are just come, ma'amselle,' said Annette, 'with two Signors from Venice, and I was glad to see such Christian faces once again. — But what can they mean by coming here? They must surely be stark mad to come freely to such a place as this! Yet they do come freely, for they seem merry enough, I am sure.'

'They were taken prisoners, perhaps?' said Emily.

'Taken prisoners!' exclaimed Annette; 'no, indeed, ma'amselle, not they. I remember one of them very well at Venice: she came two or three times, to the Signor's you know, ma'amselle, and it was said, but I did not believe a word of it — it was said, that the Signor liked her better than he should do. Then why, says I, bring her to my lady? Very true, said Ludovico; but he looked as if he knew more, too.'

Emily desired Annette would endeavour to learn who these ladies were, as well as all she could concerning them; and she then changed the subject, and spoke of distant France.

'Ah, ma'amselle! we shall never see it more!' said Annette, almost weeping.— 'I must come on my travels, forsooth!'

Emily tried to sooth and to cheer her, with a hope, in which she scarcely herself indulged.

'How — how, ma'amselle, could you leave France, and leave *Mons.* Valancourt, too?' said Annette, sobbing. 'I — I — am sure, if Ludovico had been in France, I would never have left it.'

'Why do you lament quitting France, then?' said Emily, trying to smile, 'since, if you had remained there, you would not have found Ludovico.'

'Ah, ma'amselle! I only wish I was out of this frightful castle, serving you in France, and I would care about nothing else!'

'Thank you, my good Annette, for your affectionate regard; the time will come, I hope, when you may remember the expression of that wish with pleasure.'

Annette departed on her business, and Emily sought to lose the sense of her own cares, in the visionary scenes of the poet; but she had again to

lament the irresistible force of circumstances over the taste and powers of the mind; and that it requires a spirit at ease to be sensible even to the abstract pleasures of pure intellect. The enthusiasm of genius, with all its pictured scenes, now appeared cold, and dim. As she mused upon the book before her, she involuntarily exclaimed, ‘Are these, indeed, the passages, that have so often given me exquisite delight? Where did the charm exist? — Was it in my mind, or in the imagination of the poet? It lived in each,’ said she, pausing. ‘But the fire of the poet is vain, if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own, however it may be inferior to his in power.’

Emily would have pursued this train of thinking, because it relieved her from more painful reflection, but she found again, that thought cannot always be controlled by will; and hers returned to the consideration of her own situation.

In the evening, not choosing to venture down to the ramparts, where she would be exposed to the rude gaze of Montoni’s associates, she walked for air in the gallery, adjoining her chamber; on reaching the further end of which she heard distant sounds of merriment and laughter. It was the wild uproar of riot, not the cheering gaiety of tempered mirth; and seemed to come from that part of the castle, where Montoni usually was. Such sounds, at this time, when her aunt had been so few days dead, particularly shocked her, consistent as they were with the late conduct of Montoni.

As she listened, she thought she distinguished female voices mingling with the laughter, and this confirmed her worst surmise, concerning the character of Signora Livona and her companions. It was evident, that they had not been brought hither by compulsion; and she beheld herself in the remote wilds of the Apennine, surrounded by men, whom she considered to be little less than ruffians, and their worst associates, amid scenes of vice, from which her soul recoiled in horror. It was at this moment, when the scenes of the present and the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution shook with dread. She thought she understood all the horrors, which Montoni was preparing for her, and shrunk from an encounter with such remorseless vengeance, as he could inflict. The disputed estates she now almost determined to yield at once, whenever he should again call upon her, that she might regain safety and freedom; but then, the remembrance of

Valancourt would steal to her heart, and plunge her into the distractions of doubt.

She continued walking in the gallery, till evening threw its melancholy twilight through the painted casements, and deepened the gloom of the oak wainscoting around her; while the distant perspective of the corridor was so much obscured, as to be discernible only by the glimmering window, that terminated it.

Along the vaulted halls and passages below, peals of laughter echoed faintly, at intervals, to this remote part of the castle, and seemed to render the succeeding stillness more dreary. Emily, however, unwilling to return to her more forlorn chamber, whither Annette was not yet come, still paced the gallery. As she passed the door of the apartment, where she had once dared to lift the veil, which discovered to her a spectacle so horrible, that she had never after remembered it, but with emotions of indescribable awe, this remembrance suddenly recurred. It now brought with it reflections more terrible, than it had yet done, which the late conduct of Montoni occasioned; and, hastening to quit the gallery, while she had power to do so, she heard a sudden step behind her. — It might be that of Annette; but, turning fearfully to look, she saw, through the gloom, a tall figure following her, and all the horrors of that chamber rushed upon her mind. In the next moment, she found herself clasped in the arms of some person, and heard a deep voice murmur in her ear.

When she had power to speak, or to distinguish articulated sounds, she demanded who detained her.

‘It is I,’ replied the voice— ‘Why are you thus alarmed?’

She looked on the face of the person who spoke, but the feeble light, that gleamed through the high casement at the end of the gallery, did not permit her to distinguish the features.

‘Whoever you are,’ said Emily, in a trembling voice, ‘for heaven’s sake let me go!’

‘My charming Emily,’ said the man, ‘why will you shut yourself up in this obscure place, when there is so much gaiety below? Return with me to the cedar parlour, where you will be the fairest ornament of the party; — you shall not repent the exchange.’

Emily disdained to reply, and still endeavoured to liberate herself.

‘Promise, that you will come,’ he continued, ‘and I will release you immediately; but first give me a reward for so doing.’

‘Who are you?’ demanded Emily, in a tone of mingled terror and indignation, while she still struggled for liberty— ‘who are you, that have the cruelty thus to insult me?’

‘Why call me cruel?’ said the man, ‘I would remove you from this dreary solitude to a merry party below. Do you not know me?’

Emily now faintly remembered, that he was one of the officers who were with Montoni when she attended him in the morning. ‘I thank you for the kindness of your intention,’ she replied, without appearing to understand him, ‘but I wish for nothing so much as that you would leave me.’

‘Charming Emily!’ said he, ‘give up this foolish whim for solitude, and come with me to the company, and eclipse the beauties who make part of it; you, only, are worthy of my love.’ He attempted to kiss her hand, but the strong impulse of her indignation gave her power to liberate herself, and she fled towards the chamber. She closed the door, before he reached it, having secured which, she sunk in a chair, overcome by terror and by the exertion she had made, while she heard his voice, and his attempts to open the door, without having the power to raise herself. At length, she perceived him depart, and had remained, listening, for a considerable time, and was somewhat revived by not hearing any sound, when suddenly she remembered the door of the private staircase, and that he might enter that way, since it was fastened only on the other side. She then employed herself in endeavouring to secure it, in the manner she had formerly done. It appeared to her, that Montoni had already commenced his scheme of vengeance, by withdrawing from her his protection, and she repented of the rashness, that had made her brave the power of such a man. To retain the estates seemed to be now utterly impossible, and to preserve her life, perhaps her honour, she resolved, if she should escape the horrors of this night, to give up all claims to the estates, on the morrow, provided Montoni would suffer her to depart from Udolpho.

When she had come to this decision, her mind became more composed, though she still anxiously listened, and often started at ideal sounds, that appeared to issue from the staircase.

Having sat in darkness for some hours, during all which time Annette did not appear, she began to have serious apprehensions for her; but, not daring to venture down into the castle, was compelled to remain in uncertainty, as to the cause of this unusual absence.

Emily often stole to the staircase door, to listen if any step approached, but still no sound alarmed her: determining, however, to watch, during the night, she once more rested on her dark and desolate couch, and bathed the pillow with innocent tears. She thought of her deceased parents and then of the absent Valancourt, and frequently called upon their names; for the profound stillness, that now reigned, was propitious to the musing sorrow of her mind.

While she thus remained, her ear suddenly caught the notes of distant music, to which she listened attentively, and, soon perceiving this to be the instrument she had formerly heard at midnight, she rose, and stepped softly to the casement, to which the sounds appeared to come from a lower room.

In a few moments, their soft melody was accompanied by a voice so full of pathos, that it evidently sang not of imaginary sorrows. Its sweet and peculiar tones she thought she had somewhere heard before; yet, if this was not fancy, it was, at most, a very faint recollection. It stole over her mind, amidst the anguish of her present suffering, like a celestial strain, soothing, and reassuring her;— ‘Pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter’s ear, when he awakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill.’*

(*Ossian. [A. R.])

But her emotion can scarcely be imagined, when she heard sung, with the taste and simplicity of true feeling, one of the popular airs of her native province, to which she had so often listened with delight, when a child, and which she had so often heard her father repeat! To this wellknown song, never, till now, heard but in her native country, her heart melted, while the memory of past times returned. The pleasant, peaceful scenes of Gascony, the tenderness and goodness of her parents, the taste and simplicity of her former life — all rose to her fancy, and formed a picture, so sweet and glowing, so strikingly contrasted with the scenes, the characters and the dangers, which now surrounded her — that her mind

could not bear to pause upon the retrospect, and shrunk at the acuteness of its own sufferings.

Her sighs were deep and convulsed; she could no longer listen to the strain, that had so often charmed her to tranquillity, and she withdrew from the casement to a remote part of the chamber. But she was not yet beyond the reach of the music; she heard the measure change, and the succeeding air called her again to the window, for she immediately recollected it to be the same she had formerly heard in the fishing-house in Gascony. Assisted, perhaps, by the mystery, which had then accompanied this strain, it had made so deep an impression on her memory, that she had never since entirely forgotten it; and the manner, in which it was now sung, convinced her, however unaccountable the circumstances appeared, that this was the same voice she had then heard. Surprise soon yielded to other emotions; a thought darted, like lightning, upon her mind, which discovered a train of hopes, that revived all her spirits. Yet these hopes were so new, so unexpected, so astonishing, that she did not dare to trust, though she could not resolve to discourage them. She sat down by the casement, breathless, and overcome with the alternate emotions of hope and fear; then rose again, leaned from the window, that she might catch a nearer sound, listened, now doubting and then believing, softly exclaimed the name of Valancourt, and then sunk again into the chair. Yes, it was possible, that Valancourt was near her, and she recollected circumstances, which induced her to believe it was his voice she had just heard. She remembered he had more than once said that the fishing-house, where she had formerly listened to this voice and air, and where she had seen pencilled sonnets, addressed to herself, had been his favourite haunt, before he had been made known to her; there, too, she had herself unexpectedly met him. It appeared, from these circumstances, more than probable, that he was the musician, who had formerly charmed her attention, and the author of the lines, which had expressed such tender admiration; — who else, indeed, could it be? She was unable, at that time, to form a conjecture, as to the writer, but, since her acquaintance with Valancourt, whenever he had mentioned the fishing-house to have been known to him, she had not scrupled to believe that he was the author of the sonnets.

As these considerations passed over her mind, joy, fear and tenderness contended at her heart; she leaned again from the casement to catch the

sounds, which might confirm, or destroy her hope, though she did not recollect to have ever heard him sing; but the voice, and the instrument, now ceased.

She considered for a moment whether she should venture to speak: then, not choosing, lest it should be he, to mention his name, and yet too much interested to neglect the opportunity of enquiring, she called from the casement, ‘Is that song from Gascony?’ Her anxious attention was not cheered by any reply; every thing remained silent. Her impatience increasing with her fears, she repeated the question; but still no sound was heard, except the sighings of the wind among the battlements above; and she endeavoured to console herself with a belief, that the stranger, whoever he was, had retired, before she had spoken, beyond the reach of her voice, which, it appeared certain, had Valancourt heard and recognized, he would instantly have replied to. Presently, however, she considered, that a motive of prudence, and not an accidental removal, might occasion his silence; but the surmise, that led to this reflection, suddenly changed her hope and joy to terror and grief; for, if Valancourt were in the castle, it was too probable, that he was here a prisoner, taken with some of his countrymen, many of whom were at that time engaged in the wars of Italy, or intercepted in some attempt to reach her. Had he even recollected Emily’s voice, he would have feared, in these circumstances, to reply to it, in the presence of the men, who guarded his prison.

What so lately she had eagerly hoped she now believed she dreaded; — dreaded to know, that Valancourt was near her; and, while she was anxious to be relieved from her apprehension for his safety, she still was unconscious, that a hope of soon seeing him, struggled with the fear.

She remained listening at the casement, till the air began to freshen, and one high mountain in the east to glimmer with the morning; when, wearied with anxiety, she retired to her couch, where she found it utterly impossible to sleep, for joy, tenderness, doubt and apprehension, distracted her during the whole night. Now she rose from the couch, and opened the casement to listen; then she would pace the room with impatient steps, and, at length, return with despondence to her pillow. Never did hours appear to move so heavily, as those of this anxious night; after which she hoped that Annette might appear, and conclude her present state of torturing suspense.

CHAPTER VI

might we but hear
The folded flocks penn’d in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
‘Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.

MILTON

In the morning, Emily was relieved from her fears for Annette, who came at an early hour.

‘Here were fine doings in the castle, last night, ma’amselle,’ said she, as soon as she entered the room,— ‘fine doings, indeed! Was you not frightened, ma’amselle, at not seeing me?’

‘I was alarmed both on your account and on my own,’ replied Emily— ‘What detained you?’

‘Aye, I said so, I told him so; but it would not do. It was not my fault, indeed, ma’amselle, for I could not get out. That rogue Ludovico locked me up again.’

‘Locked you up!’ said Emily, with displeasure, ‘Why do you permit Ludovico to lock you up?’

‘Holy Saints!’ exclaimed Annette, ‘how can I help it! If he will lock the door, ma’amselle, and take away the key, how am I to get out, unless I jump through the window? But that I should not mind so much, if the casements here were not all so high; one can hardly scramble up to them on the inside, and one should break one’s neck, I suppose, going down on the outside. But you know, I dare say, ma’am, what a hurly-burly the castle was in, last night; you must have heard some of the uproar.’

‘What, were they disputing, then?’ said Emily.

‘No, ma’amselle, nor fighting, but almost as good, for I believe there was not one of the Signors sober; and what is more, not one of those fine ladies sober, either. I thought, when I saw them first, that all those fine silks and fine veils, — why, ma’amselle, their veils were worked with silver! and fine trimmings — boded no good — I guessed what they were!’

‘Good God!’ exclaimed Emily, ‘what will become of me!’

‘Aye, ma’am, Ludovico said much the same thing of me. Good God! said he, Annette, what is to become of you, if you are to go running about the castle among all these drunken Signors?’

‘O! says I, for that matter, I only want to go to my young lady’s chamber, and I have only to go, you know, along the vaulted passage and

across the great hall and up the marble staircase and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle and I am in the corridor in a minute.' 'Are you so? says he, and what is to become of you, if you meet any of those noble cavaliers in the way?' 'Well, says I, if you think there is danger, then, go with me, and guard me; I am never afraid when you are by.' 'What! says he, when I am scarcely recovered of one wound, shall I put myself in the way of getting another? for if any of the cavaliers meet you, they will fall a-fighting with me directly. No, no, says he, I will cut the way shorter, than through the vaulted passage and up the marble staircase, and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle, for you shall stay here, Annette; you shall not go out of this room, to-night.' 'So, with that I says' —

'Well, well,' said Emily, impatiently, and anxious to enquire on another subject,— 'so he locked you up?'

'Yes, he did indeed, ma'amselle, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary; and Caterina and I and he staid there all night. And in a few minutes after I was not so vexed, for there came Signor Verezzi roaring along the passage, like a mad bull, and he mistook Ludovico's hall, for old Carlo's; so he tried to burst open the door, and called out for more wine, for that he had drunk all the flasks dry, and was dying of thirst. So we were all as still as night, that he might suppose there was nobody in the room; but the Signor was as cunning as the best of us, and kept calling out at the door, "Come forth, my antient hero!" said he, "here is no enemy at the gate, that you need hide yourself: come forth, my valorous Signor Steward!" Just then old Carlo opened his door, and he came with a flask in his hand; for, as soon as the Signor saw him, he was as tame as could be, and followed him away as naturally as a dog does a butcher with a piece of meat in his basket. All this I saw through the keyhole. Well, Annette, said Ludovico, jeeringly, shall I let you out now? O no, says I, I would not' —

'I have some questions to ask you on another subject,' interrupted Emily, quite wearied by this story. 'Do you know whether there are any prisoners in the castle, and whether they are confined at this end of the edifice?'

'I was not in the way, ma'amselle,' replied Annette, 'when the first party came in from the mountains, and the last party is not come back yet,

so I don’t know, whether there are any prisoners; but it is expected back to-night, or tomorrow, and I shall know then, perhaps.’

Emily enquired if she had ever heard the servants talk of prisoners.

‘Ah ma’amselle!’ said Annette archly, ‘now I dare say you are thinking of Monsieur Valancourt, and that he may have come among the armies, which, they say, are come from our country, to fight against this state, and that he has met with some of OUR people, and is taken captive. O Lord! how glad I should be, if it was so!’

‘Would you, indeed, be glad?’ said Emily, in a tone of mournful reproach.

‘To be sure I should, ma’am,’ replied Annette, ‘and would not you be glad too, to see Signor Valancourt? I don’t know any chevalier I like better, I have a very great regard for the Signor, truly.’

‘Your regard for him cannot be doubted,’ said Emily, ‘since you wish to see him a prisoner.’

‘Why no, ma’amselle, not a prisoner either; but one must be glad to see him, you know. And it was only the other night I dreamt — I dreamt I saw him drive into the castle-yard all in a coach and six, and dressed out, with a laced coat and a sword, like a lord as he is.’

Emily could not forbear smiling at Annette’s ideas of Valancourt, and repeated her enquiry, whether she had heard the servants talk of prisoners.

‘No, ma’amselle,’ replied she, ‘never; and lately they have done nothing but talk of the apparition, that has been walking about of a night on the ramparts, and that frightened the sentinels into fits. It came among them like a flash of fire, they say, and they all fell down in a row, till they came to themselves again; and then it was gone, and nothing to be seen but the old castle walls; so they helped one another up again as fast as they could. You would not believe, ma’amselle, though I shewed you the very cannon, where it used to appear.’

‘And are you, indeed, so simple, Annette,’ said Emily, smiling at this curious exaggeration of the circumstances she had witnessed, ‘as to credit these stories?’

‘Credit them, ma’amselle! why all the world could not persuade me out of them. Roberto and Sebastian and half a dozen more of them went into fits! To be sure, there was no occasion for that; I said, myself, there was no need of that, for, says I, when the enemy comes, what a pretty figure they

will cut, if they are to fall down in fits, all of a row! The enemy won't be so civil, perhaps, as to walk off, like the ghost, and leave them to help one another up, but will fall to, cutting and slashing, till he makes them all rise up dead men. No, no, says I, there is reason in all things: though I might have fallen down in a fit that was no rule for them, being, because it is no business of mine to look gruff, and fight battles.'

Emily endeavoured to correct the superstitious weakness of Annette, though she could not entirely subdue her own; to which the latter only replied, 'Nay, ma'amselle, you will believe nothing; you are almost as bad as the Signor himself, who was in a great passion when they told of what had happened, and swore that the first man, who repeated such nonsense, should be thrown into the dungeon under the east turret. This was a hard punishment too, for only talking nonsense, as he called it, but I dare say he had other reasons for calling it so, than you have, ma'am.'

Emily looked displeased, and made no reply. As she mused upon the recollected appearance, which had lately so much alarmed her, and considered the circumstances of the figure having stationed itself opposite to her casement, she was for a moment inclined to believe it was Valancourt, whom she had seen. Yet, if it was he, why did he not speak to her, when he had the opportunity of doing so — and, if he was a prisoner in the castle, and he could be here in no other character, how could he obtain the means of walking abroad on the rampart? Thus she was utterly unable to decide, whether the musician and the form she had observed, were the same, or, if they were, whether this was Valancourt. She, however, desired that Annette would endeavour to learn whether any prisoners were in the castle, and also their names.

'O dear, ma'amselle!' said Annette, 'I forget to tell you what you bade me ask about, the ladies, as they call themselves, who are lately come to Udolpho. Why that Signora Livona, that the Signor brought to see my late lady at Venice, is his mistress now, and was little better then, I dare say. And Ludovico says (but pray be secret, ma'am) that his excellenza introduced her only to impose upon the world, that had begun to make free with her character. So when people saw my lady notice her, they thought what they had heard must be scandal. The other two are the mistresses of Signor Verezzi and Signor Bertolini; and Signor Montoni invited them all to the castle; and so, yesterday, he gave a great entertainment; and there

they were, all drinking Tuscany wine and all sorts, and laughing and singing, till they made the castle ring again. But I thought they were dismal sounds, so soon after my poor lady's death too; and they brought to my mind what she would have thought, if she had heard them — but she cannot hear them now, poor soul! said I.'

Emily turned away to conceal her emotion, and then desired Annette to go, and make enquiry, concerning the prisoners, that might be in the castle, but conjured her to do it with caution, and on no account to mention her name, or that of Monsieur Valancourt.

'Now I think of it, ma'amselle,' said Annette, 'I do believe there are prisoners, for I overheard one of the Signor's men, yesterday, in the servants hall, talking something about ransoms, and saying what a fine thing it was for his excellenza to catch up men, and they were as good booty as any other, because of the ransoms. And the other man was grumbling, and saying it was fine enough for the Signor, but none so fine for his soldiers, because, said he, we don't go shares there.'

This information heightened Emily's impatience to know more, and Annette immediately departed on her enquiry.

The late resolution of Emily to resign her estates to Montoni, now gave way to new considerations; the possibility, that Valancourt was near her, revived her fortitude, and she determined to brave the threatened vengeance, at least, till she could be assured whether he was really in the castle. She was in this temper of mind, when she received a message from Montoni, requiring her attendance in the cedar parlour, which she obeyed with trembling, and, on her way thither, endeavoured to animate her fortitude with the idea of Valancourt.

Montoni was alone. 'I sent for you,' said he, 'to give you another opportunity of retracting your late mistaken assertions concerning the Languedoc estates. I will condescend to advise, where I may command. — If you are really deluded by an opinion, that you have any right to these estates, at least, do not persist in the error — an error, which you may perceive, too late, has been fatal to you. Dare my resentment no further, but sign the papers.'

'If I have no right in these estates, sir,' said Emily, 'of what service can it be to you, that I should sign any papers, concerning them? If the lands

are yours by law, you certainly may possess them, without my interference, or my consent.'

'I will have no more argument,' said Montoni, with a look that made her tremble. 'What had I but trouble to expect, when I condescended to reason with a baby! But I will be trifled with no longer: let the recollection of your aunt's sufferings, in consequence of her folly and obstinacy, teach you a lesson. — Sign the papers.'

Emily's resolution was for a moment awed: — she shrunk at the recollections he revived, and from the vengeance he threatened; but then, the image of Valancourt, who so long had loved her, and who was now, perhaps, so near her, came to her heart, and, together with the strong feelings of indignation, with which she had always, from her infancy, regarded an act of injustice, inspired her with a noble, though imprudent, courage.

'Sign the papers,' said Montoni, more impatiently than before.

'Never, sir,' replied Emily; 'that request would have proved to me the injustice of your claim, had I even been ignorant of my right.'

Montoni turned pale with anger, while his quivering lip and lurking eye made her almost repent the boldness of her speech.

'Then all my vengeance falls upon you,' he exclaimed, with an horrible oath. 'And think not it shall be delayed. Neither the estates in Languedoc, or Gascony, shall be yours; you have dared to question my right, — now dare to question my power. I have a punishment which you think not of; it is terrible! This night — this very night' —

'This night!' repeated another voice.

Montoni paused, and turned half round, but, seeming to recollect himself, he proceeded in a lower tone.

'You have lately seen one terrible example of obstinacy and folly; yet this, it appears, has not been sufficient to deter you. — I could tell you of others — I could make you tremble at the bare recital.'

He was interrupted by a groan, which seemed to rise from underneath the chamber they were in; and, as he threw a glance round it, impatience and rage flashed from his eyes, yet something like a shade of fear passed over his countenance. Emily sat down in a chair, near the door, for the various emotions she had suffered, now almost overcame her; but Montoni

paused scarcely an instant, and, commanding his features, resumed his discourse in a lower, yet sterner voice.

‘I say, I could give you other instances of my power and of my character, which it seems you do not understand, or you would not defy me. — I could tell you, that, when once my resolution is taken — but I am talking to a baby. Let me, however, repeat, that terrible as are the examples I could recite, the recital could not now benefit you; for, though your repentance would put an immediate end to opposition, it would not now appease my indignation. — I will have vengeance as well as justice.’

Another groan filled the pause which Montoni made.

‘Leave the room instantly!’ said he, seeming not to notice this strange occurrence. Without power to implore his pity, she rose to go, but found that she could not support herself; awe and terror overcame her, and she sunk again into the chair.

‘Quit my presence!’ cried Montoni. ‘This affectation of fear ill becomes the heroine who has just dared to brave my indignation.’

‘Did you hear nothing, Signor?’ said Emily, trembling, and still unable to leave the room.

‘I heard my own voice,’ rejoined Montoni, sternly.

‘And nothing else?’ said Emily, speaking with difficulty.— ‘There again! Do you hear nothing now?’

‘Obey my order,’ repeated Montoni. ‘And for these fool’s tricks — I will soon discover by whom they are practised.’

Emily again rose, and exerted herself to the utmost to leave the room, while Montoni followed her; but, instead of calling aloud to his servants to search the chamber, as he had formerly done on a similar occurrence, passed to the ramparts.

As, in her way to the corridor, she rested for a moment at an open casement, Emily saw a party of Montoni’s troops winding down a distant mountain, whom she noticed no further, than as they brought to her mind the wretched prisoners they were, perhaps, bringing to the castle. At length, having reached her apartment, she threw herself upon the couch, overcome with the new horrors of her situation. Her thoughts lost in tumult and perplexity, she could neither repent of, or approve, her late conduct; she could only remember, that she was in the power of a man, who had no principle of action — but his will; and the astonishment and

terrors of superstition, which had, for a moment, so strongly assailed her, now yielded to those of reason.

She was, at length, roused from the reverie, which engaged her, by a confusion of distant voices, and a clattering of hoofs, that seemed to come, on the wind, from the courts. A sudden hope, that some good was approaching, seized her mind, till she remembered the troops she had observed from the casement, and concluded this to be the party, which Annette had said were expected at Udolpho.

Soon after, she heard voices faintly from the halls, and the noise of horses' feet sunk away in the wind; silence ensued. Emily listened anxiously for Annette's step in the corridor, but a pause of total stillness continued, till again the castle seemed to be all tumult and confusion. She heard the echoes of many footsteps, passing to and fro in the halls and avenues below, and then busy tongues were loud on the rampart. Having hurried to her casement, she perceived Montoni, with some of his officers, leaning on the walls, and pointing from them; while several soldiers were employed at the further end of the rampart about some cannon; and she continued to observe them, careless of the passing time.

Annette at length appeared, but brought no intelligence of Valancourt, 'For, ma'amselle,' said she, 'all the people pretend to know nothing about any prisoners. But here is a fine piece of business! The rest of the party are just arrived, ma'am; they came scampering in, as if they would have broken their necks; one scarcely knew whether the man, or his horse would get within the gates first. And they have brought word — and such news! they have brought word, that a party of the enemy, as they call them, are coming towards the castle; so we shall have all the officers of justice, I suppose, besieging it! all those terrible-looking fellows one used to see at Venice.'

'Thank God!' exclaimed Emily, fervently, 'there is yet a hope left for me, then!'

'What mean you, ma'amselle? Do you wish to fall into the hands of those sad-looking men! Why I used to shudder as I passed them, and should have guessed what they were, if Ludovico had not told me.'

'We cannot be in worse hands than at present,' replied Emily, unguardedly; 'but what reason have you to suppose these are officers of justice?'

‘Why OUR people, ma’am, are all in such a fright, and a fuss; and I don’t know any thing but the fear of justice, that could make them so. I used to think nothing on earth could fluster them, unless, indeed, it was a ghost, or so; but now, some of them are for hiding down in the vaults under the castle; but you must not tell the Signor this, ma’amselle, and I overheard two of them talking — Holy Mother! what makes you look so sad, ma’amselle? You don’t hear what I say!’

‘Yes, I do, Annette; pray proceed.’

‘Well, ma’amselle, all the castle is in such hurly-burly. Some of the men are loading the cannon, and some are examining the great gates, and the walls all round, and are hammering and patching up, just as if all those repairs had never been made, that were so long about. But what is to become of me and you, ma’amselle, and Ludovico? O! when I hear the sound of the cannon, I shall die with fright. If I could but catch the great gate open for one minute, I would be even with it for shutting me within these walls so long! — it should never see me again.’

Emily caught the latter words of Annette. ‘O! if you could find it open, but for one moment!’ she exclaimed, ‘my peace might yet be saved!’ The heavy groan she uttered, and the wildness of her look, terrified Annette, still more than her words; who entreated Emily to explain the meaning of them, to whom it suddenly occurred, that Ludovico might be of some service, if there should be a possibility of escape, and who repeated the substance of what had passed between Montoni and herself, but conjured her to mention this to no person except to Ludovico. ‘It may, perhaps, be in his power,’ she added, ‘to effect our escape. Go to him, Annette, tell him what I have to apprehend, and what I have already suffered; but entreat him to be secret, and to lose no time in attempting to release us. If he is willing to undertake this he shall be amply rewarded. I cannot speak with him myself, for we might be observed, and then effectual care would be taken to prevent our flight. But be quick, Annette, and, above all, be discreet — I will await your return in this apartment.’

The girl, whose honest heart had been much affected by the recital, was now as eager to obey, as Emily was to employ her, and she immediately quitted the room.

Emily’s surprise increased, as she reflected upon Annette’s intelligence. ‘Alas!’ said she, ‘what can the officers of justice do against an armed

castle? these cannot be such.’ Upon further consideration, however, she concluded, that, Montoni’s bands having plundered the country round, the inhabitants had taken arms, and were coming with the officers of police and a party of soldiers, to force their way into the castle. ‘But they know not,’ thought she, ‘its strength, or the armed numbers within it. Alas! except from flight, I have nothing to hope!’

Montoni, though not precisely what Emily apprehended him to be — a captain of banditti — had employed his troops in enterprises not less daring, or less atrocious, than such a character would have undertaken. They had not only pillaged, whenever opportunity offered, the helpless traveller, but had attacked, and plundered the villas of several persons, which, being situated among the solitary recesses of the mountains, were totally unprepared for resistance. In these expeditions the commanders of the party did not appear, and the men, partly disguised, had sometimes been mistaken for common robbers, and, at others, for bands of the foreign enemy, who, at that period, invaded the country. But, though they had already pillaged several mansions, and brought home considerable treasures, they had ventured to approach only one castle, in the attack of which they were assisted by other troops of their own order; from this, however, they were vigorously repulsed, and pursued by some of the foreign enemy, who were in league with the besieged. Montoni’s troops fled precipitately towards Udolpho, but were so closely tracked over the mountains, that, when they reached one of the heights in the neighbourhood of the castle, and looked back upon the road, they perceived the enemy winding among the cliffs below, and at not more than a league distant. Upon this discovery, they hastened forward with increased speed, to prepare Montoni for the enemy; and it was their arrival, which had thrown the castle into such confusion and tumult.

As Emily awaited anxiously some information from below, she now saw from her casements a body of troops pour over the neighbouring heights; and, though Annette had been gone a very short time, and had a difficult and dangerous business to accomplish, her impatience for intelligence became painful: she listened; opened her door; and often went out upon the corridor to meet her.

At length, she heard a footstep approach her chamber; and, on opening the door, saw, not Annette, but old Carlo! New fears rushed upon her mind.

He said he came from the Signor, who had ordered him to inform her, that she must be ready to depart from Udolpho immediately, for that the castle was about to be besieged; and that mules were preparing to convey her, with her guides, to a place of safety.

‘Of safety!’ exclaimed Emily, thoughtlessly; ‘has, then, the Signor so much consideration for me?’

Carlo looked upon the ground, and made no reply. A thousand opposite emotions agitated Emily, successively, as she listened to old Carlo; those of joy, grief, distrust and apprehension, appeared, and vanished from her mind, with the quickness of lightning. One moment, it seemed impossible, that Montoni could take this measure merely for her preservation; and so very strange was his sending her from the castle at all, that she could attribute it only to the design of carrying into execution the new scheme of vengeance, with which he had menaced her. In the next instant, it appeared so desirable to quit the castle, under any circumstances, that she could not but rejoice in the prospect, believing that change must be for the better, till she remembered the probability of Valancourt being detained in it, when sorrow and regret usurped her mind, and she wished, much more fervently than she had yet done, that it might not be his voice which she had heard.

Carlo having reminded her, that she had no time to lose, for that the enemy were within sight of the castle, Emily entreated him to inform her whither she was to go; and, after some hesitation, he said he had received no orders to tell; but, on her repeating the question, replied, that he believed she was to be carried into Tuscany.’

‘To Tuscany!’ exclaimed Emily— ‘and why thither?’

Carlo answered, that he knew nothing further, than that she was to be lodged in a cottage on the borders of Tuscany, at the feet of the Apennines — ‘Not a day’s journey distant,’ said he.

Emily now dismissed him; and, with trembling hands, prepared the small package, that she meant to take with her; while she was employed about which Annette returned.

‘O ma’amselle!’ said she, ‘nothing can be done! Ludovico says the new porter is more watchful even than Barnardine was, and we might as well throw ourselves in the way of a dragon, as in his. Ludovico is almost as broken-hearted as you are, ma’am, on my account, he says, and I am sure I shall never live to hear the cannon fire twice!’

She now began to weep, but revived upon hearing of what had just occurred, and entreated Emily to take her with her.

‘That I will do most willingly,’ replied Emily, ‘if Signor Montoni permits it;’ to which Annette made no reply, but ran out of the room, and immediately sought Montoni, who was on the terrace, surrounded by his officers, where she began her petition. He sharply bade her go into the castle, and absolutely refused her request. Annette, however, not only pleaded for herself, but for Ludovico; and Montoni had ordered some of his men to take her from his presence, before she would retire.

In an agony of disappointment, she returned to Emily, who foreboded little good towards herself, from this refusal to Annette, and who, soon after, received a summons to repair to the great court, where the mules, with her guides, were in waiting. Emily here tried in vain to sooth the weeping Annette, who persisted in saying, that she should never see her dear young lady again; a fear, which her mistress secretly thought too well justified, but which she endeavoured to restrain, while, with apparent composure, she bade this affectionate servant farewell. Annette, however, followed to the courts, which were now thronged with people, busy in preparation for the enemy; and, having seen her mount her mule and depart, with her attendants, through the portal, turned into the castle and wept again.

Emily, meanwhile, as she looked back upon the gloomy courts of the castle, no longer silent as when she had first entered them, but resounding with the noise of preparation for their defence, as well as crowded with soldiers and workmen, hurrying to and fro; and, when she passed once more under the huge portcullis, which had formerly struck her with terror and dismay, and, looking round, saw no walls to confine her steps — felt, in spite of anticipation, the sudden joy of a prisoner, who unexpectedly finds himself at liberty. This emotion would not suffer her now to look impartially on the dangers that awaited her without; on mountains infested by hostile parties, who seized every opportunity for plunder; and on a journey commended under the guidance of men, whose countenances certainly did not speak favourably of their dispositions. In the present moments, she could only rejoice, that she was liberated from those walls, which she had entered with such dismal forebodings; and, remembering

the superstitious presentiment, which had then seized her, she could now smile at the impression it had made upon her mind.

As she gazed, with these emotions, upon the turrets of the castle, rising high over the woods, among which she wound, the stranger, whom she believed to be confined there, returned to her remembrance, and anxiety and apprehension, lest he should be Valancourt, again passed like a cloud upon her joy. She recollected every circumstance, concerning this unknown person, since the night, when she had first heard him play the song of her native province; — circumstances, which she had so often recollected, and compared before, without extracting from them any thing like conviction, and which still only prompted her to believe, that Valancourt was a prisoner at Udolpho. It was possible, however, that the men, who were her conductors, might afford her information, on this subject; but, fearing to question them immediately, lest they should be unwilling to discover any circumstance to her in the presence of each other, she watched for an opportunity of speaking with them separately.

Soon after, a trumpet echoed faintly from a distance; the guides stopped, and looked toward the quarter whence it came, but the thick woods, which surrounded them, excluding all view of the country beyond, one of the men rode on to the point of an eminence, that afforded a more extensive prospect, to observe how near the enemy, whose trumpet he guessed this to be, were advanced; the other, meanwhile, remained with Emily, and to him she put some questions, concerning the stranger at Udolpho. Ugo, for this was his name, said, that there were several prisoners in the castle, but he neither recollected their persons, or the precise time of their arrival, and could therefore give her no information. There was a surliness in his manner, as he spoke, that made it probable he would not have satisfied her enquiries, even if he could have done so.

Having asked him what prisoners had been taken, about the time, as nearly as she could remember, when she had first heard the music, ‘All that week,’ said Ugo, ‘I was out with a party, upon the mountains, and knew nothing of what was doing at the castle. We had enough upon our hands, we had warm work of it.’

Bertrand, the other man, being now returned, Emily enquired no further, and, when he had related to his companion what he had seen, they travelled on in deep silence; while Emily often caught, between the

opening woods, partial glimpses of the castle above — the west towers, whose battlements were now crowded with archers, and the ramparts below, where soldiers were seen hurrying along, or busy upon the walls, preparing the cannon.

Having emerged from the woods, they wound along the valley in an opposite direction to that, from whence the enemy were approaching. Emily now had a full view of Udolpho, with its gray walls, towers and terraces, high overtopping the precipices and the dark woods, and glittering partially with the arms of the condottieri, as the sun's rays, streaming through an autumnal cloud, glanced upon a part of the edifice, whose remaining features stood in darkened majesty. She continued to gaze, through her tears, upon walls that, perhaps, confined Valancourt, and which now, as the cloud floated away, were lighted up with sudden splendour, and then, as suddenly were shrouded in gloom; while the passing gleam fell on the wood-tops below, and heightened the first tints of autumn, that had begun to steal upon the foliage. The winding mountains, at length, shut Udolpho from her view, and she turned, with mournful reluctance, to other objects. The melancholy sighing of the wind among the pines, that waved high over the steeps, and the distant thunder of a torrent assisted her musings, and conspired with the wild scenery around, to diffuse over her mind emotions solemn, yet not unpleasing, but which were soon interrupted by the distant roar of cannon, echoing among the mountains. The sounds rolled along the wind, and were repeated in faint and fainter reverberation, till they sunk in sullen murmurs. This was a signal, that the enemy had reached the castle, and fear for Valancourt again tormented Emily. She turned her anxious eyes towards that part of the country, where the edifice stood, but the intervening heights concealed it from her view; still, however, she saw the tall head of a mountain, which immediately fronted her late chamber, and on this she fixed her gaze, as if it could have told her of all that was passing in the scene it overlooked. The guides twice reminded her, that she was losing time and that they had far to go, before she could turn from this interesting object, and, even when she again moved onward, she often sent a look back, till only its blue point, brightening in a gleam of sunshine, appeared peeping over other mountains.

The sound of the cannon affected Ugo, as the blast of the trumpet does the war-horse; it called forth all the fire of his nature; he was impatient to be in the midst of the fight, and uttered frequent execrations against Montoni for having sent him to a distance. The feelings of his comrade seemed to be very opposite, and adapted rather to the cruelties, than to the dangers of war.

Emily asked frequent questions, concerning the place of her destination, but could only learn, that she was going to a cottage in Tuscany; and, whenever she mentioned the subject, she fancied she perceived, in the countenances of these men, an expression of malice and cunning, that alarmed her.

It was afternoon, when they had left the castle. During several hours, they travelled through regions of profound solitude, where no bleat of sheep, or bark of watch-dog, broke on silence, and they were now too far off to hear even the faint thunder of the cannon. Towards evening, they wound down precipices, black with forests of cypress, pine and cedar, into a glen so savage and secluded, that, if Solitude ever had local habitation, this might have been ‘her place of dearest residence.’ To Emily it appeared a spot exactly suited for the retreat of banditti, and, in her imagination, she already saw them lurking under the brow of some projecting rock, whence their shadows, lengthened by the setting sun, stretched across the road, and warned the traveller of his danger. She shuddered at the idea, and, looking at her conductors, to observe whether they were armed, thought she saw in them the banditti she dreaded!

It was in this glen, that they proposed to alight, ‘For,’ said Ugo, ‘night will come on presently, and then the wolves will make it dangerous to stop.’ This was a new subject of alarm to Emily, but inferior to what she suffered from the thought of being left in these wilds, at midnight, with two such men as her present conductors. Dark and dreadful hints of what might be Montoni’s purpose in sending her hither, came to her mind. She endeavoured to dissuade the men from stopping, and enquired, with anxiety, how far they had yet to go.

‘Many leagues yet,’ replied Bertrand. ‘As for you, Signora, you may do as you please about eating, but for us, we will make a hearty supper, while we can. We shall have need of it, I warrant, before we finish our journey. The sun’s going down apace; let us alight under that rock, yonder.’

His comrade assented, and, turning the mules out of the road, they advanced towards a cliff, overhung with cedars, Emily following in trembling silence. They lifted her from her mule, and, having seated themselves on the grass, at the foot of the rocks, drew some homely fare from a wallet, of which Emily tried to eat a little, the better to disguise her apprehensions.

The sun was now sunk behind the high mountains in the west, upon which a purple haze began to spread, and the gloom of twilight to draw over the surrounding objects. To the low and sullen murmur of the breeze, passing among the woods, she no longer listened with any degree of pleasure, for it conspired with the wildness of the scene and the evening hour, to depress her spirits.

Suspense had so much increased her anxiety, as to the prisoner at Udolpho, that, finding it impracticable to speak alone with Bertrand, on that subject, she renewed her questions in the presence of Ugo; but he either was, or pretended to be entirely ignorant, concerning the stranger. When he had dismissed the question, he talked with Ugo on some subject, which led to the mention of Signor Orsino and of the affair that had banished him from Venice; respecting which Emily had ventured to ask a few questions. Ugo appeared to be well acquainted with the circumstances of that tragical event, and related some minute particulars, that both shocked and surprised her; for it appeared very extraordinary how such particulars could be known to any, but to persons, present when the assassination was committed.

‘He was of rank,’ said Bertrand, ‘or the State would not have troubled itself to enquire after his assassins. The Signor has been lucky hitherto; this is not the first affair of the kind he has had upon his hands; and to be sure, when a gentleman has no other way of getting redress — why he must take this.’

‘Aye,’ said Ugo, ‘and why is not this as good as another? This is the way to have justice done at once, without more ado. If you go to law, you must stay till the judges please, and may lose your cause, at last, Why the best way, then, is to make sure of your right, while you can, and execute justice yourself.’

‘Yes, yes,’ rejoined Bertrand, ‘if you wait till justice is done you — you may stay long enough. Why if I want a friend of mine properly served,

how am I to get my revenge? Ten to one they will tell me he is in the right, and I am in the wrong. Or, if a fellow has got possession of property, which I think ought to be mine, why I may wait, till I starve, perhaps, before the law will give it me, and then, after all, the judge may say — the estate is his. What is to be done then? — Why the case is plain enough, I must take it at last.'

Emily's horror at this conversation was heightened by a suspicion, that the latter part of it was pointed against herself, and that these men had been commissioned by Montoni to execute a similar kind of JUSTICE, in his cause.

'But I was speaking of Signor Orsino,' resumed Bertrand, 'he is one of those, who love to do justice at once. I remember, about ten years ago, the Signor had a quarrel with a cavaliero of Milan. The story was told me then, and it is still fresh in my head. They quarrelled about a lady, that the Signor liked, and she was perverse enough to prefer the gentleman of Milan, and even carried her whim so far as to marry him. This provoked the Signor, as well it might, for he had tried to talk reason to her a long while, and used to send people to serenade her, under her windows, of a night; and used to make verses about her, and would swear she was the handsomest lady in Milan — But all would not do — nothing would bring her to reason; and, as I said, she went so far at last, as to marry this other cavaliero. This made the Signor wrath, with a vengeance; he resolved to be even with her though, and he watched his opportunity, and did not wait long, for, soon after the marriage, they set out for Padua, nothing doubting, I warrant, of what was preparing for them. The cavaliero thought, to be sure, he was to be called to no account, but was to go off triumphant; but he was soon made to know another sort of story.'

'What then, the lady had promised to have Signor Orsino?' said Ugo.

'Promised! No,' replied Bertrand, 'she had not wit enough even to tell him she liked him, as I heard, but the contrary, for she used to say, from the first, she never meant to have him. And this was what provoked the Signor, so, and with good reason, for, who likes to be told that he is disagreeable? and this was saying as good. It was enough to tell him this; she need not have gone, and married another.'

'What, she married, then, on purpose to plague the Signor?' said Ugo.

‘I don’t know as for that,’ replied Bertrand, ‘they said, indeed, that she had had a regard for the other gentleman a great while; but that is nothing to the purpose, she should not have married him, and then the Signor would not have been so much provoked. She might have expected what was to follow; it was not to be supposed he would bear her ill usage tamely, and she might thank herself for what happened. But, as I said, they set out for Padua, she and her husband, and the road lay over some barren mountains like these. This suited the Signor’s purpose well. He watched the time of their departure, and sent his men after them, with directions what to do. They kept their distance, till they saw their opportunity, and this did not happen, till the second day’s journey, when, the gentleman having sent his servants forward to the next town, may be, to have horses in readiness, the Signor’s men quickened their pace, and overtook the carriage, in a hollow, between two mountains, where the woods prevented the servants from seeing what passed, though they were then not far off. When we came up, we fired our tromboni, but missed.’

Emily turned pale, at these words, and then hoped she had mistaken them; while Bertrand proceeded:

‘The gentleman fired again, but he was soon made to alight, and it was as he turned to call his people, that he was struck. It was the most dexterous feat you ever saw — he was struck in the back with three stillettos at once. He fell, and was dispatched in a minute; but the lady escaped, for the servants had heard the firing, and came up before she could be taken care of. “Bertrand,” said the Signor, when his men returned’ —

‘Bertrand!’ exclaimed Emily, pale with horror, on whom not a syllable of this narrative had been lost.

‘Bertrand, did I say?’ rejoined the man, with some confusion— ‘No, Giovanni. But I have forgot where I was;— “Bertrand,” said the Signor’ —

‘Bertrand, again!’ said Emily, in a faltering voice, ‘Why do you repeat that name?’

Bertrand swore. ‘What signifies it,’ he proceeded, ‘what the man was called — Bertrand, or Giovanni — or Roberto? it’s all one for that. You have put me out twice with that — question. “Bertrand,” or Giovanni — or what you will— “Bertrand,” said the Signor, “if your comrades had done their duty, as well as you, I should not have lost the lady. Go, my honest

fellow, and be happy with this.” He game him a purse of gold — and little enough too, considering the service he had done him.’

‘Aye, aye,’ said Ugo, ‘little enough — little enough.’

Emily now breathed with difficulty, and could scarcely support herself. When first she saw these men, their appearance and their connection with Montoni had been sufficient to impress her with distrust; but now, when one of them had betrayed himself to be a murderer, and she saw herself, at the approach of night, under his guidance, among wild and solitary mountains, and going she scarcely knew whither, the most agonizing terror seized her, which was the less supportable from the necessity she found herself under of concealing all symptoms of it from her companions. Reflecting on the character and the menaces of Montoni, it appeared not improbable, that he had delivered her to them, for the purpose of having her murdered, and of thus securing to himself, without further opposition, or delay, the estates, for which he had so long and so desperately contended. Yet, if this was his design, there appeared no necessity for sending her to such a distance from the castle; for, if any dread of discovery had made him unwilling to perpetrate the deed there, a much nearer place might have sufficed for the purpose of concealment. These considerations, however, did not immediately occur to Emily, with whom so many circumstances conspired to rouse terror, that she had no power to oppose it, or to enquire coolly into its grounds; and, if she had done so, still there were many appearances which would too well have justified her most terrible apprehensions. She did not now dare to speak to her conductors, at the sound of whose voices she trembled; and when, now and then, she stole a glance at them, their countenances, seen imperfectly through the gloom of evening, served to confirm her fears.

The sun had now been set some time; heavy clouds, whose lower skirts were tinged with sulphureous crimson, lingered in the west, and threw a reddish tint upon the pine forests, which sent forth a solemn sound, as the breeze rolled over them. The hollow moan struck upon Emily’s heart, and served to render more gloomy and terrific every object around her, — the mountains, shaded in twilight — the gleaming torrent, hoarsely roaring — the black forests, and the deep glen, broken into rocky recesses, high overshadowed by cypress and sycamore and winding into long obscurity. To this glen, Emily, as she sent forth her anxious eye, thought there was no

end; no hamlet, or even cottage, was seen, and still no distant bark of watch dog, or even faint, far-off halloo came on the wind. In a tremulous voice, she now ventured to remind the guides, that it was growing late, and to ask again how far they had to go: but they were too much occupied by their own discourse to attend to her question, which she forbore to repeat, lest it should provoke a surly answer. Having, however, soon after, finished their supper, the men collected the fragments into their wallet, and proceeded along this winding glen, in gloomy silence; while Emily again mused upon her own situation, and concerning the motives of Montoni for involving her in it. That it was for some evil purpose towards herself, she could not doubt; and it seemed, that, if he did not intend to destroy her, with a view of immediately seizing her estates, he meant to reserve her a while in concealment, for some more terrible design, for one that might equally gratify his avarice and still more his deep revenge. At this moment, remembering Signor Brochio and his behaviour in the corridor, a few preceding nights, the latter supposition, horrible as it was, strengthened in her belief. Yet, why remove her from the castle, where deeds of darkness had, she feared, been often executed with secrecy? — from chambers, perhaps

With many a foul, and midnight murder stain’d.

The dread of what she might be going to encounter was now so excessive, that it sometimes threatened her senses; and, often as she went, she thought of her late father and of all he would have suffered, could he have foreseen the strange and dreadful events of her future life; and how anxiously he would have avoided that fatal confidence, which committed his daughter to the care of a woman so weak as was Madame Montoni. So romantic and improbable, indeed, did her present situation appear to Emily herself, particularly when she compared it with the repose and beauty of her early days, that there were moments, when she could almost have believed herself the victim of frightful visions, glaring upon a disordered fancy.

Restrained by the presence of her guides from expressing her terrors, their acuteness was, at length, lost in gloomy despair. The dreadful view of what might await her hereafter rendered her almost indifferent to the surrounding dangers. She now looked, with little emotion, on the wild dingles, and the gloomy road and mountains, whose outlines were only

distinguishable through the dusk; — objects, which but lately had affected her spirits so much, as to awaken horrid views of the future, and to tinge these with their own gloom.

It was now so nearly dark, that the travellers, who proceeded only by the slowest pace, could scarcely discern their way. The clouds, which seemed charged with thunder, passed slowly along the heavens, shewing, at intervals, the trembling stars; while the groves of cypress and sycamore, that overhung the rocks, waved high in the breeze, as it swept over the glen, and then rushed among the distant woods. Emily shivered as it passed.

‘Where is the torch?’ said Ugo, ‘It grows dark.’

‘Not so dark yet,’ replied Bertrand, ‘but we may find our way, and ‘tis best not light the torch, before we can help, for it may betray us, if any straggling party of the enemy is abroad.’

Ugo muttered something, which Emily did not understand, and they proceeded in darkness, while she almost wished, that the enemy might discover them; for from change there was something to hope, since she could scarcely imagine any situation more dreadful than her present one.

As they moved slowly along, her attention was surprised by a thin tapering flame, that appeared, by fits, at the point of the pike, which Bertrand carried, resembling what she had observed on the lance of the sentinel, the night Madame Montoni died, and which he had said was an omen. The event immediately following it appeared to justify the assertion, and a superstitious impression had remained on Emily’s mind, which the present appearance confirmed. She thought it was an omen of her own fate, and watched it successively vanish and return, in gloomy silence, which was at length interrupted by Bertrand.

‘Let us light the torch,’ said he, ‘and get under shelter of the woods; — a storm is coming on — look at my lance.’

He held it forth, with the flame tapering at its point.*

(*See the Abbe Berthelon on Electricity. [A. R.])

‘Aye,’ said Ugo, ‘you are not one of those, that believe in omens: we have left cowards at the castle, who would turn pale at such a sight. I have often seen it before a thunder storm, it is an omen of that, and one is coming now, sure enough. The clouds flash fast already.’

Emily was relieved by this conversation from some of the terrors of superstition, but those of reason increased, as, waiting while Ugo searched for a flint, to strike fire, she watched the pale lightning gleam over the woods they were about to enter, and illumine the harsh countenances of her companions. Ugo could not find a flint, and Bertrand became impatient, for the thunder sounded hollowly at a distance, and the lightning was more frequent. Sometimes, it revealed the nearer recesses of the woods, or, displaying some opening in their summits, illumined the ground beneath with partial splendour, the thick foliage of the trees preserving the surrounding scene in deep shadow.

At length, Ugo found a flint, and the torch was lighted. The men then dismounted, and, having assisted Emily, led the mules towards the woods, that skirted the glen, on the left, over broken ground, frequently interrupted with brush-wood and wild plants, which she was often obliged to make a circuit to avoid.

She could not approach these woods, without experiencing keener sense of her danger. Their deep silence, except when the wind swept among their branches, and impenetrable glooms shewn partially by the sudden flash, and then, by the red glare of the torch, which served only to make ‘darkness visible,’ were circumstances, that contributed to renew all her most terrible apprehensions; she thought, too, that, at this moment, the countenances of her conductors displayed more than their usual fierceness, mingled with a kind of lurking exultation, which they seemed endeavouring to disguise. To her affrighted fancy it occurred, that they were leading her into these woods to complete the will of Montoni by her murder. The horrid suggestion called a groan from her heart, which surprised her companions, who turned round quickly towards her, and she demanded why they led her thither, beseeching them to continue their way along the open glen, which she represented to be less dangerous than the woods, in a thunder storm.

‘No, no,’ said Bertrand, ‘we know best where the danger lies. See how the clouds open over our heads. Besides, we can glide under cover of the woods with less hazard of being seen, should any of the enemy be wandering this way. By holy St. Peter and all the rest of them, I’ve as stout a heart as the best, as many a poor devil could tell, if he were alive again — but what can we do against numbers?’

‘What are you whining about?’ said Ugo, contemptuously, ‘who fears numbers! Let them come, though they were as many, as the Signor’s castle could hold; I would shew the knaves what fighting is. For you — I would lay you quietly in a dry ditch, where you might peep out, and see me put the rogues to flight. — Who talks of fear!’

Bertrand replied, with an horrible oath, that he did not like such jesting, and a violent altercation ensued, which was, at length, silenced by the thunder, whose deep volley was heard afar, rolling onward till it burst over their heads in sounds, that seemed to shake the earth to its centre. The ruffians paused, and looked upon each other. Between the boles of the trees, the blue lightning flashed and quivered along the ground, while, as Emily looked under the boughs, the mountains beyond, frequently appeared to be clothed in livid flame. At this moment, perhaps, she felt less fear of the storm, than did either of her companions, for other terrors occupied her mind.

The men now rested under an enormous chesnut-tree, and fixed their pikes in the ground, at some distance, on the iron points of which Emily repeatedly observed the lightning play, and then glide down them into the earth.

‘I would we were well in the Signor’s castle!’ said Bertrand, ‘I know not why he should send us on this business. Hark! how it rattles above, there! I could almost find in my heart to turn priest, and pray. Ugo, hast got a rosary?’

‘No,’ replied Ugo, ‘I leave it to cowards like thee, to carry rosaries — I, carry a sword.’

‘And much good may it do thee in fighting against the storm!’ said Bertrand.

Another peal, which was reverberated in tremendous echoes among the mountains, silenced them for a moment. As it rolled away, Ugo proposed going on. ‘We are only losing time here,’ said he, ‘for the thick boughs of the woods will shelter us as well as this chesnut-tree.’

They again led the mules forward, between the boles of the trees, and over pathless grass, that concealed their high knotted roots. The rising wind was now heard contending with the thunder, as it rushed furiously among the branches above, and brightened the red flame of the torch, which threw a stronger light forward among the woods, and shewed their

gloomy recesses to be suitable resorts for the wolves, of which Ugo had formerly spoken.

At length, the strength of the wind seemed to drive the storm before it, for the thunder rolled away into distance, and was only faintly heard. After travelling through the woods for nearly an hour, during which the elements seemed to have returned to repose, the travellers, gradually ascending from the glen, found themselves upon the open brow of a mountain, with a wide valley, extending in misty moonlight, at their feet, and above, the blue sky, trembling through the few thin clouds, that lingered after the storm, and were sinking slowly to the verge of the horizon.

Emily's spirits, now that she had quitted the woods, began to revive; for she considered, that, if these men had received an order to destroy her, they would probably have executed their barbarous purpose in the solitary wild, from whence they had just emerged, where the deed would have been shrouded from every human eye. Reassured by this reflection, and by the quiet demeanour of her guides, Emily, as they proceeded silently, in a kind of sheep track, that wound along the skirts of the woods, which ascended on the right, could not survey the sleeping beauty of the vale, to which they were declining, without a momentary sensation of pleasure. It seemed varied with woods, pastures, and sloping grounds, and was screened to the north and the east by an amphitheatre of the Apennines, whose outline on the horizon was here broken into varied and elegant forms; to the west and the south, the landscape extended indistinctly into the lowlands of Tuscany.

'There is the sea yonder,' said Bertrand, as if he had known that Emily was examining the twilight view, 'yonder in the west, though we cannot see it.'

Emily already perceived a change in the climate, from that of the wild and mountainous tract she had left; and, as she continued descending, the air became perfumed by the breath of a thousand nameless flowers among the grass, called forth by the late rain. So soothingly beautiful was the scene around her, and so strikingly contrasted to the gloomy grandeur of those, to which she had long been confined, and to the manners of the people, who moved among them, that she could almost have fancied herself again at La Vallee, and, wondering why Montoni had sent her hither, could scarcely believe, that he had selected so enchanting a spot for

any cruel design. It was, however, probably not the spot, but the persons, who happened to inhabit it, and to whose care he could safely commit the execution of his plans, whatever they might be, that had determined his choice.

She now ventured again to enquire, whether they were near the place of their destination, and was answered by Ugo, that they had not far to go. ‘Only to the wood of chesnuts in the valley yonder,’ said he, ‘there, by the brook, that sparkles with the moon; I wish I was once at rest there, with a flask of good wine, and a slice of Tuscany bacon.’

Emily’s spirits revived, when she heard, that the journey was so nearly concluded, and saw the wood of chesnuts in an open part of the vale, on the margin of the stream.

In a short time, they reached the entrance of the wood, and perceived, between the twinkling leaves, a light, streaming from a distant cottage window. They proceeded along the edge of the brook to where the trees, crowding over it, excluded the moonbeams, but a long line of light, from the cottage above, was seen on its dark tremulous surface. Bertrand now stepped on first, and Emily heard him knock, and call loudly at the door. As she reached it, the small upper casement, where the light appeared, was unclosed by a man, who, having enquired what they wanted, immediately descended, let them into a neat rustic cot, and called up his wife to set refreshments before the travellers. As this man conversed, rather apart, with Bertrand, Emily anxiously surveyed him. He was a tall, but not robust, peasant, of a sallow complexion, and had a shrewd and cunning eye; his countenance was not of a character to win the ready confidence of youth, and there was nothing in his manner, that might conciliate a stranger.

Ugo called impatiently for supper, and in a tone as if he knew his authority here to be unquestionable. ‘I expected you an hour ago,’ said the peasant, ‘for I have had Signor Montoni’s letter these three hours, and I and my wife had given you up, and gone to bed. How did you fare in the storm?’

‘Ill enough,’ replied Ugo, ‘ill enough and we are like to fare ill enough here, too, unless you will make more haste. Get us more wine, and let us see what you have to eat.’

The peasant placed before them all, that his cottage afforded — ham, wine, figs, and grapes of such size and flavour, as Emily had seldom tasted.

After taking refreshment, she was shewn by the peasant's wife to her little bedchamber, where she asked some questions concerning Montoni, to which the woman, whose name was Dorina, gave reserved answers, pretending ignorance of his excellenza's intention in sending Emily hither, but acknowledging that her husband had been apprized of the circumstance. Perceiving, that she could obtain no intelligence concerning her destination, Emily dismissed Dorina, and retired to repose; but all the busy scenes of her past and the anticipated ones of the future came to her anxious mind, and conspired with the sense of her new situation to banish sleep.

CHAPTER VII

Was nought around but images of rest,
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between,
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kept,
From poppies breath’d, and banks of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets play’d,
And hurled every where their water’s sheen,
That, as they bicker’d through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

THOMSON

When Emily, in the morning, opened her casement, she was surprised to observe the beauties, that surrounded it. The cottage was nearly embowered in the woods, which were chiefly of chesnut intermixed with some cypress, larch and sycamore. Beneath the dark and spreading branches, appeared, to the north, and to the east, the woody Apennines, rising in majestic amphitheatre, not black with pines, as she had been accustomed to see them, but their loftiest summits crowned with antient forests of chesnut, oak, and oriental plane, now animated with the rich tints of autumn, and which swept downward to the valley uninterruptedly, except where some bold rocky promontory looked out from among the foliage, and caught the passing gleam. Vineyards stretched along the feet of the mountains, where the elegant villas of the Tuscan nobility frequently adorned the scene, and overlooked slopes clothed with groves of olive, mulberry, orange and lemon. The plain, to which these declined, was coloured with the riches of cultivation, whose mingled hues were mellowed into harmony by an Italian sun. Vines, their purple clusters blushing between the russet foliage, hung in luxuriant festoons from the branches of standard fig and cherry trees, while pastures of verdure, such as Emily had seldom seen in Italy, enriched the banks of a stream that, after descending from the mountains, wound along the landscape, which it reflected, to a bay of the sea. There, far in the west, the waters, fading into the sky, assumed a tint of the faintest purple, and the line of separation between them was, now and then, discernible only by the progress of a sail, brightened with the sunbeam, along the horizon.

The cottage, which was shaded by the woods from the intenser rays of the sun, and was open only to his evening light, was covered entirely with vines, fig-trees and jessamine, whose flowers surpassed in size and fragrance any that Emily had seen. These and ripening clusters of grapes hung round her little casement. The turf, that grew under the woods, was inlaid with a variety of wild flowers and perfumed herbs, and, on the opposite margin of the stream, whose current diffused freshness beneath the shades, rose a grove of lemon and orange trees. This, though nearly

opposite to Emily’s window, did not interrupt her prospect, but rather heightened, by its dark verdure, the effect of the perspective; and to her this spot was a bower of sweets, whose charms communicated imperceptibly to her mind somewhat of their own serenity.

She was soon summoned to breakfast, by the peasant’s daughter, a girl about seventeen, of a pleasant countenance, which, Emily was glad to observe, seemed animated with the pure affections of nature, though the others, that surrounded her, expressed, more or less, the worst qualities — cruelty, ferocity, cunning and duplicity; of the latter style of countenance, especially, were those of the peasant and his wife. Maddelina spoke little, but what she said was in a soft voice, and with an air of modesty and complacency, that interested Emily, who breakfasted at a separate table with Dorina, while Ugo and Bertrand were taking a repast of Tuscany bacon and wine with their host, near the cottage door; when they had finished which, Ugo, rising hastily, enquired for his mule, and Emily learned that he was to return to Udolpho, while Bertrand remained at the cottage; a circumstance, which, though it did not surprise, distressed her.

When Ugo was departed, Emily proposed to walk in the neighbouring woods; but, on being told, that she must not quit the cottage, without having Bertrand for her attendant, she withdrew to her own room. There, as her eyes settled on the towering Apennines, she recollected the terrific scenery they had exhibited and the horrors she had suffered, on the preceding night, particularly at the moment when Bertrand had betrayed himself to be an assassin; and these remembrances awakened a train of images, which, since they abstracted her from a consideration of her own situation, she pursued for some time, and then arranged in the following lines; pleased to have discovered any innocent means, by which she could beguile an hour of misfortune.

THE PILGRIM*

Slow o’er the Apennine, with bleeding feet,
A patient Pilgrim wound his lonely way,
To deck the Lady of Loretto’s seat
With all the little wealth his zeal could pay.
From mountain-tops cold died the evening ray,

And, stretch’d in twilight, slept the vale below;
And now the last, last purple streaks of day
Along the melancholy West fade slow.
High o’er his head, the restless pines complain,
As on their summit rolls the breeze of night;
Beneath, the hoarse stream chides the rocks in vain:
The Pilgrim pauses on the dizzy height.
Then to the vale his cautious step he prest,
For there a hermit’s cross was dimly seen,
Cresting the rock, and there his limbs might rest,
Cheer’d in the good man’s cave, by faggot’s sheen,
On leafy beds, nor guile his sleep molest.
Unhappy Luke! he trusts a treacherous clue!
Behind the cliff the lurking robber stood;
No friendly moon his giant shadow threw
Athwart the road, to save the Pilgrim’s blood;
On as he went a vesper-hymn he sang,
The hymn, that nightly sooth’d him to repose.
Fierce on his harmless prey the ruffian sprang!
The Pilgrim bleeds to death, his eyelids close.
Yet his meek spirit knew no vengeful care,
But, dying, for his murd’rer breath’d — a sainted pray’r!

(* This poem and that entitled THE TRAVELLER in vol. ii, have already appeared in a periodical publication. [A. R.])

Preferring the solitude of her room to the company of the persons below stairs, Emily dined above, and Maddelina was suffered to attend her, from whose simple conversation she learned, that the peasant and his wife were old inhabitants of this cottage, which had been purchased for them by Montoni, in reward of some service, rendered him, many years before, by Marco, to whom Carlo, the steward at the castle, was nearly related. ‘So many years ago, Signora,’ added Maddelina, ‘that I know nothing about it; but my father did the Signor a great good, for my mother has often said to him, this cottage was the least he ought to have had.’

To the mention of this circumstance Emily listened with a painful interest, since it appeared to give a frightful colour to the character of Marco, whose service, thus rewarded by Montoni, she could scarcely doubt have been criminal; and, if so, had too much reason to believe, that she had been committed into his hands for some desperate purpose. ‘Did you ever hear how many years it is,’ said Emily, who was considering of Signora Laurentini’s disappearance from Udolpho, ‘since your father performed the services you spoke of?’

‘It was a little before he came to live at the cottage, Signora,’ replied Maddelina, ‘and that is about eighteen years ago.’

This was near the period, when Signora Laurentini had been said to disappear, and it occurred to Emily, that Marco had assisted in that mysterious affair, and, perhaps, had been employed in a murder! This horrible suggestion fixed her in such profound reverie, that Maddelina quitted the room, unperceived by her, and she remained unconscious of all around her, for a considerable time. Tears, at length, came to her relief, after indulging which, her spirits becoming calmer, she ceased to tremble at a view of evils, that might never arrive; and had sufficient resolution to endeavour to withdraw her thoughts from the contemplation of her own interests. Remembering the few books, which even in the hurry of her departure from Udolpho she had put into her little package, she sat down with one of them at her pleasant casement, whence her eyes often wandered from the page to the landscape, whose beauty gradually soothed her mind into gentle melancholy.

Here, she remained alone, till evening, and saw the sun descend the western sky, throw all his pomp of light and shadow upon the mountains, and gleam upon the distant ocean and the stealing sails, as he sunk amidst the waves. Then, at the musing hour of twilight, her softened thoughts returned to Valancourt; she again recollected every circumstance, connected with the midnight music, and all that might assist her conjecture, concerning his imprisonment at the castle, and, becoming confirmed in the supposition, that it was his voice she had heard there, she looked back to that gloomy abode with emotions of grief and momentary regret.

Refreshed by the cool and fragrant air, and her spirits soothed to a state of gentle melancholy by the stilly murmur of the brook below and of the

woods around, she lingered at her casement long after the sun had set, watching the valley sinking into obscurity, till only the grand outline of the surrounding mountains, shadowed upon the horizon, remained visible. But a clear moonlight, that succeeded, gave to the landscape, what time gives to the scenes of past life, when it softens all their harsher features, and throws over the whole the mellowing shade of distant contemplation. The scenes of La Vallee, in the early morn of her life, when she was protected and beloved by parents equally loved, appeared in Emily's memory tenderly beautiful, like the prospect before her, and awakened mournful comparisons. Unwilling to encounter the coarse behaviour of the peasant's wife, she remained supperless in her room, while she wept again over her forlorn and perilous situation, a review of which entirely overcame the small remains of her fortitude, and, reducing her to temporary despondence, she wished to be released from the heavy load of life, that had so long oppressed her, and prayed to Heaven to take her, in its mercy, to her parents.

Wearied with weeping, she, at length, lay down on her mattress, and sunk to sleep, but was soon awakened by a knocking at her chamber door, and, starting up in terror, she heard a voice calling her. The image of Bertrand, with a stilletto in his hand, appeared to her alarmed fancy, and she neither opened the door, or answered, but listened in profound silence, till, the voice repeating her name in the same low tone, she demanded who called. 'It is I, Signora,' replied the voice, which she now distinguished to be Maddelina's, 'pray open the door. Don't be frightened, it is I.'

'And what brings you here so late, Maddelina?' said Emily, as she let her in.

'Hush! signora, for heaven's sake hush! — if we are overheard I shall never be forgiven. My father and mother and Bertrand are all gone to bed,' continued Maddelina, as she gently shut the door, and crept forward, 'and I have brought you some supper, for you had none, you know, Signora, below stairs. Here are some grapes and figs and half a cup of wine.' Emily thanked her, but expressed apprehension lest this kindness should draw upon her the resentment of Dorina, when she perceived the fruit was gone. 'Take it back, therefore, Maddelina,' added Emily, 'I shall suffer much less from the want of it, than I should do, if this act of good-nature was to subject you to your mother's displeasure.'

‘O Signora! there is no danger of that,’ replied Maddelina, ‘my mother cannot miss the fruit, for I saved it from my own supper. You will make me very unhappy, if you refuse to take it, Signora.’ Emily was so much affected by this instance of the good girl’s generosity, that she remained for some time unable to reply, and Maddelina watched her in silence, till, mistaking the cause of her emotion, she said, ‘Do not weep so, Signora! My mother, to be sure, is a little cross, sometimes, but then it is soon over, — so don’t take it so much to heart. She often scolds me, too, but then I have learned to bear it, and, when she has done, if I can but steal out into the woods, and play upon my sticcado, I forget it all directly.’

Emily, smiling through her tears, told Maddelina, that she was a good girl, and then accepted her offering. She wished anxiously to know, whether Bertrand and Dorina had spoken of Montoni, or of his designs, concerning herself, in the presence of Maddelina, but disdained to tempt the innocent girl to a conduct so mean, as that of betraying the private conversations of her parents. When she was departing, Emily requested, that she would come to her room as often as she dared, without offending her mother, and Maddelina, after promising that she would do so, stole softly back again to her own chamber.

Thus several days passed, during which Emily remained in her own room, Maddelina attending her only at her repast, whose gentle countenance and manners soothed her more than any circumstance she had known for many months. Of her pleasant embowered chamber she now became fond, and began to experience in it those feelings of security, which we naturally attach to home. In this interval also, her mind, having been undisturbed by any new circumstance of disgust, or alarm, recovered its tone sufficiently to permit her the enjoyment of her books, among which she found some unfinished sketches of landscapes, several blank sheets of paper, with her drawing instruments, and she was thus enabled to amuse herself with selecting some of the lovely features of the prospect, that her window commanded, and combining them in scenes, to which her tasteful fancy gave a last grace. In these little sketches she generally placed interesting groups, characteristic of the scenery they animated, and often contrived to tell, with perspicuity, some simple and affecting story, when, as a tear fell over the pictured griefs, which her imagination drew, she would forget, for a moment, her real sufferings. Thus innocently she

beguiled the heavy hours of misfortune, and, with meek patience, awaited the events of futurity.

A beautiful evening, that had succeeded to a sultry day, at length induced Emily to walk, though she knew that Bertrand must attend her, and, with Maddelina for her companion, she left the cottage, followed by Bertrand, who allowed her to choose her own way. The hour was cool and silent, and she could not look upon the country around her, without delight. How lovely, too, appeared the brilliant blue, that coloured all the upper region of the air, and, thence fading downward, was lost in the saffron glow of the horizon! Nor less so were the varied shades and warm colouring of the Apennines, as the evening sun threw his slanting rays athwart their broken surface. Emily followed the course of the stream, under the shades, that overhung its grassy margin. On the opposite banks, the pastures were animated with herds of cattle of a beautiful cream-colour; and, beyond, were groves of lemon and orange, with fruit glowing on the branches, frequent almost as the leaves, which partly concealed it. She pursued her way towards the sea, which reflected the warm glow of sun-set, while the cliffs, that rose over its edge, were tinted with the last rays. The valley was terminated on the right by a lofty promontory, whose summit, impending over the waves, was crowned with a ruined tower, now serving for the purpose of a beacon, whose shattered battlements and the extended wings of some sea-fowl, that circled near it, were still illumined by the upward beams of the sun, though his disk was now sunk beneath the horizon; while the lower part of the ruin, the cliff on which it stood and the waves at its foot, were shaded with the first tints of twilight.

Having reached this headland, Emily gazed with solemn pleasure on the cliffs, that extended on either hand along the sequestered shores, some crowned with groves of pine, and others exhibiting only barren precipices of grayish marble, except where the crags were tufted with myrtle and other aromatic shrubs. The sea slept in a perfect calm; its waves, dying in murmurs on the shores, flowed with the gentlest undulation, while its clear surface reflected in softened beauty the vermeil tints of the west. Emily, as she looked upon the ocean, thought of France and of past times, and she wished, Oh! how ardently, and vainly — wished! that its waves would bear her to her distant, native home!

‘Ah! that vessel,’ said she, ‘that vessel, which glides along so stately, with its tall sails reflected in the water is, perhaps, bound for France! Happy — happy bark!’ She continued to gaze upon it, with warm emotion, till the gray of twilight obscured the distance, and veiled it from her view. The melancholy sound of the waves at her feet assisted the tenderness, that occasioned her tears, and this was the only sound, that broke upon the hour, till, having followed the windings of the beach, for some time, a chorus of voices passed her on the air. She paused a moment, wishing to hear more, yet fearing to be seen, and, for the first time, looked back to Bertrand, as her protector, who was following, at a short distance, in company with some other person. Reassured by this circumstance, she advanced towards the sounds, which seemed to arise from behind a high promontory, that projected athwart the beach. There was now a sudden pause in the music, and then one female voice was heard to sing in a kind of chant. Emily quickened her steps, and, winding round the rock, saw, within the sweeping bay, beyond, which was hung with woods from the borders of the beach to the very summit of the cliffs, two groups of peasants, one seated beneath the shades, and the other standing on the edge of the sea, round the girl, who was singing, and who held in her hand a chaplet of flowers, which she seemed about to drop into the waves.

Emily, listening with surprise and attention, distinguished the following invocation delivered in the pure and elegant tongue of Tuscany, and accompanied by a few pastoral instruments.

TO A SEA-NYMPH

O nymph! who loves to float on the green wave,
When Neptune sleeps beneath the moonlight hour,
Lull’d by the music’s melancholy pow’r,
O nymph, arise from out thy pearly cave!

For Hesper beams amid the twilight shade,
And soon shall Cynthia tremble o’er the tide,
Gleam on these cliffs, that bound the ocean’s pride,
And lonely silence all the air pervade.

Then, let thy tender voice at distance swell,
And steal along this solitary shore,
Sink on the breeze, till dying — heard no more —
Thou wak’st the sudden magic of thy shell.

While the long coast in echo sweet replies,
Thy soothing strains the pensive heart beguile,
And bid the visions of the future smile,
O nymph! from out thy pearly cave — arise!

(Chorus) — ARISE!
(Semi-chorus) — ARISE!

The last words being repeated by the surrounding group, the garland of flowers was thrown into the waves, and the chorus, sinking gradually into a chant, died away in silence.

‘What can this mean, Maddelina?’ said Emily, awakening from the pleasing trance, into which the music had lulled her. ‘This is the eve of a festival, Signora,’ replied Maddelina; ‘and the peasants then amuse themselves with all kinds of sports.’

‘But they talked of a sea-nymph,’ said Emily: ‘how came these good people to think of a sea-nymph?’

‘O, Signora,’ rejoined Maddelina, mistaking the reason of Emily’s surprise, ‘nobody BELIEVES in such things, but our old songs tell of them, and, when we are at our sports, we sometimes sing to them, and throw garlands into the sea.’

Emily had been early taught to venerate Florence as the seat of literature and of the fine arts; but, that its taste for classic story should descend to the peasants of the country, occasioned her both surprise and admiration. The Arcadian air of the girls next attracted her attention. Their dress was a very short full petticoat of light green, with a boddice of white silk; the sleeves loose, and tied up at the shoulders with ribbons and bunches of flowers. Their hair, falling in ringlets on their necks, was also ornamented with flowers, and with a small straw hat, which, set rather backward and on one side of the head, gave an expression of gaiety and smartness to the whole figure. When the song had concluded, several of these girls approached Emily, and, inviting her to sit down among them, offered her, and Maddelina, whom they knew, grapes and figs.

Emily accepted their courtesy, much pleased with the gentleness and grace of their manners, which appeared to be perfectly natural to them; and when Bertrand, soon after, approached, and was hastily drawing her away, a peasant, holding up a flask, invited him to drink; a temptation, which Bertrand was seldom very valiant in resisting.

‘Let the young lady join in the dance, my friend,’ said the peasant, ‘while we empty this flask. They are going to begin directly. Strike up! my lads, strike up your tambourines and merry flutes!’

They sounded gaily; and the younger peasants formed themselves into a circle, which Emily would readily have joined, had her spirits been in unison with their mirth. Maddelina, however, tripped it lightly, and Emily, as she looked on the happy group, lost the sense of her misfortunes in that of a benevolent pleasure. But the pensive melancholy of her mind returned, as she sat rather apart from the company, listening to the mellow music, which the breeze softened as it bore it away, and watching the moon, stealing its tremulous light over the waves and on the woody summits of the cliffs, that wound along these Tuscan shores.

Meanwhile, Bertrand was so well pleased with his first flask, that he very willingly commenced the attack on a second, and it was late before Emily, not without some apprehension, returned to the cottage.

After this evening, she frequently walked with Maddelina, but was never unattended by Bertrand; and her mind became by degrees as tranquil as the circumstances of her situation would permit. The quiet, in which she was suffered to live, encouraged her to hope, that she was not sent hither with an evil design; and, had it not appeared probable, that Valancourt was at this time an inhabitant of Udolpho, she would have wished to remain at the cottage, till an opportunity should offer of returning to her native country. But, concerning Montoni's motive for sending her into Tuscany, she was more than ever perplexed, nor could she believe that any consideration for her safety had influenced him on this occasion.

She had been some time at the cottage, before she recollected, that, in the hurry of leaving Udolpho, she had forgotten the papers committed to her by her late aunt, relative to the Languedoc estates; but, though this remembrance occasioned her much uneasiness, she had some hope, that, in the obscure place, where they were deposited, they would escape the detection of Montoni.

CHAPTER VIII

My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.
I play the torturer, by small and small,
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken.

RICHARD II

We now return, for a moment, to Venice, where Count Morano was suffering under an accumulation of misfortunes. Soon after his arrival in that city, he had been arrested by order of the Senate, and, without knowing of what he was suspected, was conveyed to a place of confinement, whither the most strenuous enquiries of his friends had been unable to trace him. Who the enemy was, that had occasioned him this calamity, he had not been able to guess, unless, indeed, it was Montoni, on whom his suspicions rested, and not only with much apparent probability, but with justice.

In the affair of the poisoned cup, Montoni had suspected Morano; but, being unable to obtain the degree of proof, which was necessary to convict him of a guilty intention, he had recourse to means of other revenge, than he could hope to obtain by prosecution. He employed a person, in whom he believed he might confide, to drop a letter of accusation into the DENUNZIE SECRETE, or lions' mouths, which are fixed in a gallery of the Doge's palace, as receptacles for anonymous information, concerning persons, who may be disaffected towards the state. As, on these occasions, the accuser is not confronted with the accused, a man may falsely impeach his enemy, and accomplish an unjust revenge, without fear of punishment, or detection. That Montoni should have recourse to these diabolical means of ruining a person, whom he suspected of having attempted his life, is not in the least surprising. In the letter, which he had employed as the instrument of his revenge, he accused Morano of designs against the state, which he attempted to prove, with all the plausible simplicity of which he was master; and the Senate, with whom a suspicion was, at that time, almost equal to a proof, arrested the Count, in consequence of this accusation; and, without even hinting to him his crime, threw him into one of those secret prisons, which were the terror of the Venetians, and in which persons often languished, and sometimes died, without being discovered by their friends.

Morano had incurred the personal resentment of many members of the state; his habits of life had rendered him obnoxious to some; and his

ambition, and the bold rivalship, which he discovered, on several public occasions, — to others; and it was not to be expected, that mercy would soften the rigour of a law, which was to be dispensed from the hands of his enemies.

Montoni, meantime, was beset by dangers of another kind. His castle was besieged by troops, who seemed willing to dare every thing, and to suffer patiently any hardships in pursuit of victory. The strength of the fortress, however, withstood their attack, and this, with the vigorous defence of the garrison and the scarcity of provision on these wild mountains, soon compelled the assailants to raise the siege.

When Udolpho was once more left to the quiet possession of Montoni, he dispatched Ugo into Tuscany for Emily, whom he had sent from considerations of her personal safety, to a place of greater security, than a castle, which was, at that time, liable to be overrun by his enemies. Tranquillity being once more restored to Udolpho, he was impatient to secure her again under his roof, and had commissioned Ugo to assist Bertrand in guarding her back to the castle. Thus compelled to return, Emily bade the kind Maddelina farewell, with regret, and, after about a fortnight’s stay in Tuscany, where she had experienced an interval of quiet, which was absolutely necessary to sustain her long-harassed spirits, began once more to ascend the Apennines, from whose heights she gave a long and sorrowful look to the beautiful country, that extended at their feet, and to the distant Mediterranean, whose waves she had so often wished would bear her back to France. The distress she felt, on her return towards the place of her former sufferings, was, however, softened by a conjecture, that Valancourt was there, and she found some degree of comfort in the thought of being near him, notwithstanding the consideration, that he was probably a prisoner.

It was noon, when she had left the cottage, and the evening was closed, long before she came within the neighbourhood of Udolpho. There was a moon, but it shone only at intervals, for the night was cloudy, and, lighted by the torch, which Ugo carried, the travellers paced silently along, Emily musing on her situation, and Bertrand and Ugo anticipating the comforts of a flask of wine and a good fire, for they had perceived for some time the difference between the warm climate of the lowlands of Tuscany and the nipping air of these upper regions. Emily was, at length, roused from her

reverie by the far-off sound of the castle clock, to which she listened not without some degree of awe, as it rolled away on the breeze. Another and another note succeeded, and died in sullen murmur among the mountains: — to her mournful imagination it seemed a knell measuring out some fateful period for her.

‘Aye, there is the old clock,’ said Bertrand, ‘there he is still; the cannon have not silenced him!’

‘No,’ answered Ugo, ‘he crowed as loud as the best of them in the midst of it all. There he was roaring out in the hottest fire I have seen this many a day! I said that some of them would have a hit at the old fellow, but he escaped, and the tower too.’

The road winding round the base of a mountain, they now came within view of the castle, which was shewn in the perspective of the valley by a gleam of moonshine, and then vanished in shade; while even a transient view of it had awakened the poignancy of Emily’s feelings. Its massy and gloomy walls gave her terrible ideas of imprisonment and suffering: yet, as she advanced, some degree of hope mingled with her terror; for, though this was certainly the residence of Montoni, it was possibly, also, that of Valancourt, and she could not approach a place, where he might be, without experiencing somewhat of the joy of hope.

They continued to wind along the valley, and, soon after, she saw again the old walls and moonlit towers, rising over the woods: the strong rays enabled her, also, to perceive the ravages, which the siege had made, — with the broken walls, and shattered battlements, for they were now at the foot of the steep, on which Udolpho stood. Massy fragments had rolled down among the woods, through which the travellers now began to ascend, and there mingled with the loose earth, and pieces of rock they had brought with them. The woods, too, had suffered much from the batteries above, for here the enemy had endeavoured to screen themselves from the fire of the ramparts. Many noble trees were levelled with the ground, and others, to a wide extent, were entirely stripped of their upper branches. ‘We had better dismount,’ said Ugo, ‘and lead the mules up the hill, or we shall get into some of the holes, which the balls have left. Here are plenty of them. Give me the torch,’ continued Ugo, after they had dismounted, ‘and take care you don’t stumble over any thing, that lies in your way, for the ground is not yet cleared of the enemy.’

‘How!’ exclaimed Emily, ‘are any of the enemy here, then?’

‘Nay, I don’t know for that, now,’ he replied, ‘but when I came away I saw one or two of them lying under the trees.’

As they proceeded, the torch threw a gloomy light upon the ground, and far among the recesses of the woods, and Emily feared to look forward, lest some object of horror should meet her eye. The path was often strewn with broken heads of arrows, and with shattered remains of armour, such as at that period was mingled with the lighter dress of the soldiers. ‘Bring the light hither,’ said Bertrand, ‘I have stumbled over something, that rattles loud enough.’ Ugo holding up the torch, they perceived a steel breastplate on the ground, which Bertrand raised, and they saw, that it was pierced through, and that the lining was entirely covered with blood; but upon Emily’s earnest entreaties, that they would proceed, Bertrand, uttering some joke upon the unfortunate person, to whom it had belonged, threw it hard upon the ground, and they passed on.

At every step she took, Emily feared to see some vestige of death. Coming soon after to an opening in the woods, Bertrand stopped to survey the ground, which was encumbered with massy trunks and branches of the trees, that had so lately adorned it, and seemed to have been a spot particularly fatal to the besiegers; for it was evident from the destruction of the trees, that here the hottest fire of the garrison had been directed. As Ugo held again forth the torch, steel glittered between the fallen trees; the ground beneath was covered with broken arms, and with the torn vestments of soldiers, whose mangled forms Emily almost expected to see; and she again entreated her companions to proceed, who were, however, too intent in their examination, to regard her, and she turned her eyes from this desolated scene to the castle above, where she observed lights gliding along the ramparts. Presently, the castle clock struck twelve, and then a trumpet sounded, of which Emily enquired the occasion.

‘O! they are only changing watch,’ replied Ugo. ‘I do not remember this trumpet,’ said Emily, ‘it is a new custom.’ ‘It is only an old one revived, lady; we always use it in time of war. We have sounded it, at midnight, ever since the place was besieged.’

‘Hark!’ said Emily, as the trumpet sounded again; and, in the next moment, she heard a faint clash of arms, and then the watchword passed along the terrace above, and was answered from a distant part of the

castle; after which all was again still. She complained of cold, and begged to go on. ‘Presently, lady,’ said Bertrand, turning over some broken arms with the pike he usually carried. ‘What have we here?’

‘Hark!’ cried Emily, ‘what noise was that?’

‘What noise was it?’ said Ugo, starting up and listening.

‘Hush!’ repeated Emily. ‘It surely came from the ramparts above:’ and, on looking up, they perceived a light moving along the walls, while, in the next instant, the breeze swelling, the voice sounded louder than before.

‘Who goes yonder?’ cried a sentinel of the castle. ‘Speak or it will be worse for you.’ Bertrand uttered a shout of joy. ‘Hah! my brave comrade, is it you?’ said he, and he blew a shrill whistle, which signal was answered by another from the soldier on watch; and the party, then passing forward, soon after emerged from the woods upon the broken road, that led immediately to the castle gates, and Emily saw, with renewed terror, the whole of that stupendous structure. ‘Alas!’ said she to herself, ‘I am going again into my prison!’

‘Here has been warm work, by St. Marco!’ cried Bertrand, waving a torch over the ground; ‘the balls have torn up the earth here with a vengeance.’

‘Aye,’ replied Ugo, ‘they were fired from that redoubt, yonder, and rare execution they did. The enemy made a furious attack upon the great gates; but they might have guessed they could never carry it there; for, besides the cannon from the walls, our archers, on the two round towers, showered down upon them at such a rate, that, by holy Peter! there was no standing it. I never saw a better sight in my life; I laughed, till my sides aked, to see how the knaves scampered. Bertrand, my good fellow, thou shouldst have been among them; I warrant thou wouldst have won the race!’

‘Hah! you are at your old tricks again,’ said Bertrand in a surly tone. ‘It is well for thee thou art so near the castle; thou knowest I have killed my man before now.’ Ugo replied only by a laugh, and then gave some further account of the siege, to which as Emily listened, she was struck by the strong contrast of the present scene with that which had so lately been acted here.

The mingled uproar of cannon, drums, and trumpets, the groans of the conquered, and the shouts of the conquerors were now sunk into a silence so profound, that it seemed as if death had triumphed alike over the

vanquished and the victor. The shattered condition of one of the towers of the great gates by no means confirmed the VALIANT account just given by Ugo of the scampering party, who, it was evident, had not only made a stand, but had done much mischief before they took to flight; for this tower appeared, as far as Emily could judge by the dim moonlight that fell upon it, to be laid open, and the battlements were nearly demolished. While she gazed, a light glimmered through one of the lower loop-holes, and disappeared; but, in the next moment, she perceived through the broken wall, a soldier, with a lamp, ascending the narrow staircase, that wound within the tower, and, remembering that it was the same she had passed up, on the night, when Barnardine had deluded her with a promise of seeing Madame Montoni, fancy gave her somewhat of the terror she had then suffered. She was now very near the gates, over which the soldier having opened the door of the portal-chamber, the lamp he carried gave her a dusky view of that terrible apartment, and she almost sunk under the recollected horrors of the moment, when she had drawn aside the curtain, and discovered the object it was meant to conceal.

‘Perhaps,’ said she to herself, ‘it is now used for a similar purpose; perhaps, that soldier goes, at this dead hour, to watch over the corpse of his friend!’ The little remains of her fortitude now gave way to the united force of remembered and anticipated horrors, for the melancholy fate of Madame Montoni appeared to foretell her own. She considered, that, though the Languedoc estates, if she relinquished them, would satisfy Montoni’s avarice, they might not appease his vengeance, which was seldom pacified but by a terrible sacrifice; and she even thought, that, were she to resign them, the fear of justice might urge him either to detain her a prisoner, or to take away her life.

They were now arrived at the gates, where Bertrand, observing the light glimmer through a small casement of the portal-chamber, called aloud; and the soldier, looking out, demanded who was there. ‘Here, I have brought you a prisoner,’ said Ugo, ‘open the gate, and let us in.’

‘Tell me first who it is, that demands entrance,’ replied the soldier. ‘What! my old comrade,’ cried Ugo, ‘don’t you know me? not know Ugo? I have brought home a prisoner here, bound hand and foot — a fellow, who has been drinking Tuscany wine, while we here have been fighting.’

‘You will not rest till you meet with your match,’ said Bertrand sullenly. ‘Hah! my comrade, is it you?’ said the soldier— ‘I’ll be with you directly.’

Emily presently heard his steps descending the stairs within, and then the heavy chain fall, and the bolts undraw of a small postern door, which he opened to admit the party. He held the lamp low, to shew the step of the gate, and she found herself once more beneath the gloomy arch, and heard the door close, that seemed to shut her from the world for ever. In the next moment, she was in the first court of the castle, where she surveyed the spacious and solitary area, with a kind of calm despair; while the dead hour of the night, the gothic gloom of the surrounding buildings, and the hollow and imperfect echoes, which they returned, as Ugo and the soldier conversed together, assisted to increase the melancholy forebodings of her heart. Passing on to the second court, a distant sound broke feebly on the silence, and gradually swelling louder, as they advanced, Emily distinguished voices of revelry and laughter, but they were to her far other than sounds of joy. ‘Why, you have got some Tuscany wine among you, HERE,’ said Bertrand, ‘if one may judge by the uproar that is going forward. Ugo has taken a larger share of that than of fighting, I’ll be sworn. Who is carousing at this late hour?’

‘His excellenza and the Signors,’ replied the soldier: ‘it is a sign you are a stranger at the castle, or you would not need to ask the question. They are brave spirits, that do without sleep — they generally pass the night in good cheer; would that we, who keep the watch, had a little of it! It is cold work, pacing the ramparts so many hours of the night, if one has no good liquor to warm one’s heart.’

‘Courage, my lad, courage ought to warm your heart,’ said Ugo. ‘Courage!’ replied the soldier sharply, with a menacing air, which Ugo perceiving, prevented his saying more, by returning to the subject of the carousal. ‘This is a new custom,’ said he; ‘when I left the castle, the Signors used to sit up counselling.’

‘Aye, and for that matter, carousing too,’ replied the soldier, ‘but, since the siege, they have done nothing but make merry: and if I was they, I would settle accounts with myself, for all my hard fighting, the same way.’

They had now crossed the second court, and reached the hall door, when the soldier, bidding them good night, hastened back to his post; and, while they waited for admittance, Emily considered how she might avoid seeing

Montoni, and retire unnoticed to her former apartment, for she shrunk from the thought of encountering either him, or any of his party, at this hour. The uproar within the castle was now so loud, that, though Ugo knocked repeatedly at the hall door, he was not heard by any of the servants, a circumstance, which increased Emily's alarm, while it allowed her time to deliberate on the means of retiring unobserved; for, though she might, perhaps, pass up the great staircase unseen, it was impossible she could find the way to her chamber, without a light, the difficulty of procuring which, and the danger of wandering about the castle, without one, immediately struck her. Bertrand had only a torch, and she knew, that the servants never brought a taper to the door, for the hall was sufficiently lighted by the large tripod lamp, which hung in the vaulted roof; and, while she should wait till Annette could bring a taper, Montoni, or some of his companions, might discover her.

The door was now opened by Carlo; and Emily, having requested him to send Annette immediately with a light to the great gallery, where she determined to await her, passed on with hasty steps towards the staircase; while Bertrand and Ugo, with the torch, followed old Carlo to the servants' hall, impatient for supper and the warm blaze of a wood fire. Emily, lighted only by the feeble rays, which the lamp above threw between the arches of this extensive hall, endeavoured to find her way to the staircase, now hid in obscurity; while the shouts of merriment, that burst from a remote apartment, served, by heightening her terror, to increase her perplexity, and she expected, every instant, to see the door of that room open, and Montoni and his companions issue forth. Having, at length, reached the staircase, and found her way to the top, she seated herself on the last stair, to await the arrival of Annette; for the profound darkness of the gallery deterred her from proceeding farther, and, while she listened for her footstep, she heard only distant sounds of revelry, which rose in sullen echoes from among the arcades below. Once she thought she heard a low sound from the dark gallery behind her; and, turning her eyes, fancied she saw something luminous move in it; and, since she could not, at this moment, subdue the weakness that caused her fears, she quitted her seat, and crept softly down a few stairs lower.

Annette not yet appearing, Emily now concluded, that she was gone to bed, and that nobody chose to call her up; and the prospect, that presented

itself, of passing the night in darkness, in this place, or in some other equally forlorn (for she knew it would be impracticable to find her way through the intricacies of the galleries to her chamber), drew tears of mingled terror and despondency from her eyes.

While thus she sat, she fancied she heard again an odd sound from the gallery, and she listened, scarcely daring to breathe, but the increasing voices below overcame every other sound. Soon after, she heard Montoni and his companions burst into the hall, who spoke, as if they were much intoxicated, and seemed to be advancing towards the staircase. She now remembered, that they must come this way to their chambers, and, forgetting all the terrors of the gallery, hurried towards it with an intention of secreting herself in some of the passages, that opened beyond, and of endeavouring, when the Signors were retired, to find her way to her own room, or to that of Annette, which was in a remote part of the castle.

With extended arms, she crept along the gallery, still hearing the voices of persons below, who seemed to stop in conversation at the foot of the staircase, and then pausing for a moment to listen, half fearful of going further into the darkness of the gallery, where she still imagined, from the noise she had heard, that some person was lurking, ‘They are already informed of my arrival,’ said she, ‘and Montoni is coming himself to seek me! In the present state of his mind, his purpose must be desperate.’ Then, recollecting the scene, that had passed in the corridor, on the night preceding her departure from the castle, ‘O Valancourt!’ said she, ‘I must then resign you for ever. To brave any longer the injustice of Montoni, would not be fortitude, but rashness.’ Still the voices below did not draw nearer, but they became louder, and she distinguished those of Verezzi and Bertolini above the rest, while the few words she caught made her listen more anxiously for others. The conversation seemed to concern herself; and, having ventured to step a few paces nearer to the staircase, she discovered, that they were disputing about her, each seeming to claim some former promise of Montoni, who appeared, at first, inclined to appease and to persuade them to return to their wine, but afterwards to be weary of the dispute, and, saying that he left them to settle it as they could, was returning with the rest of the party to the apartment he had just quitted. Verezzi then stopped him. ‘Where is she? Signor,’ said he, in a voice of impatience: ‘tell us where she is.’ ‘I have already told you that I

do not know,' replied Montoni, who seemed to be somewhat overcome with wine; 'but she is most probably gone to her apartment.' Verezzi and Bertolini now desisted from their enquiries, and sprang to the staircase together, while Emily, who, during this discourse, had trembled so excessively, that she had with difficulty supported herself, seemed inspired with new strength, the moment she heard the sound of their steps, and ran along the gallery, dark as it was, with the fleetness of a fawn. But, long before she reached its extremity, the light, which Verezzi carried, flashed upon the walls; both appeared, and, instantly perceiving Emily, pursued her. At this moment, Bertolini, whose steps, though swift, were not steady, and whose impatience overcame what little caution he had hitherto used, stumbled, and fell at his length. The lamp fell with him, and was presently expiring on the floor; but Verezzi, regardless of saving it, seized the advantage this accident gave him over his rival, and followed Emily, to whom, however, the light had shown one of the passages that branched from the gallery, and she instantly turned into it. Verezzi could just discern the way she had taken, and this he pursued; but the sound of her steps soon sunk in distance, while he, less acquainted with the passage, was obliged to proceed through the dark, with caution, lest he should fall down a flight of steps, such as in this extensive old castle frequently terminated an avenue. This passage at length brought Emily to the corridor, into which her own chamber opened, and, not hearing any footstep, she paused to take breath, and consider what was the safest design to be adopted. She had followed this passage, merely because it was the first that appeared, and now that she had reached the end of it, was as perplexed as before. Whither to go, or how further to find her way in the dark, she knew not; she was aware only that she must not seek her apartment, for there she would certainly be sought, and her danger increased every instant, while she remained near it. Her spirits and her breath, however, were so much exhausted, that she was compelled to rest, for a few minutes, at the end of the passage, and still she heard no steps approaching. As thus she stood, light glimmered under an opposite door of the gallery, and, from its situation, she knew, that it was the door of that mysterious chamber, where she had made a discovery so shocking, that she never remembered it but with the utmost horror. That there should be light in this chamber, and at this hour, excited her strong surprise, and she felt a momentary terror

concerning it, which did not permit her to look again, for her spirits were now in such a state of weakness, that she almost expected to see the door slowly open, and some horrible object appear at it. Still she listened for a step along the passage, and looked up it, where, not a ray of light appearing, she concluded, that Verezzi had gone back for the lamp; and, believing that he would shortly be there, she again considered which way she should go, or rather which way she could find in the dark.

A faint ray still glimmered under the opposite door, but so great, and, perhaps, so just was her horror of that chamber, that she would not again have tempted its secrets, though she had been certain of obtaining the light so important to her safety. She was still breathing with difficulty, and resting at the end of the passage, when she heard a rustling sound, and then a low voice, so very near her, that it seemed close to her ear; but she had presence of mind to check her emotions, and to remain quite still; in the next moment, she perceived it to be the voice of Verezzi, who did not appear to know, that she was there, but to have spoken to himself. ‘The air is fresher here,’ said he: ‘this should be the corridor.’ Perhaps, he was one of those heroes, whose courage can defy an enemy better than darkness, and he tried to rally his spirits with the sound of his own voice. However this might be, he turned to the right, and proceeded, with the same stealing steps, towards Emily’s apartment, apparently forgetting, that, in darkness, she could easily elude his search, even in her chamber; and, like an intoxicated person, he followed pertinaciously the one idea, that had possessed his imagination.

The moment she heard his steps steal away, she left her station and moved softly to the other end of the corridor, determined to trust again to chance, and to quit it by the first avenue she could find; but, before she could effect this, light broke upon the walls of the gallery, and, looking back, she saw Verezzi crossing it towards her chamber. She now glided into a passage, that opened on the left, without, as she thought, being perceived; but, in the next instant, another light, glimmering at the further end of this passage, threw her into new terror. While she stopped and hesitated which way to go, the pause allowed her to perceive, that it was Annette, who advanced, and she hurried to meet her: but her imprudence again alarmed Emily, on perceiving whom, she burst into a scream of joy, and it was some minutes, before she could be prevailed with to be silent,

or to release her mistress from the ardent clasp, in which she held her. When, at length, Emily made Annette comprehend her danger, they hurried towards Annette's room, which was in a distant part of the castle. No apprehensions, however, could yet silence the latter. 'Oh dear ma'amselle,' said she, as they passed along, 'what a terrified time have I had of it! Oh! I thought I should have died an hundred times! I never thought I should live to see you again! and I never was so glad to see any body in my whole life, as I am to see you now.' 'Hark!' cried Emily, 'we are pursued; that was the echo of steps!' 'No, ma'amselle,' said Annette, 'it was only the echo of a door shutting; sound runs along these vaulted passages so, that one is continually deceived by it; if one does but speak, or cough, it makes a noise as loud as a cannon.' 'Then there is the greater necessity for us to be silent,' said Emily: 'pr'ythee say no more, till we reach your chamber.' Here, at length, they arrived, without interruption, and, Annette having fastened the door, Emily sat down on her little bed, to recover breath and composure. To her enquiry, whether Valancourt was among the prisoners in the castle, Annette replied, that she had not been able to hear, but that she knew there were several persons confined. She then proceeded, in her tedious way, to give an account of the siege, or rather a detail of her terrors and various sufferings, during the attack. 'But,' added she, 'when I heard the shouts of victory from the ramparts, I thought we were all taken, and gave myself up for lost, instead of which, WE had driven the enemy away. I went then to the north gallery, and saw a great many of them scampering away among the mountains; but the rampart walls were all in ruins, as one may say, and there was a dismal sight to see down among the woods below, where the poor fellows were lying in heaps, but were carried off presently by their comrades. While the siege was going on, the Signor was here, and there, and every where, at the same time, as Ludovico told me, for he would not let me see any thing hardly, and locked me up, as he has often done before, in a room in the middle of the castle, and used to bring me food, and come and talk with me as often as he could; and I must say, if it had not been for Ludovico, I should have died outright.'

'Well, Annette,' said Emily, 'and how have affairs gone on, since the siege?'

‘O! sad hurly burly doings, ma’amselle,’ replied Annette; ‘the Signors have done nothing but sit and drink and game, ever since. They sit up, all night, and play among themselves, for all those riches and fine things, they brought in, some time since, when they used to go out a-robbing, or as good, for days together; and then they have dreadful quarrels about who loses, and who wins. That fierce Signor Verezzi is always losing, as they tell me, and Signor Orsino wins from him, and this makes him very wroth, and they have had several hard set-to’s about it. Then, all those fine ladies are at the castle still; and I declare I am frighted, whenever I meet any of them in the passages.’ —

‘Surely, Annette,’ said Emily starting, ‘I heard a noise: listen.’ After a long pause, ‘No, ma’amselle,’ said Annette, ‘it was only the wind in the gallery; I often hear it, when it shakes the old doors, at the other end. But won’t you go to bed, ma’amselle? you surely will not sit up starving, all night.’ Emily now laid herself down on the mattress, and desired Annette to leave the lamp burning on the hearth; having done which, the latter placed herself beside Emily, who, however, was not suffered to sleep, for she again thought she heard a noise from the passage; and Annette was again trying to convince her, that it was only the wind, when footsteps were distinctly heard near the door. Annette was now starting from the bed, but Emily prevailed with her to remain there, and listened with her in a state of terrible expectation. The steps still loitered at the door, when presently an attempt was made on the lock, and, in the next instant, a voice called. ‘For heaven’s sake, Annette, do not answer,’ said Emily softly, ‘remain quite still; but I fear we must extinguish the lamp, or its glare will betray us.’ ‘Holy Virgin!’ exclaimed Annette, forgetting her discretion, ‘I would not be in darkness now for the whole world.’ While she spoke, the voice became louder than before, and repeated Annette’s name; ‘Blessed Virgin!’ cried she suddenly, ‘it is only Ludovico.’ She rose to open the door, but Emily prevented her, till they should be more certain, that it was he alone; with whom Annette, at length, talked for some time, and learned, that he was come to enquire after herself, whom he had let out of her room to go to Emily, and that he was now returned to lock her in again. Emily, fearful of being overheard, if they conversed any longer through the door, consented that it should be opened, and a young man appeared, whose open countenance confirmed the favourable opinion of him, which his care

of Annette had already prompted her to form. She entreated his protection, should Verezzi make this requisite; and Ludovico offered to pass the night in an old chamber, adjoining, that opened from the gallery, and, on the first alarm, to come to their defence.

Emily was much soothed by this proposal; and Ludovico, having lighted his lamp, went to his station, while she, once more, endeavoured to repose on her mattress. But a variety of interests pressed upon her attention, and prevented sleep. She thought much on what Annette had told her of the dissolute manners of Montoni and his associates, and more of his present conduct towards herself, and of the danger, from which she had just escaped. From the view of her present situation she shrunk, as from a new picture of terror. She saw herself in a castle, inhabited by vice and violence, seated beyond the reach of law or justice, and in the power of a man, whose perseverance was equal to every occasion, and in whom passions, of which revenge was not the weakest, entirely supplied the place of principles. She was compelled, once more, to acknowledge, that it would be folly, and not fortitude, any longer to dare his power; and, resigning all hopes of future happiness with Valancourt, she determined, that, on the following morning, she would compromise with Montoni, and give up her estates, on condition, that he would permit her immediate return to France. Such considerations kept her waking for many hours; but, the night passed, without further alarm from Verezzi.

On the next morning, Emily had a long conversation with Ludovico, in which she heard circumstances concerning the castle, and received hints of the designs of Montoni, that considerably increased her alarms. On expressing her surprise, that Ludovico, who seemed to be so sensible of the evils of his situation, should continue in it, he informed her, that it was not his intention to do so, and she then ventured to ask him, if he would assist her to escape from the castle. Ludovico assured her of his readiness to attempt this, but strongly represented the difficulty of the enterprise, and the certain destruction which must ensure, should Montoni overtake them, before they had passed the mountains; he, however, promised to be watchful of every circumstance, that might contribute to the success of the attempt, and to think upon some plan of departure.

Emily now confided to him the name of Valancourt, and begged he would enquire for such a person among the prisoners in the castle; for the

faint hope, which this conversation awakened, made her now recede from her resolution of an immediate compromise with Montoni. She determined, if possible, to delay this, till she heard further from Ludovico, and, if his designs were found to be impracticable, to resign the estates at once. Her thoughts were on this subject, when Montoni, who was now recovered from the intoxication of the preceding night, sent for her, and she immediately obeyed the summons. He was alone. ‘I find,’ said he, ‘that you were not in your chamber, last night; where were you?’ Emily related to him some circumstances of her alarm, and entreated his protection from a repetition of them. ‘You know the terms of my protection,’ said he; ‘if you really value this, you will secure it.’ His open declaration, that he would only conditionally protect her, while she remained a prisoner in the castle, shewed Emily the necessity of an immediate compliance with his terms; but she first demanded, whether he would permit her immediately to depart, if she gave up her claim to the contested estates. In a very solemn manner he then assured her, that he would, and immediately laid before her a paper, which was to transfer the right of those estates to himself.

She was, for a considerable time, unable to sign it, and her heart was torn with contending interests, for she was about to resign the happiness of all her future years — the hope, which had sustained her in so many hours of adversity.

After hearing from Montoni a recapitulation of the conditions of her compliance, and a remonstrance, that his time was valuable, she put her hand to the paper; when she had done which, she fell back in her chair, but soon recovered, and desired, that he would give orders for her departure, and that he would allow Annette to accompany her. Montoni smiled. ‘It was necessary to deceive you,’ said he,— ‘there was no other way of making you act reasonably; you shall go, but it must not be at present. I must first secure these estates by possession: when that is done, you may return to France if you will.’

The deliberate villany, with which he violated the solemn engagement he had just entered into, shocked Emily as much, as the certainty, that she had made a fruitless sacrifice, and must still remain his prisoner. She had no words to express what she felt, and knew, that it would have been useless, if she had. As she looked piteously at Montoni, he turned away,

and at the same time desired she would withdraw to her apartment; but, unable to leave the room, she sat down in a chair near the door, and sighed heavily. She had neither words nor tears.

‘Why will you indulge this childish grief?’ said he. ‘Endeavour to strengthen your mind, to bear patiently what cannot now be avoided; you have no real evil to lament; be patient, and you will be sent back to France. At present retire to your apartment.’

‘I dare not go, sir,’ said she, ‘where I shall be liable to the intrusion of Signor Verezzi.’ ‘Have I not promised to protect you?’ said Montoni. ‘You have promised, sir,’ — replied Emily, after some hesitation. ‘And is not my promise sufficient?’ added he sternly. ‘You will recollect your former promise, Signor,’ said Emily, trembling, ‘and may determine for me, whether I ought to rely upon this.’ ‘Will you provoke me to declare to you, that I will not protect you then?’ said Montoni, in a tone of haughty displeasure. ‘If that will satisfy you, I will do it immediately. Withdraw to your chamber, before I retract my promise; you have nothing to fear there.’ Emily left the room, and moved slowly into the hall, where the fear of meeting Verezzi, or Bertolini, made her quicken her steps, though she could scarcely support herself; and soon after she reached once more her own apartment. Having looked fearfully round her, to examine if any person was there, and having searched every part of it, she fastened the door, and sat down by one of the casements. Here, while she looked out for some hope to support her fainting spirits, which had been so long harassed and oppressed, that, if she had not now struggled much against misfortune, they would have left her, perhaps, for ever, she endeavoured to believe, that Montoni did really intend to permit her return to France as soon as he had secured her property, and that he would, in the mean time, protect her from insult; but her chief hope rested with Ludovico, who, she doubted not, would be zealous in her cause, though he seemed almost to despair of success in it. One circumstance, however, she had to rejoice in. Her prudence, or rather her fears, had saved her from mentioning the name of Valancourt to Montoni, which she was several times on the point of doing, before she signed the paper, and of stipulating for his release, if he should be really a prisoner in the castle. Had she done this, Montoni’s jealous fears would now probably have loaded Valancourt with new severities, and have suggested the advantage of holding him a captive for life.

Thus passed the melancholy day, as she had before passed many in this same chamber. When night drew on, she would have withdrawn herself to Annette's bed, had not a particular interest inclined her to remain in this chamber, in spite of her fears; for, when the castle should be still, and the customary hour arrived, she determined to watch for the music, which she had formerly heard. Though its sounds might not enable her positively to determine, whether Valancourt was there, they would perhaps strengthen her opinion that he was, and impart the comfort, so necessary to her present support. — But, on the other hand, if all should be silent — ! She hardly dared to suffer her thoughts to glance that way, but waited, with impatient expectation, the approaching hour.

The night was stormy; the battlements of the castle appeared to rock in the wind, and, at intervals, long groans seemed to pass on the air, such as those, which often deceive the melancholy mind, in tempests, and amidst scenes of desolation. Emily heard, as formerly, the sentinels pass along the terrace to their posts, and, looking out from her casement, observed, that the watch was doubled; a precaution, which appeared necessary enough, when she threw her eyes on the walls, and saw their shattered condition. The wellknown sounds of the soldiers' march, and of their distant voices, which passed her in the wind, and were lost again, recalled to her memory the melancholy sensation she had suffered, when she formerly heard the same sounds; and occasioned almost involuntary comparisons between her present, and her late situation. But this was no subject for congratulations, and she wisely checked the course of her thoughts, while, as the hour was not yet come, in which she had been accustomed to hear the music, she closed the casement, and endeavoured to await it in patience. The door of the staircase she tried to secure, as usual, with some of the furniture of the room; but this expedient her fears now represented to her to be very inadequate to the power and perseverance of Verezzi; and she often looked at a large and heavy chest, that stood in the chamber, with wishes that she and Annette had strength enough to move it. While she blamed the long stay of this girl, who was still with Ludovico and some other of the servants, she trimmed her wood fire, to make the room appear less desolate, and sat down beside it with a book, which her eyes perused, while her thoughts wandered to Valancourt, and her own misfortunes. As she sat thus, she thought, in a pause of the wind, she distinguished music,

and went to the casement to listen, but the loud swell of the gust overcame every other sound. When the wind sunk again, she heard distinctly, in the deep pause that succeeded, the sweet strings of a lute; but again the rising tempest bore away the notes, and again was succeeded by a solemn pause. Emily, trembling with hope and fear, opened her casement to listen, and to try whether her own voice could be heard by the musician; for to endure any longer this state of torturing suspense concerning Valancourt, seemed to be utterly impossible. There was a kind of breathless stillness in the chambers, that permitted her to distinguish from below the tender notes of the very lute she had formerly heard, and with it, a plaintive voice, made sweeter by the low rustling sound, that now began to creep along the wood-tops, till it was lost in the rising wind. Their tall heads then began to wave, while, through a forest of pine, on the left, the wind, groaning heavily, rolled onward over the woods below, bending them almost to their roots; and, as the long-resounding gale swept away, other woods, on the right, seemed to answer the ‘loud lament;’ then, others, further still, softened it into a murmur, that died into silence. Emily listened, with mingled awe and expectation, hope and fear; and again the melting sweetness of the lute was heard, and the same solemn-breathing voice. Convinced that these came from an apartment underneath, she leaned far out of her window, that she might discover whether any light was there; but the casements below, as well as those above, were sunk so deep in the thick walls of the castle, that she could not see them, or even the faint ray, that probably glimmered through their bars. She then ventured to call; but the wind bore her voice to the other end of the terrace, and then the music was heard as before, in the pause of the gust. Suddenly, she thought she heard a noise in her chamber, and she drew herself within the casement; but, in a moment after, distinguishing Annette’s voice at the door, she concluded it was her she had heard before, and she let her in. ‘Move softly, Annette, to the casement,’ said she, ‘and listen with me; the music is returned.’ They were silent till, the measure changing, Annette exclaimed, ‘Holy Virgin! I know that song well; it is a French song, one of the favourite songs of my dear country.’ This was the ballad Emily had heard on a former night, though not the one she had first listened to from the fishing-house in Gascony. ‘O! it is a Frenchman, that sings,’ said Annette: ‘it must be Monsieur Valancourt.’ ‘Hark! Annette, do not speak so loud,’

said Emily, ‘we may be overheard.’ ‘What! by the Chevalier?’ said Annette. ‘No,’ replied Emily mournfully, ‘but by somebody, who may report us to the Signor. What reason have you to think it is Monsieur Valancourt, who sings? But hark! now the voice swells louder! Do you recollect those tones? I fear to trust my own judgment.’ ‘I never happened to hear the Chevalier sing, Mademoiselle,’ replied Annette, who, as Emily was disappointed to perceive, had no stronger reason for concluding this to be Valancourt, than that the musician must be a Frenchman. Soon after, she heard the song of the fishing-house, and distinguished her own name, which was repeated so distinctly, that Annette had heard it also. She trembled, sunk into a chair by the window, and Annette called aloud, ‘Monsieur Valancourt! Monsieur Valancourt!’ while Emily endeavoured to check her, but she repeated the call more loudly than before, and the lute and the voice suddenly stopped. Emily listened, for some time, in a state of intolerable suspense; but, no answer being returned, ‘It does not signify, Mademoiselle,’ said Annette; ‘it is the Chevalier, and I will speak to him.’ ‘No, Annette,’ said Emily, ‘I think I will speak myself; if it is he, he will know my voice, and speak again.’ ‘Who is it,’ said she, ‘that sings at this late hour?’

A long silence ensued, and, having repeated the question, she perceived some faint accents, mingling in the blast, that swept by; but the sounds were so distant, and passed so suddenly, that she could scarcely hear them, much less distinguish the words they uttered, or recognise the voice. After another pause, Emily called again; and again they heard a voice, but as faintly as before; and they perceived, that there were other circumstances, besides the strength, and direction of the wind, to content with; for the great depth, at which the casements were fixed in the castle walls, contributed, still more than the distance, to prevent articulated sounds from being understood, though general ones were easily heard. Emily, however, ventured to believe, from the circumstance of her voice alone having been answered, that the stranger was Valancourt, as well as that he knew her, and she gave herself up to speechless joy. Annette, however, was not speechless. — She renewed her calls, but received no answer; and Emily, fearing, that a further attempt, which certainly was, as present, highly dangerous, might expose them to the guards of the castle, while it could not perhaps terminate her suspense, insisted on Annette’s dropping

the enquiry for this night; though she determined herself to question Ludovico, on the subject, in the morning, more urgently than she had yet done. She was now enabled to say, that the stranger, whom she had formerly heard, was still in the castle, and to direct Ludovico to that part of it, in which he was confined.

Emily, attended by Annette, continued at the casement, for some time, but all remained still; they heard neither lute or voice again, and Emily was now as much oppressed by anxious joy, as she lately was by a sense of her misfortunes. With hasty steps she paced the room, now half calling on Valancourt's name, then suddenly stopping, and now going to the casement and listening, where, however, she heard nothing but the solemn waving of the woods. Sometimes her impatience to speak to Ludovico prompted her to send Annette to call him; but a sense of the impropriety of this at midnight restrained her. Annette, meanwhile, as impatient as her mistress, went as often to the casement to listen, and returned almost as much disappointed. She, at length, mentioned Signor Verezzi, and her fear, lest he should enter the chamber by the staircase, door. 'But the night is now almost past, Mademoiselle,' said she, recollecting herself; 'there is the morning light, beginning to peep over those mountains yonder in the east.'

Emily had forgotten, till this moment, that such a person existed as Verezzi, and all the danger that had appeared to threaten her; but the mention of his name renewed her alarm, and she remembered the old chest, that she had wished to place against the door, which she now, with Annette, attempted to move, but it was so heavy, that they could not lift it from the floor. 'What is in this great old chest, Mademoiselle,' said Annette, 'that makes it so weighty?' Emily having replied, 'that she found it in the chamber, when she first came to the castle, and had never examined it.'— 'Then I will, ma'amselle,' said Annette, and she tried to lift the lid; but this was held by a lock, for which she had no key, and which, indeed, appeared, from its peculiar construction, to open with a spring. The morning now glimmered through the casements, and the wind had sunk into a calm. Emily looked out upon the dusky woods, and on the twilight mountains, just stealing in the eye, and saw the whole scene, after the storm, lying in profound stillness, the woods motionless, and the clouds above, through which the dawn trembled, scarcely appearing to move along the heavens. One soldier was pacing the terrace beneath, with

measured steps; and two, more distant, were sunk asleep on the walls, wearied with the night's watch. Having inhaled, for a while, the pure spirit of the air, and of vegetation, which the late rains had called forth; and having listened, once more, for a note of music, she now closed the casement, and retired to rest.

CHAPTER IV

Thus on the chill Lapponian’s dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the seasons bland,
And in their northern cave the storms hath bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl’d, green hills emerge, and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flow’rs are crown’d;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant’s heart o’erflow.

BEATTIE

Several of her succeeding days passed in suspense, for Ludovico could only learn from the soldiers, that there was a prisoner in the apartment, described to him by Emily, and that he was a Frenchman, whom they had taken in one of their skirmishes, with a party of his countrymen. During this interval, Emily escaped the persecutions of Bertolini, and Verezzi, by confining herself to her apartment; except that sometimes, in an evening, she ventured to walk in the adjoining corridor. Montoni appeared to respect his last promise, though he had prophaned his first; for to his protection only could she attribute her present repose; and in this she was now so secure, that she did not wish to leave the castle, till she could obtain some certainty concerning Valancourt; for which she waited, indeed, without any sacrifice of her own comfort, since no circumstance had occurred to make her escape probable.

On the fourth day, Ludovico informed her, that he had hopes of being admitted to the presence of the prisoner; it being the turn of a soldier, with whom he had been for some time familiar, to attend him on the following night. He was not deceived in his hope; for, under pretence of carrying in a pitcher of water, he entered the prison, though, his prudence having prevented him from telling the sentinel the real motive of his visit, he was obliged to make his conference with the prisoner a very short one.

Emily awaited the result in her own apartment, Ludovico having promised to accompany Annette to the corridor, in the evening; where, after several hours impatiently counted, he arrived. Emily, having then uttered the name of Valancourt, could articulate no more, but hesitated in trembling expectation. ‘The Chevalier would not entrust me with his name, Signora,’ replied Ludovico; ‘but, when I just mentioned yours, he seemed overwhelmed with joy, though he was not so much surprised as I expected.’ ‘Does he then remember me?’ she exclaimed.

‘O! it is *Mons.* Valancourt,’ said Annette, and looked impatiently at Ludovico, who understood her look, and replied to Emily: ‘Yes, lady, the Chevalier does, indeed, remember you, and, I am sure, has a very great regard for you, and I made bold to say you had for him. He then enquired

how you came to know he was in the castle, and whether you ordered me to speak to him. The first question I could not answer, but the second I did; and then he went off into his ecstasies again. I was afraid his joy would have betrayed him to the sentinel at the door.'

'But how does he look, Ludovico?' interrupted Emily: 'is he not melancholy and ill with this long confinement?'— 'Why, as to melancholy, I saw no symptom of that, lady, while I was with him, for he seemed in the finest spirits I ever saw any body in, in all my life. His countenance was all joy, and, if one may judge from that, he was very well; but I did not ask him.' 'Did he send me no message?' said Emily. 'O yes, Signora, and something besides,' replied Ludovico, who searched his pockets. 'Surely, I have not lost it,' added he. 'The Chevalier said, he would have written, madam, if he had had pen and ink, and was going to have sent a very long message, when the sentinel entered the room, but not before he had give me this.' Ludovico then drew forth a miniature from his bosom, which Emily received with a trembling hand, and perceived to be a portrait of herself — the very picture, which her mother had lost so strangely in the fishing-house at La Vallee.

Tears of mingled joy and tenderness flowed to her eyes, while Ludovico proceeded— '"Tell your lady," said the Chevalier, as he gave me the picture, "that this has been my companion, and only solace in all my misfortunes. Tell her, that I have worn it next my heart, and that I sent it her as the pledge of an affection, which can never die; that I would not part with it, but to her, for the wealth of worlds, and that I now part with it, only in the hope of soon receiving it from her hands. Tell her" — Just then, Signora, the sentinel came in, and the Chevalier said no more; but he had before asked me to contrive an interview for him with you; and when I told him, how little hope I had of prevailing with the guard to assist me, he said, that was not, perhaps, of so much consequence as I imagined, and bade me contrive to bring back your answer, and he would inform me of more than he chose to do then. So this, I think, lady, is the whole of what passed.'

'How, Ludovico, shall I reward you for your zeal?' said Emily: 'but, indeed, I do not now possess the means. When can you see the Chevalier again?' 'That is uncertain, Signora,' replied he. 'It depends upon who

stands guard next: there are not more than one or two among them, from whom I would dare to ask admittance to the prison-chamber.'

'I need not bid you remember, Ludovico,' resumed Emily, 'how very much interested I am in your seeing the Chevalier soon; and, when you do so, tell him, that I have received the picture, and, with the sentiments he wished. Tell him I have suffered much, and still suffer— ' She paused. 'But shall I tell him you will see him, lady?' said Ludovico. 'Most certainly I will,' replied Emily. 'But when, Signora, and where?' 'That must depend upon circumstances,' returned Emily. 'The place, and the hour, must be regulated by his opportunities.'

'As to the place, mademoiselle,' said Annette, 'there is no other place in the castle, besides this corridor, where WE can see him in safety, you know; and, as for the hour, — it must be when all the Signors are asleep, if that ever happens!' 'You may mention these circumstances to the Chevalier, Ludovico,' said she, checking the flippancy of Annette, 'and leave them to his judgment and opportunity. Tell him, my heart is unchanged. But, above all, let him see you again as soon as possible; and, Ludovico, I think it is needless to tell you I shall very anxiously look for you.' Having then wished her good night, Ludovico descended the staircase, and Emily retired to rest, but not to sleep, for joy now rendered her as wakeful, as she had ever been from grief. Montoni and his castle had all vanished from her mind, like the frightful vision of a necromancer, and she wandered, once more, in fairy scenes of unfading happiness:

As when, beneath the beam
Of summer moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood, all silver'd with the gleam,
The soft embodied Fays thro' airy portals stream.

A week elapsed, before Ludovico again visited the prison; for the sentinels, during that period, were men, in whom he could not confide, and he feared to awaken curiosity, by asking to see their prisoner. In this interval, he communicated to Emily terrific reports of what was passing in the castle; of riots, quarrels, and of carousals more alarming than either; while from some circumstances, which he mentioned, she not only

doubted, whether Montoni meant ever to release her, but greatly feared, that he had designs, concerning her, — such as she had formerly dreaded. Her name was frequently mentioned in the conversations, which Bertolini and Verezzi held together, and, at those times, they were frequently in contention. Montoni had lost large sums to Verezzi, so that there was a dreadful possibility of his designing her to be a substitute for the debt; but, as she was ignorant, that he had formerly encouraged the hopes of Bertolini also, concerning herself, after the latter had done him some signal service, she knew not how to account for these contentions between Bertolini and Verezzi. The cause of them, however, appeared to be of little consequence, for she thought she saw destruction approaching in many forms, and her entreaties to Ludovico to contrive an escape and to see the prisoner again, were more urgent than ever.

At length, he informed her, that he had again visited the Chevalier, who had directed him to confide in the guard of the prison, from whom he had already received some instances of kindness, and who had promised to permit his going into the castle for half an hour, on the ensuing night, when Montoni and his companions should be engaged at their carousals. ‘This was kind, to be sure,’ added Ludovico: ‘but Sebastian knows he runs no risque in letting the Chevalier out, for, if he can get beyond the bars and iron doors of the castle, he must be cunning indeed. But the Chevalier desired me, Signora, to go to you immediately, and to beg you would allow him to visit you, this night, if it was only for a moment, for that he could no longer live under the same roof, without seeing you; the hour, he said, he could not mention, for it must depend on circumstances (just as you said, Signora); and the place he desired you would appoint, as knowing which was best for your own safety.’

Emily was now so much agitated by the near prospect of meeting Valancourt, that it was some time, before she could give any answer to Ludovico, or consider of the place of meeting; when she did, she saw none, that promised so much security, as the corridor, near her own apartment, which she was checked from leaving, by the apprehension of meeting any of Montoni’s guests, on their way to their rooms; and she dismissed the scruples, which delicacy opposed, now that a serious danger was to be avoided by encountering them. It was settled, therefore, that the Chevalier should meet her in the corridor, at that hour of the night, which Ludovico,

who was to be upon the watch, should judge safest: and Emily, as may be imagined, passed this interval in a tumult of hope and joy, anxiety and impatience. Never, since her residence in the castle, had she watched, with so much pleasure, the sun set behind the mountains, and twilight shade, and darkness veil the scene, as on this evening. She counted the notes of the great clock, and listened to the steps of the sentinels, as they changed the watch, only to rejoice, that another hour was gone. ‘O, Valancourt!’ said she, ‘after all I have suffered; after our long, long separation, when I thought I should never — never see you more — we are still to meet again! O! I have endured grief, and anxiety, and terror, and let me, then, not sink beneath this joy!’ These were moments, when it was impossible for her to feel emotions of regret, or melancholy, for any ordinary interests; — even the reflection, that she had resigned the estates, which would have been a provision for herself and Valancourt for life, threw only a light and transient shade upon her spirits. The idea of Valancourt, and that she should see him so soon, alone occupied her heart.

At length the clock struck twelve; she opened the door to listen, if any noise was in the castle, and heard only distant shouts of riot and laughter, echoed feebly along the gallery. She guessed, that the Signor and his guests were at the banquet. ‘They are now engaged for the night,’ said she; ‘and Valancourt will soon be here.’ Having softly closed the door, she paced the room with impatient steps, and often went to the casement to listen for the lute; but all was silent, and, her agitation every moment increasing, she was at length unable to support herself, and sat down by the window. Annette, whom she detained, was, in the meantime, as loquacious as usual; but Emily heard scarcely any thing she said, and having at length risen to the casement, she distinguished the chords of the lute, struck with an expressive hand, and then the voice, she had formerly listened to, accompanied it.

Now rising love they fann’d, now pleasing dole
They breath’d in tender musings through the heart;
And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands an hymn impart!

Emily wept in doubtful joy and tenderness; and, when the strain ceased, she considered it as a signal, that Valancourt was about to leave the prison. Soon after, she heard steps in the corridor; — they were the light, quick steps of hope; she could scarcely support herself, as they approached, but opening the door of the apartment, she advanced to meet Valancourt, and, in the next moment, sunk in the arms of a stranger. His voice — his countenance instantly convinced her, and she fainted away.

On reviving, she found herself supported by the stranger, who was watching over her recovery, with a countenance of ineffable tenderness and anxiety. She had no spirits for reply, or enquiry; she asked no questions, but burst into tears, and disengaged herself from his arms; when the expression of his countenance changed to surprise and disappointment, and he turned to Ludovico, for an explanation; Annette soon gave the information, which Ludovico could not. ‘O, sir!’ said she, in a voice, interrupted with sobs; ‘O, sir! you are not the other Chevalier. We expected Monsieur Valancourt, but you are not he! O Ludovico! how could you deceive us so? my poor lady will never recover it — never!’ The stranger, who now appeared much agitated, attempted to speak, but his words faltered; and then striking his hand against his forehead, as if in sudden despair, he walked abruptly to the other end of the corridor.

Suddenly, Annette dried her tears, and spoke to Ludovico. ‘But, perhaps,’ said she, ‘after all, the other Chevalier is not this: perhaps the Chevalier Valancourt is still below.’ Emily raised her head. ‘No,’ replied Ludovico, ‘Monsieur Valancourt never was below, if this gentleman is not he.’ ‘If you, sir,’ said Ludovico, addressing the stranger, ‘would but have had the goodness to trust me with your name, this mistake had been avoided.’ ‘Most true,’ replied the stranger, speaking in broken Italian, ‘but it was of the utmost consequence to me, that my name should be concealed from Montoni. Madam,’ added he then, addressing Emily in French, ‘will you permit me to apologize for the pain I have occasioned you, and to explain to you alone my name, and the circumstance, which has led me into this error? I am of France; — I am your countryman; — we are met in a foreign land.’ Emily tried to compose her spirits; yet she hesitated to grant his request. At length, desiring, that Ludovico would wait on the staircase, and detaining Annette, she told the stranger, that her woman understood very little Italian, and begged he would communicate what he

wished to say, in that language. — Having withdrawn to a distant part of the corridor, he said, with a long-drawn sigh, ‘You, madam, are no stranger to me, though I am so unhappy as to be unknown to you. — My name is Du Pont; I am of France, of Gascony, your native province, and have long admired, — and, why should I affect to disguise it? — have long loved you.’ He paused, but, in the next moment, proceeded. ‘My family, madam, is probably not unknown to you, for we lived within a few miles of La Vallee, and I have, sometimes, had the happiness of meeting you, on visits in the neighbourhood. I will not offend you by repeating how much you interested me; how much I loved to wander in the scenes you frequented; how often I visited your favourite fishing-house, and lamented the circumstance, which, at that time, forbade me to reveal my passion. I will not explain how I surrendered to temptation, and became possessed of a treasure, which was to me inestimable; a treasure, which I committed to your messenger, a few days ago, with expectations very different from my present ones. I will say nothing of these circumstances, for I know they will avail me little; let me only supplicate from you forgiveness, and the picture, which I so unwarily returned. Your generosity will pardon the theft, and restore the prize. My crime has been my punishment; for the portrait I stole has contributed to nourish a passion, which must still be my torment.’

Emily now interrupted him. ‘I think, sir, I may leave it to your integrity to determine, whether, after what has just appeared, concerning *Mons.* Valancourt, I ought to return the picture. I think you will acknowledge, that this would not be generosity; and you will allow me to add, that it would be doing myself an injustice. I must consider myself honoured by your good opinion, but’ — and she hesitated,— ‘the mistake of this evening makes it unnecessary for me to say more.’

‘It does, madam, — alas! it does!’ said the stranger, who, after a long pause, proceeded.— ‘But you will allow me to shew my disinterestedness, though not my love, and will accept the services I offer. Yet, alas! what services can I offer? I am myself a prisoner, a sufferer, like you. But, dear as liberty is to me, I would not seek it through half the hazards I would encounter to deliver you from this recess of vice. Accept the offered services of a friend; do not refuse me the reward of having, at least, attempted to deserve your thanks.’

‘You deserve them already, sir,’ said Emily; ‘the wish deserves my warmest thanks. But you will excuse me for reminding you of the danger you incur by prolonging this interview. It will be a great consolation to me to remember, whether your friendly attempts to release me succeed or not, that I have a countryman, who would so generously protect me.’ — Monsieur Du Pont took her hand, which she but feebly attempted to withdraw, and pressed it respectfully to his lips. ‘Allow me to breathe another fervent sigh for your happiness,’ said he, ‘and to applaud myself for an affection, which I cannot conquer.’ As he said this, Emily heard a noise from her apartment, and, turning round, saw the door from the staircase open, and a man rush into her chamber. ‘I will teach you to conquer it,’ cried he, as he advanced into the corridor, and drew a stiletto, which he aimed at Du Pont, who was unarmed, but who, stepping back, avoided the blow, and then sprung upon Verezzi, from whom he wrenched the stiletto. While they struggled in each other’s grasp, Emily, followed by Annette, ran further into the corridor, calling on Ludovico, who was, however, gone from the staircase, and, as she advanced, terrified and uncertain what to do, a distant noise, that seemed to arise from the hall, reminded her of the danger she was incurring; and, sending Annette forward in search of Ludovico, she returned to the spot where Du Pont and Verezzi were still struggling for victory. It was her own cause which was to be decided with that of the former, whose conduct, independently of this circumstance, would, however, have interested her in his success, even had she not disliked and dreaded Verezzi. She threw herself in a chair, and supplicated them to desist from further violence, till, at length, Du Pont forced Verezzi to the floor, where he lay stunned by the violence of his fall; and she then entreated Du Pont to escape from the room, before Montoni, or his party, should appear; but he still refused to leave her unprotected; and, while Emily, now more terrified for him, than for herself, enforced the entreaty, they heard steps ascending the private staircase.

‘O you are lost!’ cried she, ‘these are Montoni’s people.’ Du Pont made no reply, but supported Emily, while, with a steady, though eager, countenance, he awaited their appearance, and, in the next moment, Ludovico, alone, mounted the landing-place. Throwing an hasty glance

round the chamber, ‘Follow me,’ said he, ‘as you value your lives; we have not an instant to lose!’

Emily enquired what had occurred, and whither they were to go?

‘I cannot stay to tell you now, Signora,’ replied Ludovico: ‘fly! fly!’

She immediately followed him, accompanied by *Mons.* Du Pont, down the staircase, and along a vaulted passage, when suddenly she recollected Annette, and enquired for her. ‘She awaits us further on, Signora,’ said Ludovico, almost breathless with haste; ‘the gates were open, a moment since, to a party just come in from the mountains: they will be shut, I fear, before we can reach them! Through this door, Signora,’ added Ludovico, holding down the lamp, ‘take care, here are two steps.’

Emily followed, trembling still more, than before she had understood, that her escape from the castle, depended upon the present moment; while Du Pont supported her, and endeavoured, as they passed along, to cheer her spirits.

‘Speak low, Signor,’ said Ludovico, ‘these passages send echoes all round the castle.’

‘Take care of the light,’ cried Emily, ‘you go so fast, that the air will extinguish it.’

Ludovico now opened another door, where they found Annette, and the party then descended a short flight of steps into a passage, which, Ludovico said, led round the inner court of the castle, and opened into the outer one. As they advanced, confused and tumultuous sounds, that seemed to come from the inner court, alarmed Emily. ‘Nay, Signora,’ said Ludovico, ‘our only hope is in that tumult; while the Signor’s people are busied about the men, who are just arrived, we may, perhaps, pass unnoticed through the gates. But hush!’ he added, as they approached the small door, that opened into the outer court, ‘if you will remain here a moment, I will go to see whether the gates are open, and any body is in the way. Pray extinguish the light, Signor, if you hear me talking,’ continued Ludovico, delivering the lamp to Du Pont, ‘and remain quite still.’

Saying this, he stepped out upon the court, and they closed the door, listening anxiously to his departing steps. No voice, however, was heard in the court, which he was crossing, though a confusion of many voices yet issued from the inner one. ‘We shall soon be beyond the walls,’ said Du

Pont softly to Emily, ‘support yourself a little longer, Madam, and all will be well.’

But soon they heard Ludovico speaking loud, and the voice also of some other person, and Du Pont immediately extinguished the lamp. ‘Ah! it is too late!’ exclaimed Emily, ‘what is to become of us?’ They listened again, and then perceived, that Ludovico was talking with a sentinel, whose voices were heard also by Emily’s favourite dog, that had followed her from the chamber, and now barked loudly. ‘This dog will betray us!’ said Du Pont, ‘I will hold him.’ ‘I fear he has already betrayed us!’ replied Emily. Du Pont, however, caught him up, and, again listening to what was going on without, they heard Ludovico say, ‘I’ll watch the gates the while.’

‘Stay a minute,’ replied the sentinel, ‘and you need not have the trouble, for the horses will be sent round to the outer stables, then the gates will be shut, and I can leave my post.’ ‘I don’t mind the trouble, comrade,’ said Ludovico, ‘you will do such another good turn for me, some time. Go — go, and fetch the wine; the rogues, that are just come in, will drink it all else.’

The soldier hesitated, and then called aloud to the people in the second court, to know why they did not send out the horses, that the gates might be shut; but they were too much engaged, to attend to him, even if they had heard his voice.

‘Aye — aye,’ said Ludovico, ‘they know better than that; they are sharing it all among them; if you wait till the horses come out, you must wait till the wine is drunk. I have had my share already, but, since you do not care about yours, I see no reason why I should not have that too.’

‘Hold, hold, not so fast,’ cried the sentinel, ‘do watch then, for a moment: I’ll be with you presently.’

‘Don’t hurry yourself,’ said Ludovico, coolly, ‘I have kept guard before now. But you may leave me your trombone,* that, if the castle should be attacked, you know, I may be able to defend the pass, like a hero.’

(* A kind of blunderbuss. [A. R.])

‘There, my good fellow,’ returned the soldier, ‘there, take it — it has seen service, though it could do little in defending the castle. I’ll tell you a good story, though, about this same trombone.’

‘You’ll tell it better when you have had the wine,’ said Ludovico. ‘There! they are coming out from the court already.’

‘I’ll have the wine, though,’ said the sentinel, running off. ‘I won’t keep you a minute.’

‘Take your time, I am in no haste,’ replied Ludovico, who was already hurrying across the court, when the soldier came back. ‘Whither so fast, friend — whither so fast?’ said the latter. ‘What! is this the way you keep watch! I must stand to my post myself, I see.’

‘Aye, well,’ replied Ludovico, ‘you have saved me the trouble of following you further, for I wanted to tell you, if you have a mind to drink the Tuscany wine, you must go to Sebastian, he is dealing it out; the other that Federico has, is not worth having. But you are not likely to have any, I see, for they are all coming out.’

‘By St. Peter! so they are,’ said the soldier, and again ran off, while Ludovico, once more at liberty, hastened to the door of the passage, where Emily was sinking under the anxiety this long discourse had occasioned; but, on his telling them the court was clear, they followed him to the gates, without waiting another instant, yet not before he had seized two horses, that had strayed from the second court, and were picking a scanty meal among the grass, which grew between the pavement of the first.

They passed, without interruption, the dreadful gates, and took the road that led down among the woods, Emily, Monsieur Du Pont and Annette on foot, and Ludovico, who was mounted on one horse, leading the other. Having reached them, they stopped, while Emily and Annette were placed on horseback with their two protectors, when, Ludovico leading the way, they set off as fast as the broken road, and the feeble light, which a rising moon threw among the foliage, would permit.

Emily was so much astonished by this sudden departure, that she scarcely dared to believe herself awake; and she yet much doubted whether this adventure would terminate in escape, — a doubt, which had too much probability to justify it; for, before they quitted the woods, they heard shouts in the wind, and, on emerging from them, saw lights moving quickly near the castle above. Du Pont whipped his horse, and with some difficulty compelled him to go faster.

‘Ah! poor beast,’ said Ludovico, ‘he is weary enough; — he has been out all day; but, Signor, we must fly for it, now; for yonder are lights coming this way.’

Having given his own horse a lash, they now both set off on a full gallop; and, when they again looked back, the lights were so distant as scarcely to be discerned, and the voices were sunk into silence. The travellers then abated their pace, and, consulting whither they should direct their course, it was determined they should descend into Tuscany, and endeavour to reach the Mediterranean, where they could readily embark for France. Thither Du Pont meant to attend Emily, if he should learn, that the regiment he had accompanied into Italy, was returned to his native country.

They were now on the road, which Emily had travelled with Ugo and Bertrand; but Ludovico, who was the only one of the party, acquainted with the passes of these mountains, said, that, a little further on, a bye-road, branching from this, would lead them down into Tuscany with very little difficulty; and that, at a few leagues distance, was a small town, where necessaries could be procured for their journey.

‘But, I hope,’ added he, ‘we shall meet with no straggling parties of banditti; some of them are abroad, I know. However, I have got a good trombone, which will be of some service, if we should encounter any of those brave spirits. You have no arms, Signor?’ ‘Yes,’ replied Du Pont, ‘I have the villain’s stilletto, who would have stabbed me — but let us rejoice in our escape from Udolpho, nor torment ourselves with looking out for dangers, that may never arrive.’

The moon was now risen high over the woods, that hung upon the sides of the narrow glen, through which they wandered, and afforded them light sufficient to distinguish their way, and to avoid the loose and broken stones, that frequently crossed it. They now travelled leisurely, and in profound silence; for they had scarcely yet recovered from the astonishment, into which this sudden escape had thrown them. — Emily’s mind, especially, was sunk, after the various emotions it had suffered, into a kind of musing stillness, which the reposing beauty of the surrounding scene and the creeping murmur of the night-breeze among the foliage above contributed to prolong. She thought of Valancourt and of France, with hope, and she would have thought of them with joy, had not the first events of this evening harassed her spirits too much, to permit her now to

feel so lively a sensation. Meanwhile, Emily was alone the object of Du Pont's melancholy consideration; yet, with the despondency he suffered, as he mused on his recent disappointment, was mingled a sweet pleasure, occasioned by her presence, though they did not now exchange a single word. Annette thought of this wonderful escape, of the bustle in which Montoni and his people must be, now that their flight was discovered; of her native country, whither she hoped she was returning, and of her marriage with Ludovico, to which there no longer appeared any impediment, for poverty she did not consider such. Ludovico, on his part, congratulated himself, on having rescued his Annette and Signora Emily from the danger, that had surrounded them; on his own liberation from people, whose manners he had long detested; on the freedom he had given to Monsieur Du Pont; on his prospect of happiness with the object of his affections, and not a little on the address, with which he had deceived the sentinel, and conducted the whole of this affair.

Thus variously engaged in thought, the travellers passed on silently, for above an hour, a question only being, now and then, asked by Du Pont, concerning the road, or a remark uttered by Annette, respecting objects, seen imperfectly in the twilight. At length, lights were perceived twinkling on the side of a mountain, and Ludovico had no doubt, that they proceeded from the town he had mentioned, while his companions, satisfied by this assurance, sunk again into silence. Annette was the first who interrupted this. 'Holy Peter!' said she, 'What shall we do for money on our journey? for I know neither I, or my lady, have a single sequin; the Signor took care of that!'

This remark produced a serious enquiry, which ended in as serious an embarrassment, for Du Pont had been rifled of nearly all his money, when he was taken prisoner; the remainder he had given to the sentinel, who had enabled him occasionally to leave his prison-chamber; and Ludovico, who had for some time found a difficulty, in procuring any part of the wages due to him, had now scarcely cash sufficient to procure necessary refreshment at the first town, in which they should arrive.

Their poverty was the more distressing, since it would detain them among the mountains, where, even in a town, they could scarcely consider themselves safe from Montoni. The travellers, however, had only to proceed and dare the future; and they continued their way through lonely

wilds and dusky vallies, where the overhanging foliage now admitted, and then excluded the moonlight; — wilds so desolate, that they appeared, on the first glance, as if no human being had ever trode them before. Even the road, in which the party were, did but slightly contradict this error, for the high grass and other luxuriant vegetation, with which it was overgrown, told how very seldom the foot of a traveller had passed it.

At length, from a distance, was heard the faint tinkling of a sheep-bell; and, soon after, the bleat of flocks, and the party then knew, that they were near some human habitation, for the light, which Ludovico had fancied to proceed from a town, had long been concealed by intervening mountains. Cheered by this hope, they quickened their pace along the narrow pass they were winding, and it opened upon one of those pastoral vallies of the Apennines, which might be painted for a scene of Arcadia, and whose beauty and simplicity are finely contrasted by the grandeur of the snow-topt mountains above.

The morning light, now glimmering in the horizon, shewed faintly, at a little distance, upon the brow of a hill, which seemed to peep from ‘under the opening eyelids of the morn,’ the town they were in search of, and which they soon after reached. It was not without some difficulty, that they there found a house, which could afford shelter for themselves and their horses; and Emily desired they might not rest longer than was necessary for refreshment. Her appearance excited some surprise, for she was without a hat, having had time only to throw on her veil before she left the castle, a circumstance, that compelled her to regret again the want of money, without which it was impossible to procure this necessary article of dress.

Ludovico, on examining his purse, found it even insufficient to supply present refreshment, and Du Pont, at length, ventured to inform the landlord, whose countenance was simple and honest, of their exact situation, and requested, that he would assist them to pursue their journey; a purpose, which he promised to comply with, as far as he was able, when he learned that they were prisoners escaping from Montoni, whom he had too much reason to hate. But, though he consented to lend them fresh horses to carry them to the next town, he was too poor himself to trust them with money, and they were again lamenting their poverty, when Ludovico, who had been with his tired horses to the hovel, which served

for a stable, entered the room, half frantic with joy, in which his auditors soon participated. On removing the saddle from one of the horses, he had found beneath it a small bag, containing, no doubt, the booty of one of the condottieri, who had returned from a plundering excursion, just before Ludovico left the castle, and whose horse having strayed from the inner court, while his master was engaged in drinking, had brought away the treasure, which the ruffian had considered the reward of his exploit.

On counting over this, Du Pont found, that it would be more than sufficient to carry them all to France, where he now determined to accompany Emily, whether he should obtain intelligence of his regiment, or not; for, though he had as much confidence in the integrity of Ludovico, as his small knowledge of him allowed, he could not endure the thought of committing her to his care for the voyage; nor, perhaps, had he resolution enough to deny himself the dangerous pleasure, which he might derive from her presence.

He now consulted them, concerning the seaport, to which they should direct their way, and Ludovico, better informed of the geography of the country, said, that Leghorn was the nearest port of consequence, which Du Pont knew also to be the most likely of any in Italy to assist their plan, since from thence vessels of all nations were continually departing. Thither, therefore, it was determined, that they should proceed.

Emily, having purchased a little straw hat, such as was worn by the peasant girls of Tuscany, and some other little necessary equipments for the journey, and the travellers, having exchanged their tired horses for others better able to carry them, recommenced their joyous way, as the sun was rising over the mountains, and, after travelling through this romantic country, for several hours, began to descend into the vale of Arno. And here Emily beheld all the charms of sylvan and pastoral landscape united, adorned with the elegant villas of the Florentine nobles, and diversified with the various riches of cultivation. How vivid the shrubs, that embowered the slopes, with the woods, that stretched amphitheatrically along the mountains! and, above all, how elegant the outline of these waving Apennines, now softening from the wildness, which their interior regions exhibited! At a distance, in the east, Emily discovered Florence, with its towers rising on the brilliant horizon, and its luxuriant plain, spreading to the feet of the Apennines, speckled with gardens and

magnificent villas, or coloured with groves of orange and lemon, with vines, corn, and plantations of olives and mulberry; while, to the west, the vale opened to the waters of the Mediterranean, so distant, that they were known only by a blueish line, that appeared upon the horizon, and by the light marine vapour, which just stained the aether above.

With a full heart, Emily hailed the waves, that were to bear her back to her native country, the remembrance of which, however, brought with it a pang; for she had there no home to receive, no parents to welcome her, but was going, like a forlorn pilgrim, to weep over the sad spot, where he, who WAS her father, lay interred. Nor were her spirits cheered, when she considered how long it would probably be before she should see Valancourt, who might be stationed with his regiment in a distant part of France, and that, when they did meet, it would be only to lament the successful villany of Montoni; yet, still she would have felt inexpressible delight at the thought of being once more in the same country with Valancourt, had it even been certain, that she could not see him.

The intense heat, for it was now noon, obliged the travellers to look out for a shady recess, where they might rest, for a few hours, and the neighbouring thickets, abounding with wild grapes, raspberries, and figs, promised them grateful refreshment. Soon after, they turned from the road into a grove, whose thick foliage entirely excluded the sunbeams, and where a spring, gushing from the rock, gave coolness to the air; and, having alighted and turned the horses to graze, Annette and Ludovico ran to gather fruit from the surrounding thickets, of which they soon returned with an abundance. The travellers, seated under the shade of a pine and cypress grove and on turf, enriched with such a profusion of fragrant flowers, as Emily had scarcely ever seen, even among the Pyrenees, took their simple repast, and viewed, with new delight, beneath the dark umbrage of gigantic pines, the glowing landscape stretching to the sea.

Emily and Du Pont gradually became thoughtful and silent; but Annette was all joy and loquacity, and Ludovico was gay, without forgetting the respectful distance, which was due to his companions. The repast being over, Du Pont recommended Emily to endeavour to sleep, during these sultry hours, and, desiring the servants would do the same, said he would watch the while; but Ludovico wished to spare him this trouble; and Emily

and Annette, wearied with travelling, tried to repose, while he stood guard with his trombone.

When Emily, refreshed by slumber, awoke, she found the sentinel asleep on his post and Du Pont awake, but lost in melancholy thought. As the sun was yet too high to allow them to continue their journey, and as it was necessary, that Ludovico, after the toils and trouble he had suffered, should finish his sleep, Emily took this opportunity of enquiring by what accident Du Pont became Montoni's prisoner, and he, pleased with the interest this enquiry expressed and with the excuse it gave him for talking to her of himself, immediately answered her curiosity.

'I came into Italy, madam,' said Du Pont, 'in the service of my country. In an adventure among the mountains our party, engaging with the bands of Montoni, was routed, and I, with a few of my comrades, was taken prisoner. When they told me, whose captive I was, the name of Montoni struck me, for I remembered, that Madame Cheron, your aunt, had married an Italian of that name, and that you had accompanied them into Italy. It was not, however, till some time after, that I became convinced this was the same Montoni, or learned that you, madam, was under the same roof with myself. I will not pain you by describing what were my emotions upon this discovery, which I owed to a sentinel, whom I had so far won to my interest, that he granted me many indulgences, one of which was very important to me, and somewhat dangerous to himself; but he persisted in refusing to convey any letter, or notice of my situation to you, for he justly dreaded a discovery and the consequent vengeance of Montoni. He however enabled me to see you more than once. You are surprised, madam, and I will explain myself. My health and spirits suffered extremely from want of air and exercise, and, at length, I gained so far upon the pity, or the avarice of the man, that he gave me the means of walking on the terrace.'

Emily now listened, with very anxious attention, to the narrative of Du Pont, who proceeded:

'In granting this indulgence, he knew, that he had nothing to apprehend from a chance of my escaping from a castle, which was vigilantly guarded, and the nearest terrace of which rose over a perpendicular rock; he shewed me also,' continued Du Pont, 'a door concealed in the cedar wainscot of the apartment where I was confined, which he instructed me how to open;

and which, leading into a passage, formed within the thickness of the wall, that extended far along the castle, finally opened in an obscure corner of the eastern rampart. I have since been informed, that there are many passages of the same kind concealed within the prodigious walls of that edifice, and which were, undoubtedly, contrived for the purpose of facilitating escapes in time of war. Through this avenue, at the dead of night, I often stole to the terrace, where I walked with the utmost caution, lest my steps should betray me to the sentinels on duty in distant parts; for this end of it, being guarded by high buildings, was not watched by soldiers. In one of these midnight wanderings, I saw light in a casement that overlooked the rampart, and which, I observed, was immediately over my prison-chamber. It occurred to me, that you might be in that apartment, and, with the hope of seeing you, I placed myself opposite to the window.'

Emily, remembering the figure that had formerly appeared on the terrace, and which had occasioned her so much anxiety, exclaimed, 'It was you then, Monsieur Du Pont, who occasioned me much foolish terror; my spirits were, at that time, so much weakened by long suffering, that they took alarm at every hint.' Du Pont, after lamenting, that he had occasioned her any apprehension, added, 'As I rested on the wall, opposite to your casement, the consideration of your melancholy situation and of my own called from me involuntary sounds of lamentation, which drew you, I fancy, to the casement; I saw there a person, whom I believed to be you. O! I will say nothing of my emotion at that moment; I wished to speak, but prudence restrained me, till the distant footstep of a sentinel compelled me suddenly to quit my station.

'It was some time, before I had another opportunity of walking, for I could only leave my prison, when it happened to be the turn of one man to guard me; meanwhile I became convinced from some circumstances related by him, that your apartment was over mine, and, when again I ventured forth, I returned to your casement, where again I saw you, but without daring to speak. I waved my hand, and you suddenly disappeared; then it was, that I forgot my prudence, and yielded to lamentation; again you appeared — you spoke — I heard the wellknown accent of your voice! and, at that moment, my discretion would have forsaken me again, had I not heard also the approaching steps of a soldier, when I instantly quitted the place, though not before the man had seen me. He followed down the

terrace and gained so fast upon me, that I was compelled to make use of a stratagem, ridiculous enough, to save myself. I had heard of the superstition of many of these men, and I uttered a strange noise, with a hope, that my pursuer would mistake it for something supernatural, and desist from pursuit. Luckily for myself I succeeded; the man, it seems, was subject to fits, and the terror he suffered threw him into one, by which accident I secured my retreat. A sense of the danger I had escaped, and the increased watchfulness, which my appearance had occasioned among the sentinels, deterred me ever after from walking on the terrace; but, in the stillness of night, I frequently beguiled myself with an old lute, procured for me by a soldier, which I sometimes accompanied with my voice, and sometimes, I will acknowledge, with a hope of making myself heard by you; but it was only a few evenings ago, that this hope was answered. I then thought I heard a voice in the wind, calling me; yet, even then I feared to reply, lest the sentinel at the prison door should hear me. Was I right, madam, in this conjecture — was it you who spoke?'

'Yes,' said Emily, with an involuntary sigh, 'you was right indeed.'

Du Pont, observing the painful emotions, which this question revived, now changed the subject. 'In one of my excursions through the passage, which I have mentioned, I overheard a singular conversation,' said he.

'In the passage!' said Emily, with surprise.

'I heard it in the passage,' said Du Pont, 'but it proceeded from an apartment, adjoining the wall, within which the passage wound, and the shell of the wall was there so thin, and was also somewhat decayed, that I could distinctly hear every word, spoken on the other side. It happened that Montoni and his companions were assembled in the room, and Montoni began to relate the extraordinary history of the lady, his predecessor, in the castle. He did, indeed, mention some very surprising circumstances, and whether they were strictly true, his conscience must decide; I fear it will determine against him. But you, madam, have doubtless heard the report, which he designs should circulate, on the subject of that lady's mysterious fate.'

'I have, sir,' replied Emily, 'and I perceive, that you doubt it.'

'I doubted it before the period I am speaking of,' rejoined Du Pont;— 'but some circumstances, mentioned by Montoni, greatly contributed to my suspicions. The account I then heard, almost convinced me, that he

was a murderer. I trembled for you; — the more so that I had heard the guests mention your name in a manner, that threatened your repose; and, knowing, that the most impious men are often the most superstitious, I determined to try whether I could not awaken their consciences, and awe them from the commission of the crime I dreaded. I listened closely to Montoni, and, in the most striking passages of his story, I joined my voice, and repeated his last words, in a disguised and hollow tone.'

'But was you not afraid of being discovered?' said Emily.

'I was not,' replied Du Pont; 'for I knew, that, if Montoni had been acquainted with the secret of this passage, he would not have confined me in the apartment, to which it led. I knew also, from better authority, that he was ignorant of it. The party, for some time, appeared inattentive to my voice; but, at length, were so much alarmed, that they quitted the apartment; and, having heard Montoni order his servants to search it, I returned to my prison, which was very distant from this part of the passage.' 'I remember perfectly to have heard of the conversation you mention,' said Emily; 'it spread a general alarm among Montoni's people, and I will own I was weak enough to partake of it.'

Monsieur Du Pont and Emily thus continued to converse of Montoni, and then of France, and of the plan of their voyage; when Emily told him, that it was her intention to retire to a convent in Languedoc, where she had been formerly treated with much kindness, and from thence to write to her relation Monsieur Quesnel, and inform him of her conduct. There, she designed to wait, till La Vallee should again be her own, whither she hoped her income would some time permit her to return; for Du Pont now taught her to expect, that the estate, of which Montoni had attempted to defraud her, was not irrecoverably lost, and he again congratulated her on her escape from Montoni, who, he had not a doubt, meant to have detained her for life. The possibility of recovering her aunt's estates for Valancourt and herself lighted up a joy in Emily's heart, such as she had not known for many months; but she endeavoured to conceal this from Monsieur Du Pont, lest it should lead him to a painful remembrance of his rival.

They continued to converse, till the sun was declining in the west, when Du Pont awoke Ludovico, and they set forward on their journey. Gradually descending the lower slopes of the valley, they reached the Arno, and wound along its pastoral margin, for many miles, delighted with the

scenery around them, and with the remembrances, which its classic waves revived. At a distance, they heard the gay song of the peasants among the vineyards, and observed the setting sun tint the waves with yellow lustre, and twilight draw a dusky purple over the mountains, which, at length, deepened into night. Then the LUCCIOLA, the fire-fly of Tuscany, was seen to flash its sudden sparks among the foliage, while the cicala, with its shrill note, became more clamorous than even during the noonday heat, loving best the hour when the English beetle, with less offensive sound,

winds
His small but sullen horn,
As oft he rises ‘midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.*
(* Collins. [A. R.])

The travellers crossed the Arno by moonlight, at a ferry, and, learning that Pisa was distant only a few miles down the river, they wished to have proceeded thither in a boat, but, as none could be procured, they set out on their wearied horses for that city. As they approached it, the vale expanded into a plain, variegated with vineyards, corn, olives and mulberry groves; but it was late, before they reached its gates, where Emily was surprised to hear the busy sound of footsteps and the tones of musical instruments, as well as to see the lively groups, that filled the streets, and she almost fancied herself again at Venice; but here was no moonlight sea — no gay gondolas, dashing the waves, — no PALLADIAN palaces, to throw enchantment over the fancy and lead it into the wilds of fairy story. The Arno rolled through the town, but no music trembled from balconies over its waters; it gave only the busy voices of sailors on board vessels just arrived from the Mediterranean; the melancholy heaving of the anchor, and the shrill boatswain’s whistle; — sounds, which, since that period, have there sunk almost into silence. They then served to remind Du Pont, that it was probable he might hear of a vessel, sailing soon to France from this port, and thus be spared the trouble of going to Leghorn. As soon as Emily had reached the inn, he went therefore to the quay, to make his enquiries; but, after all the endeavours of himself and Ludovico, they could hear of no bark, destined immediately for France, and the travellers returned to their resting-place. Here also, Du Pont endeavoured to learn where his regiment then lay, but could acquire no information concerning

it. The travellers retired early to rest, after the fatigues of this day; and, on the following, rose early, and, without pausing to view the celebrated antiquities of the place, or the wonders of its hanging tower, pursued their journey in the cooler hours, through a charming country, rich with wine, and corn and oil. The Apennines, no longer awful, or even grand, here softened into the beauty of sylvan and pastoral landscape; and Emily, as she descended them, looked down delighted on Leghorn, and its spacious bay, filled with vessels, and crowned with these beautiful hills.

She was no less surprised and amused, on entering this town, to find it crowded with persons in the dresses of all nations; a scene, which reminded her of a Venetian masquerade, such as she had witnessed at the time of the Carnival; but here, was bustle, without gaiety, and noise instead of music, while elegance was to be looked for only in the waving outlines of the surrounding hills.

THE MARINER

Soft came the breath of spring; smooth flow’d the tide;
And blue the heaven in its mirror smil’d;
The white sail trembled, swell’d, expanded wide,
The busy sailors at the anchor toil’d.

With anxious friends, that shed the parting tear,
The deck was throng’d — how swift the moments fly!
The vessel heaves, the farewel signs appear;
Mute is each tongue, and eloquent each eye!

The last dread moment comes! — The sailor-youth
Hides the big drop, then smiles amid his pain,
Sooths his sad bride, and vows eternal truth,
‘Farewel, my love — we shall — shall meet again!’

Long on the stern, with waving hand, he stood;
The crowded shore sinks, lessening, from his view,
As gradual glides the bark along the flood;
His bride is seen no more— ‘Adieu! — adieu!’

The breeze of Eve moans low, her smile is o’er,
Dim steals her twilight down the crimson’d west,
He climbs the topmost mast, to seek once more
The far-seen coast, where all his wishes rest.

He views its dark line on the distant sky,
And Fancy leads him to his little home,
He sees his weeping love, he hears her sigh,
He sooths her griefs, and tells of joys to come.

Eve yields to night, the breeze to wintry gales,
In one vast shade the seas and shores repose;
He turns his aching eyes, — his spirit fails,
The chill tear falls; — sad to the deck he goes!

The storm of midnight swells, the sails are furl'd,
Deep sounds the lead, but finds no friendly shore,
Fast o'er the waves the wretched bark is hurl'd,
'O Ellen, Ellen! we must meet no more!'

Lightnings, that shew the vast and foamy deep,
The rending thunders, as they onward roll,
The loud, loud winds, that o'er the billows sweep —
Shake the firm nerve, appall the bravest soul!

Ah! what avails the seamen's toiling care!
The straining cordage bursts, the mast is riv'n;
The sounds of terror groan along the air,
Then sink afar; — the bark on rocks is driv'n!

Fierce o'er the wreck the whelming waters pass'd,
The helpless crew sunk in the roaring main!
Henry's faint accents trembled in the blast —
'Farewel, my love! — we ne'er shall meet again!'

Oft, at the calm and silent evening hour,
When summer-breezes linger on the wave,
A melancholy voice is heard to pour
Its lonely sweetness o'er poor Henry's grave!

And oft, at midnight, airy strains are heard
Around the grove, where Ellen's form is laid;
Nor is the dirge by village-maidens fear'd,

For lovers’ spirits guard the holy shade!

CHAPTER X

Oh! the joy
Of young ideas, painted on the mind
In the warm glowing colours fancy spreads
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely!

SACRED DRAMAS

We now return to Languedoc and to the mention of Count De Villefort, the nobleman, who succeeded to an estate of the Marquis De Villeroi situated near the monastery of St. Claire. It may be recollected, that this chateau was uninhabited, when St. Aubert and his daughter were in the neighbourhood, and that the former was much affected on discovering himself to be so near Chateau-le-Blanc, a place, concerning which the good old La Voisin afterwards dropped some hints, that had alarmed Emily's curiosity.

It was in the year 1584, the beginning of that, in which St. Aubert died, that Francis Beauveau, Count De Villefort, came into possession of the mansion and extensive domain called Chateau-le-Blanc, situated in the province of Languedoc, on the shore of the Mediterranean. This estate, which, during some centuries, had belonged to his family, now descended to him, on the decease of his relative, the Marquis De Villeroi, who had been latterly a man of reserved manners and austere character; circumstances, which, together with the duties of his profession, that often called him into the field, had prevented any degree of intimacy with his cousin, the Count De Villefort. For many years, they had known little of each other, and the Count received the first intelligence of his death, which happened in a distant part of France, together with the instruments, that gave him possession of the domain Chateau-le-Blanc; but it was not till the following year, that he determined to visit that estate, when he designed to pass the autumn there. The scenes of Chateau-le-Blanc often came to his remembrance, heightened by the touches, which a warm imagination gives to the recollection of early pleasures; for, many years before, in the lifetime of the Marchioness, and at that age when the mind is particularly sensible to impressions of gaiety and delight, he had once visited this spot, and, though he had passed a long intervening period amidst the vexations and tumults of public affairs, which too frequently corrode the heart, and vitiate the taste, the shades of Languedoc and the grandeur of its distant scenery had never been remembered by him with indifference.

During many years, the chateau had been abandoned by the late Marquis, and, being inhabited only by an old steward and his wife, had been suffered to fall much into decay. To superintend the repairs, that would be requisite to make it a comfortable residence, had been a principal motive with the Count for passing the autumnal months in Languedoc; and neither the remonstrances, or the tears of the Countess, for, on urgent occasions, she could weep, were powerful enough to overcome his determination. She prepared, therefore, to obey the command, which she could not conquer, and to resign the gay assemblies of Paris, — where her beauty was generally unrivalled and won the applause, to which her wit had but feeble claim — for the twilight canopy of woods, the lonely grandeur of mountains and the solemnity of gothic halls and of long, long galleries, which echoed only the solitary step of a domestic, or the measured clink, that ascended from the great clock — the ancient monitor of the hall below. From these melancholy expectations she endeavoured to relieve her spirits by recollecting all that she had ever heard, concerning the joyous vintage of the plains of Languedoc; but there, alas! no airy forms would bound to the gay melody of Parisian dances, and a view of the rustic festivities of peasants could afford little pleasure to a heart, in which even the feelings of ordinary benevolence had long since decayed under the corruptions of luxury.

The Count had a son and a daughter, the children of a former marriage, who, he designed, should accompany him to the south of France; Henri, who was in his twentieth year, was in the French service; and Blanche, who was not yet eighteen, had been hitherto confined to the convent, where she had been placed immediately on her father’s second marriage. The present Countess, who had neither sufficient ability, or inclination, to superintend the education of her daughter-in-law, had advised this step, and the dread of superior beauty had since urged her to employ every art, that might prevail on the Count to prolong the period of Blanche’s seclusion; it was, therefore, with extreme mortification, that she now understood he would no longer submit on this subject, yet it afforded her some consolation to consider, that, though the Lady Blanche would emerge from her convent, the shades of the country would, for some time, veil her beauty from the public eye.

On the morning, which commenced the journey, the postillions stopped at the convent, by the Count’s order, to take up Blanche, whose heart beat with delight, at the prospect of novelty and freedom now before her. As the time of her departure drew nigh, her impatience had increased, and the last night, during which she counted every note of every hour, had appeared the most tedious of any she had ever known. The morning light, at length, dawned; the matin-bell rang; she heard the nuns descending from their chambers, and she started from a sleepless pillow to welcome the day, which was to emancipate her from the severities of a cloister, and introduce her to a world, where pleasure was ever smiling, and goodness ever blessed — where, in short, nothing but pleasure and goodness reigned! When the bell of the great gate rang, and the sound was followed by that of carriage wheels, she ran, with a palpitating heart, to her lattice, and, perceiving her father’s carriage in the court below, danced, with airy steps, along the gallery, where she was met by a nun with a summons from the abbess. In the next moment, she was in the parlour, and in the presence of the Countess who now appeared to her as an angel, that was to lead her into happiness. But the emotions of the Countess, on beholding her, were not in unison with those of Blanche, who had never appeared so lovely as at this moment, when her countenance, animated by the lightning smile of joy, glowed with the beauty of happy innocence.

After conversing for a few minutes with the abbess, the Countess rose to go. This was the moment, which Blanche had anticipated with such eager expectation, the summit from which she looked down upon the fairyland of happiness, and surveyed all its enchantment; was it a moment, then, for tears of regret? Yet it was so. She turned, with an altered and dejected countenance, to her young companions, who were come to bid her farewell, and wept! Even my lady abbess, so stately and so solemn, she saluted with a degree of sorrow, which, an hour before, she would have believed it impossible to feel, and which may be accounted for by considering how reluctantly we all part, even with unpleasing objects, when the separation is consciously for ever. Again, she kissed the poor nuns and then followed the Countess from that spot with tears, which she expected to leave only with smiles.

But the presence of her father and the variety of objects, on the road, soon engaged her attention, and dissipated the shade, which tender regret had thrown upon her spirits. Inattentive to a conversation, which was passing between the Countess and a Mademoiselle Bearn, her friend, Blanche sat, lost in pleasing reverie, as she watched the clouds floating silently along the blue expanse, now veiling the sun and stretching their shadows along the distant scene, and then disclosing all his brightness. The journey continued to give Blanche inexpressible delight, for new scenes of nature were every instant opening to her view, and her fancy became stored with gay and beautiful imagery.

It was on the evening of the seventh day, that the travellers came within view of Chateau-le-Blanc, the romantic beauty of whose situation strongly impressed the imagination of Blanche, who observed, with sublime astonishment, the Pyrenean mountains, which had been seen only at a distance during the day, now rising within a few leagues, with their wild cliffs and immense precipices, which the evening clouds, floating round them, now disclosed, and again veiled. The setting rays, that tinged their snowy summits with a roseate hue, touched their lower points with various colouring, while the blueish tint, that pervaded their shadowy recesses, gave the strength of contrast to the splendour of light. The plains of Languedoc, blushing with the purple vine and diversified with groves of mulberry, almond and olives, spread far to the north and the east; to the south, appeared the Mediterranean, clear as crystal, and blue as the heavens it reflected, bearing on its bosom vessels, whose white sails caught the sunbeams, and gave animation to the scene. On a high promontory, washed by the waters of the Mediterranean, stood her father’s mansion, almost secluded from the eye by woods of intermingled pine, oak and chesnut, which crowned the eminence, and sloped towards the plains, on one side; while, on the other, they extended to a considerable distance along the seashores.

As Blanche drew nearer, the gothic features of this antient mansion successively appeared — first an embattled turret, rising above the trees — then the broken arch of an immense gateway, retiring beyond them; and she almost fancied herself approaching a castle, such as is often celebrated in early story, where the knights look out from the battlements on some champion below, who, clothed in black armour, comes, with his

companions, to rescue the fair lady of his love from the oppression of his rival; a sort of legends, to which she had once or twice obtained access in the library of her convent, that, like many others, belonging to the monks, was stored with these reliques of romantic fiction.

The carriages stopped at a gate, which led into the domain of the chateau, but which was now fastened; and the great bell, that had formerly served to announce the arrival of strangers, having long since fallen from its station, a servant climbed over a ruined part of the adjoining wall, to give notice to those within of the arrival of their lord.

As Blanche leaned from the coach window, she resigned herself to the sweet and gentle emotions, which the hour and the scenery awakened. The sun had now left the earth, and twilight began to darken the mountains; while the distant waters, reflecting the blush that still glowed in the west, appeared like a line of light, skirting the horizon. The low murmur of waves, breaking on the shore, came in the breeze, and, now and then, the melancholy dashing of oars was feebly heard from a distance. She was suffered to indulge her pensive mood, for the thoughts of the rest of the party were silently engaged upon the subjects of their several interests. Meanwhile, the Countess, reflecting, with regret, upon the gay parties she had left at Paris, surveyed, with disgust, what she thought the gloomy woods and solitary wildness of the scene; and, shrinking from the prospect of being shut up in an old castle, was prepared to meet every object with displeasure. The feelings of Henri were somewhat similar to those of the Countess; he gave a mournful sigh to the delights of the capital, and to the remembrance of a lady, who, he believed, had engaged his affections, and who had certainly fascinated his imagination; but the surrounding country, and the mode of life, on which he was entering, had, for him, at least, the charm of novelty, and his regret was softened by the gay expectations of youth. The gates being at length unbarred, the carriage moved slowly on, under spreading chesnuts, that almost excluded the remains of day, following what had been formerly a road, but which now, overgrown with luxuriant vegetation, could be traced only by the boundary, formed by trees, on either side, and which wound for near half a mile among the woods, before it reached the chateau. This was the very avenue that St. Aubert and Emily had formerly entered, on their first arrival in the neighbourhood, with the hope of finding a house, that would receive them,

for the night, and had so abruptly quitted, on perceiving the wildness of the place, and a figure, which the postillion had fancied was a robber.

‘What a dismal place is this!’ exclaimed the Countess, as the carriage penetrated the deeper recesses of the woods. ‘Surely, my lord, you do not mean to pass all the autumn in this barbarous spot! One ought to bring hither a cup of the waters of Lethe, that the remembrance of pleasanter scenes may not heighten, at least, the natural dreariness of these.’

‘I shall be governed by circumstances, madam,’ said the Count, ‘this barbarous spot was inhabited by my ancestors.’

The carriage now stopped at the chateau, where, at the door of the great hall, appeared the old steward and the Parisian servants, who had been sent to prepare the chateau, waiting to receive their lord. Lady Blanche now perceived, that the edifice was not built entirely in the gothic style, but that it had additions of a more modern date; the large and gloomy hall, however, into which she now entered, was entirely gothic, and sumptuous tapestry, which it was now too dark to distinguish, hung upon the walls, and depictured scenes from some of the antient Provencal romances. A vast gothic window, embroidered with CLEMATIS and eglantine, that ascended to the south, led the eye, now that the casements were thrown open, through this verdant shade, over a sloping lawn, to the tops of dark woods, that hung upon the brow of the promontory. Beyond, appeared the waters of the Mediterranean, stretching far to the south, and to the east, where they were lost in the horizon; while, to the northeast, they were bounded by the luxuriant shores of Languedoc and Provence, enriched with wood, and gay with vines and sloping pastures; and, to the south-west, by the majestic Pyrenees, now fading from the eye, beneath the gradual gloom.

Blanche, as she crossed the hall, stopped a moment to observe this lovely prospect, which the evening twilight obscured, yet did not conceal. But she was quickly awakened from the complacent delight, which this scene had diffused upon her mind, by the Countess, who, discontented with every object around, and impatient for refreshment and repose, hastened forward to a large parlour, whose cedar wainscot, narrow, pointed casements, and dark ceiling of carved cypress wood, gave it an aspect of peculiar gloom, which the dingy green velvet of the chairs and couches, fringed with tarnished gold, had once been designed to enliven.

While the Countess enquired for refreshment, the Count, attended by his son, went to look over some part of the chateau, and Lady Blanche reluctantly remained to witness the discontent and ill-humour of her step-mother.

‘How long have you lived in this desolate place?’ said her ladyship, to the old house keeper, who came to pay her duty.

‘Above twenty years, your ladyship, on the next feast of St. Jerome.’

‘How happened it, that you have lived here so long, and almost alone, too? I understood, that the chateau had been shut up for some years?’

‘Yes, madam, it was for many years after my late lord, the Count, went to the wars; but it is above twenty years, since I and my husband came into his service. The place is so large, and has of late been so lonely, that we were lost in it, and, after some time, we went to live in a cottage at the end of the woods, near some of the tenants, and came to look after the chateau, every now and then. When my lord returned to France from the wars, he took a dislike to the place, and never came to live here again, and so he was satisfied with our remaining at the cottage. Alas — alas! how the chateau is changed from what it once was! What delight my late lady used to take in it! I well remember when she came here a bride, and how fine it was. Now, it has been neglected so long, and is gone into such decay! I shall never see those days again!’

The Countess appearing to be somewhat offended by the thoughtless simplicity, with which the old woman regretted former times, Dorothee added— ‘But the chateau will now be inhabited, and cheerful again; not all the world could tempt me to live in it alone.’

‘Well, the experiment will not be made, I believe,’ said the Countess, displeased that her own silence had been unable to awe the loquacity of this rustic old housekeeper, now spared from further attendance by the entrance of the Count, who said he had been viewing part of the chateau, and found, that it would require considerable repairs and some alterations, before it would be perfectly comfortable, as a place of residence. ‘I am sorry to hear it, my lord,’ replied the Countess. ‘And why sorry, madam?’ ‘Because the place will ill repay your trouble; and were it even a paradise, it would be insufferable at such a distance from Paris.’

The Count made no reply, but walked abruptly to a window. ‘There are windows, my lord, but they neither admit entertainment, or light; they

shew only a scene of savage nature.’

‘I am at a loss, madam,’ said the Count, ‘to conjecture what you mean by savage nature. Do those plains, or those woods, or that fine expanse of water, deserve the name?’

‘Those mountains certainly do, my lord,’ rejoined the Countess, pointing to the Pyrenees, ‘and this chateau, though not a work of rude nature, is, to my taste, at least, one of savage art.’ The Count coloured highly. ‘This place, madam, was the work of my ancestors,’ said he, ‘and you must allow me to say, that your present conversation discovers neither good taste, or good manners.’ Blanche, now shocked at an altercation, which appeared to be increasing to a serious disagreement, rose to leave the room, when her mother’s woman entered it; and the Countess, immediately desiring to be shewn to her own apartment, withdrew, attended by Mademoiselle Bearn.

Lady Blanche, it being not yet dark, took this opportunity of exploring new scenes, and, leaving the parlour, she passed from the hall into a wide gallery, whose walls were decorated by marble pilasters, which supported an arched roof, composed of a rich mosaic work. Through a distant window, that seemed to terminate the gallery, were seen the purple clouds of evening and a landscape, whose features, thinly veiled in twilight, no longer appeared distinctly, but, blended into one grand mass, stretched to the horizon, coloured only with a tint of solemn grey.

The gallery terminated in a saloon, to which the window she had seen through an open door, belonged; but the increasing dusk permitted her only an imperfect view of this apartment, which seemed to be magnificent and of modern architecture; though it had been either suffered to fall into decay, or had never been properly finished. The windows, which were numerous and large, descended low, and afforded a very extensive, and what Blanche’s fancy represented to be, a very lovely prospect; and she stood for some time, surveying the grey obscurity and depicturing imaginary woods and mountains, vallies and rivers, on this scene of night; her solemn sensations rather assisted, than interrupted, by the distant bark of a watch-dog, and by the breeze, as it trembled upon the light foliage of the shrubs. Now and then, appeared for a moment, among the woods, a cottage light; and, at length, was heard, afar off, the evening bell of a convent, dying on the air. When she withdrew her thoughts from these

subjects of fanciful delight, the gloom and silence of the saloon somewhat awed her; and, having sought the door of the gallery, and pursued, for a considerable time, a dark passage, she came to a hall, but one totally different from that she had formerly seen. By the twilight, admitted through an open portico, she could just distinguish this apartment to be of very light and airy architecture, and that it was paved with white marble, pillars of which supported the roof, that rose into arches built in the Moorish style. While Blanche stood on the steps of this portico, the moon rose over the sea, and gradually disclosed, in partial light, the beauties of the eminence, on which she stood, whence a lawn, now rude and overgrown with high grass, sloped to the woods, that, almost surrounding the chateau, extended in a grand sweep down the southern sides of the promontory to the very margin of the ocean. Beyond the woods, on the north-side, appeared a long tract of the plains of Languedoc; and, to the east, the landscape she had before dimly seen, with the towers of a monastery, illumined by the moon, rising over dark groves.

The soft and shadowy tint, that overspread the scene, the waves, undulating in the moonlight, and their low and measured murmurs on the beach, were circumstances, that united to elevate the unaccustomed mind of Blanche to enthusiasm.

‘And have I lived in this glorious world so long,’ said she, ‘and never till now beheld such a prospect — never experienced these delights! Every peasant girl, on my father’s domain, has viewed from her infancy the face of nature; has ranged, at liberty, her romantic wilds, while I have been shut in a cloister from the view of these beautiful appearances, which were designed to enchant all eyes, and awaken all hearts. How can the poor nuns and friars feel the full fervour of devotion, if they never see the sun rise, or set? Never, till this evening, did I know what true devotion is; for, never before did I see the sun sink below the vast earth! Tomorrow, for the first time in my life, I will see it rise. O, who would live in Paris, to look upon black walls and dirty streets, when, in the country, they might gaze on the blue heavens, and all the green earth!’

This enthusiastic soliloquy was interrupted by a rustling noise in the hall; and, while the loneliness of the place made her sensible to fear, she thought she perceived something moving between the pillars. For a moment, she continued silently observing it, till, ashamed of her

ridiculous apprehensions, she recollected courage enough to demand who was there. ‘O my young lady, is it you?’ said the old housekeeper, who was come to shut the windows, ‘I am glad it is you.’ The manner, in which she spoke this, with a faint breath, rather surprised Blanche, who said, ‘You seemed frightened, Dorothee, what is the matter?’

‘No, not frightened, ma’amselle,’ replied Dorothee, hesitating and trying to appear composed, ‘but I am old, and — a little matter startles me.’ The Lady Blanche smiled at the distinction. ‘I am glad, that my lord the Count is come to live at the chateau, ma’amselle,’ continued Dorothee, ‘for it has been many a year deserted, and dreary enough; now, the place will look a little as it used to do, when my poor lady was alive.’ Blanche enquired how long it was, since the Marchioness died? ‘Alas! my lady,’ replied Dorothee, ‘so long — that I have ceased to count the years! The place, to my mind, has mourned ever since, and I am sure my lord’s vassals have! But you have lost yourself, ma’amselle, — shall I shew you to the other side of the chateau?’

Blanche enquired how long this part of the edifice had been built. ‘Soon after my lord’s marriage, ma’am,’ replied Dorothee. ‘The place was large enough without this addition, for many rooms of the old building were even then never made use of, and my lord had a princely household too; but he thought the antient mansion gloomy, and gloomy enough it is!’ Lady Blanche now desired to be shewn to the inhabited part of the chateau; and, as the passages were entirely dark, Dorothee conducted her along the edge of the lawn to the opposite side of the edifice, where, a door opening into the great hall, she was met by Mademoiselle Bearn. ‘Where have you been so long?’ said she, ‘I had begun to think some wonderful adventure had befallen you, and that the giant of this enchanted castle, or the ghost, which, no doubt, haunts it, had conveyed you through a trapdoor into some subterranean vault, whence you was never to return.’

‘No,’ replied Blanche, laughingly, ‘you seem to love adventures so well, that I leave them for you to achieve.’

‘Well, I am willing to achieve them, provided I am allowed to describe them.’

‘My dear Mademoiselle Bearn,’ said Henri, as he met her at the door of the parlour, ‘no ghost of these days would be so savage as to impose

silence on you. Our ghosts are more civilized than to condemn a lady to a purgatory severer even, than their own, be it what it may.’

Mademoiselle Bearn replied only by a laugh; and, the Count now entering the room, supper was served, during which he spoke little, frequently appeared to be abstracted from the company, and more than once remarked, that the place was greatly altered, since he had last seen it. ‘Many years have intervened since that period,’ said he; ‘and, though the grand features of the scenery admit of no change, they impress me with sensations very different from those I formerly experienced.’

‘Did these scenes, sir,’ said Blanche, ‘ever appear more lovely, than they do now? To me this seems hardly possible.’ The Count, regarding her with a melancholy smile, said, ‘They once were as delightful to me, as they are now to you; the landscape is not changed, but time has changed me; from my mind the illusion, which gave spirit to the colouring of nature, is fading fast! If you live, my dear Blanche, to revisit this spot, at the distance of many years, you will, perhaps, remember and understand the feelings of your father.’

Lady Blanche, affected by these words, remained silent; she looked forward to the period, which the Count anticipated, and considering, that he, who now spoke, would then probably be no more, her eyes, bent to the ground, were filed with tears. She gave her hand to her father, who, smiling affectionately, rose from his chair, and went to a window to conceal his emotion.

The fatigues of the day made the party separate at an early hour, when Blanche retired through a long oak gallery to her chamber, whose spacious and lofty walls, high antiquated casements, and, what was the effect of these, its gloomy air, did not reconcile her to its remote situation, in this antient building. The furniture, also, was of antient date; the bed was of blue damask, trimmed with tarnished gold lace, and its lofty tester rose in the form of a canopy, whence the curtains descended, like those of such tents as are sometimes represented in old pictures, and, indeed, much resembling those, exhibited on the faded tapestry, with which the chamber was hung. To Blanche, every object here was matter of curiosity; and, taking the light from her woman to examine the tapestry, she perceived, that it represented scenes from the wars of Troy, though the almost colourless worsted now mocked the glowing actions they once had

painted. She laughed at the ludicrous absurdity she observed, till, recollecting, that the hands, which had wove it, were, like the poet, whose thoughts of fire they had attempted to express, long since mouldered into dust, a train of melancholy ideas passed over her mind, and she almost wept.

Having given her woman a strict injunction to awaken her, before sunrise, she dismissed her; and then, to dissipate the gloom, which reflection had cast upon her spirits, opened one of the high casements, and was again cheered by the face of living nature. The shadowy earth, the air, and ocean — all was still. Along the deep serene of the heavens, a few light clouds floated slowly, through whose skirts the stars now seemed to tremble, and now to emerge with purer splendour. Blanche's thoughts arose involuntarily to the Great Author of the sublime objects she contemplated, and she breathed a prayer of finer devotion, than any she had ever uttered beneath the vaulted roof of a cloister. At this casement, she remained till the glooms of midnight were stretched over the prospect. She then retired to her pillow, and, 'with gay visions of tomorrow,' to those sweet slumbers, which health and happy innocence only know.

Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

CHAPTER XI

What transport to retrace our early plays,
Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supplied
The woods, the mountains and the warbling maze
Of the wild brooks!

THOMSON

Blanche’s slumbers continued, till long after the hour, which she had so impatiently anticipated, for her woman, fatigued with travelling, did not call her, till breakfast was nearly ready. Her disappointment, however, was instantly forgotten, when, on opening the casement, she saw, on one hand, the wide sea sparkling in the morning rays, with its stealing sails and glancing oars; and, on the other, the fresh woods, the plains far-stretching and the blue mountains, all glowing with the splendour of day.

As she inspired the pure breeze, health spread a deeper blush upon her countenance, and pleasure danced in her eyes.

‘Who could first invent convents!’ said she, ‘and who could first persuade people to go into them? and to make religion a pretence, too, where all that should inspire it, is so carefully shut out! God is best pleased with the homage of a grateful heart, and, when we view his glories, we feel most grateful. I never felt so much devotion, during the many dull years I was in the convent, as I have done in the few hours, that I have been here, where I need only look on all around me — to adore God in my inmost heart!’

Saying this, she left the window, bounded along the gallery, and, in the next moment, was in the breakfast room, where the Count was already seated. The cheerfulness of a bright sunshine had dispersed the melancholy glooms of his reflections, a pleasant smile was on his countenance, and he spoke in an enlivening voice to Blanche, whose heart echoed back the tones. Henri and, soon after, the Countess with Mademoiselle Bearn appeared, and the whole party seemed to acknowledge the influence of the scene; even the Countess was so much reanimated as to receive the civilities of her husband with complacency, and but once forgot her good-humour, which was when she asked whether they had any neighbours, who were likely to make THIS BARBAROUS SPOT more tolerable, and whether the Count believed it possible for her to exist here, without some amusement?

Soon after breakfast the party dispersed; the Count, ordering his steward to attend him in the library, went to survey the condition of his premises,

and to visit some of his tenants; Henri hastened with alacrity to the shore to examine a boat, that was to bear them on a little voyage in the evening and to superintend the adjustment of a silk awning; while the Countess, attended by Mademoiselle Bearn, retired to an apartment on the modern side of the chateau, which was fitted up with airy elegance; and, as the windows opened upon balconies, that fronted the sea, she was there saved from a view of the HORRID Pyrenees. Here, while she reclined on a sofa, and, casting her languid eyes over the ocean, which appeared beyond the wood-tops, indulged in the luxuries of ENNUI, her companion read aloud a sentimental novel, on some fashionable system of philosophy, for the Countess was herself somewhat of a PHILOSOPHER, especially as to INFIDELITY, and among a certain circle her opinions were waited for with impatience, and received as doctrines.

The Lady Blanche, meanwhile, hastened to indulge, amidst the wild wood-walks around the chateau, her new enthusiasm, where, as she wandered under the shades, her gay spirits gradually yielded to pensive complacency. Now, she moved with solemn steps, beneath the gloom of thickly interwoven branches, where the fresh dew still hung upon every flower, that peeped from among the grass; and now tripped sportively along the path, on which the sunbeams darted and the checquered foliage trembled — where the tender greens of the beech, the acacia and the mountain-ash, mingling with the solemn tints of the cedar, the pine and cypress, exhibited as fine a contrast of colouring, as the majestic oak and oriental plane did of form, to the feathery lightness of the cork tree and the waving grace of the poplar.

Having reached a rustic seat, within a deep recess of the woods, she rested awhile, and, as her eyes caught, through a distant opening, a glimpse of the blue waters of the Mediterranean, with the white sail, gliding on its bosom, or of the broad mountain, glowing beneath the mid-day sun, her mind experienced somewhat of that exquisite delight, which awakens the fancy, and leads to poetry. The hum of bees alone broke the stillness around her, as, with other insects of various hues, they sported gaily in the shade, or sipped sweets from the fresh flowers: and, while Blanche watched a butterfly, flitting from bud to bud, she indulged herself in imagining the pleasures of its short day, till she had composed the following stanzas.

THE BUTTERFLY TO HIS LOVE

What bowery dell, with fragrant breath,
Courts thee to stay thy airy flight;
Nor seek again the purple heath,
So oft the scene of gay delight?

Long I’ve watch’d i’ the lily’s bell,
Whose whiteness stole the morning’s beam;
No fluttering sounds thy coming tell,
No waving wings, at distance, gleam.

But fountain fresh, nor breathing grove,
Nor sunny mead, nor blossom’d tree,
So sweet as lily’s cell shall prove, —
The bower of constant love and me.

When April buds begin to blow,
The primrose, and the hare-bell blue,
That on the verdant moss bank grow,
With violet cups, that weep in dew;

When wanton gales breathe through the shade,
And shake the blooms, and steal their sweets,
And swell the song of ev’ry glade,
I range the forest’s green retreats:

There, through the tangled wood-walks play,
Where no rude urchin paces near,
Where sparely peeps the sultry day,
And light dews freshen all the air.

High on a sunbeam oft I sport

O’er bower and fountain, vale and hill;
Oft ev’ry blushing flow’ret court,
That hangs its head o’er winding rill.

But these I’ll leave to be thy guide,
And shew thee, where the jasmine spreads
Her snowy leaf, where may-flow’rs hide,
And rose-buds rear their peeping heads.

With me the mountain’s summit scale,
And taste the wild-thyme’s honied bloom,
Whose fragrance, floating on the gale,
Oft leads me to the cedar’s gloom.

Yet, yet, no sound comes in the breeze!
What shade thus dares to tempt thy stay?
Once, me alone thou wish’d to please,
And with me only thou wouldst stray.

But, while thy long delay I mourn,
And chide the sweet shades for their guile,
Thou may’st be true, and they forlorn,
And fairy favours court thy smile.

The tiny queen of fairyland,
Who knows thy speed, hath sent thee far,
To bring, or ere the night-watch stand,
Rich essence for her shadowy car:

Perchance her acorn-cups to fill
With nectar from the Indian rose,
Or gather, near some haunted rill,
May-dews, that lull to sleep Love’s woes:

Or, o’er the mountains, bade thee fly,
To tell her fairy love to speed,
When ev’ning steals upon the sky,
To dance along the twilight mead.

But now I see thee sailing low,
Gay as the brightest flow’rs of spring,
Thy coat of blue and jet I know,
And well thy gold and purple wing.

Borne on the gale, thou com’st to me;
O! welcome, welcome to my home!
In lily’s cell we’ll live in glee,
Together o’er the mountains roam!

When Lady Blanche returned to the chateau, instead of going to the apartment of the Countess, she amused herself with wandering over that part of the edifice, which she had not yet examined, of which the most antient first attracted her curiosity; for, though what she had seen of the modern was gay and elegant, there was something in the former more interesting to her imagination. Having passed up the great staircase, and through the oak gallery, she entered upon a long suite of chambers, whose walls were either hung with tapestry, or wainscoted with cedar, the furniture of which looked almost as antient as the rooms themselves; the spacious fire-places, where no mark of social cheer remained, presented an image of cold desolation; and the whole suite had so much the air of neglect and desertion, that it seemed, as if the venerable persons, whose portraits hung upon the walls, had been the last to inhabit them.

On leaving these rooms, she found herself in another gallery, one end of which was terminated by a back staircase, and the other by a door, that seemed to communicate with the north-side of the chateau, but which being fastened, she descended the staircase, and, opening a door in the wall, a few steps down, found herself in a small square room, that formed

part of the west turret of the castle. Three windows presented each a separate and beautiful prospect; that to the north, overlooking Languedoc; another to the west, the hills ascending towards the Pyrenees, whose awful summits crowned the landscape; and a third, fronting the south, gave the Mediterranean, and a part of the wild shores of Rousillon, to the eye.

Having left the turret, and descended the narrow staircase, she found herself in a dusky passage, where she wandered, unable to find her way, till impatience yielded to apprehension, and she called for assistance. Presently steps approached, and light glimmered through a door at the other extremity of the passage, which was opened with caution by some person, who did not venture beyond it, and whom Blanche observed in silence, till the door was closing, when she called aloud, and, hastening towards it, perceived the old housekeeper. ‘Dear ma’amselle! is it you?’ said Dorothee, ‘How could you find your way hither?’ Had Blanche been less occupied by her own fears, she would probably have observed the strong expressions of terror and surprise on Dorothee’s countenance, who now led her through a long succession of passages and rooms, that looked as if they had been uninhabited for a century, till they reached that appropriated to the housekeeper, where Dorothee entreated she would sit down and take refreshment. Blanche accepted the sweet meats, offered to her, mentioned her discovery of the pleasant turret, and her wish to appropriate it to her own use. Whether Dorothee’s taste was not so sensible to the beauties of landscape as her young lady’s, or that the constant view of lovely scenery had deadened it, she forbore to praise the subject of Blanche’s enthusiasm, which, however, her silence did not repress. To Lady Blanche’s enquiry of whither the door she had found fastened at the end of the gallery led, she replied, that it opened to a suite of rooms, which had not been entered, during many years, ‘For,’ added she, ‘my late lady died in one of them, and I could never find in my heart to go into them since.’

Blanche, though she wished to see these chambers, forbore, on observing that Dorothee’s eyes were filled with tears, to ask her to unlock them, and, soon after, went to dress for dinner, at which the whole party met in good spirits and good humour, except the Countess, whose vacant mind, overcome by the languor of idleness, would neither suffer her to be happy herself, or to contribute to the happiness of others. Mademoiselle

Bearn, attempting to be witty, directed her badinage against Henri, who answered, because he could not well avoid it, rather than from any inclination to notice her, whose liveliness sometimes amused, but whose conceit and insensibility often disgusted him.

The cheerfulness, with which Blanche rejoined the party, vanished, on her reaching the margin of the sea; she gazed with apprehension upon the immense expanse of waters, which, at a distance, she had beheld only with delight and astonishment, and it was by a strong effort, that she so far overcame her fears as to follow her father into the boat.

As she silently surveyed the vast horizon, bending round the distant verge of the ocean, an emotion of sublimest rapture struggled to overcome a sense of personal danger. A light breeze played on the water, and on the silk awning of the boat, and waved the foliage of the receding woods, that crowned the cliffs, for many miles, and which the Count surveyed with the pride of conscious property, as well as with the eye of taste.

At some distance, among these woods, stood a pavilion, which had once been the scene of social gaiety, and which its situation still made one of romantic beauty. Thither, the Count had ordered coffee and other refreshment to be carried, and thither the sailors now steered their course, following the windings of the shore round many a woody promontory and circling bay; while the pensive tones of horns and other wind instruments, played by the attendants in a distant boat, echoed among the rocks, and died along the waves. Blanche had now subdued her fears; a delightful tranquillity stole over her mind, and held her in silence; and she was too happy even to remember the convent, or her former sorrows, as subjects of comparison with her present felicity.

The Countess felt less unhappy than she had done, since the moment of her leaving Paris; for her mind was now under some degree of restraint; she feared to indulge its wayward humours, and even wished to recover the Count’s good opinion. On his family, and on the surrounding scene, he looked with tempered pleasure and benevolent satisfaction, while his son exhibited the gay spirits of youth, anticipating new delights, and regretless of those, that were passed.

After near an hour’s rowing, the party landed, and ascended a little path, overgrown with vegetation. At a little distance from the point of the eminence, within the shadowy recess of the woods, appeared the pavilion,

which Blanche perceived, as she caught a glimpse of its portico between the trees, to be built of variegated marble. As she followed the Countess, she often turned her eyes with rapture towards the ocean, seen beneath the dark foliage, far below, and from thence upon the deep woods, whose silence and impenetrable gloom awakened emotions more solemn, but scarcely less delightful.

The pavilion had been prepared, as far as was possible, on a very short notice, for the reception of its visitors; but the faded colours of its painted walls and ceiling, and the decayed drapery of its once magnificent furniture, declared how long it had been neglected, and abandoned to the empire of the changing seasons. While the party partook of a collation of fruit and coffee, the horns, placed in a distant part of the woods, where an echo sweetened and prolonged their melancholy tones, broke softly on the stillness of the scene. This spot seemed to attract even the admiration of the Countess, or, perhaps, it was merely the pleasure of planning furniture and decorations, that made her dwell so long on the necessity of repairing and adorning it; while the Count, never happier than when he saw her mind engaged by natural and simple objects, acquiesced in all her designs, concerning the pavilion. The paintings on the walls and coved ceiling were to be renewed, the canopies and sofas were to be of light green damask; marble statues of wood-nymphs, bearing on their heads baskets of living flowers, were to adorn the recesses between the windows, which, descending to the ground, were to admit to every part of the room, and it was of octagonal form, the various landscape. One window opened upon a romantic glade, where the eye roved among the woody recesses, and the scene was bounded only by a lengthened pomp of groves; from another, the woods receding disclosed the distant summits of the Pyrenees; a third fronted an avenue, beyond which the grey towers of Chateau-le-Blanc, and a picturesque part of its ruin were seen partially among the foliage; while a fourth gave, between the trees, a glimpse of the green pastures and villages, that diversify the banks of the Aude. The Mediterranean, with the bold cliffs, that overlooked its shores, were the grand objects of a fifth window, and the others gave, in different points of view, the wild scenery of the woods.

After wandering, for some time, in these, the party returned to the shore and embarked; and, the beauty of the evening tempting them to extend

their excursion, they proceeded further up the bay. A dead calm had succeeded the light breeze, that wafted them hither, and the men took to their oars. Around, the waters were spread into one vast expanse of polished mirror, reflecting the grey cliffs and feathery woods, that overhung its surface, the glow of the western horizon and the dark clouds, that came slowly from the east. Blanche loved to see the dipping oars imprint the water, and to watch the spreading circles they left, which gave a tremulous motion to the reflected landscape, without destroying the harmony of its features.

Above the darkness of the woods, her eye now caught a cluster of high towers, touched with the splendour of the setting rays; and, soon after, the horns being then silent, she heard the faint swell of choral voices from a distance.

‘What voices are those, upon the air?’ said the Count, looking round, and listening; but the strain had ceased. ‘It seemed to be a vesper-hymn, which I have often heard in my convent,’ said Blanche.

‘We are near the monastery, then,’ observed the Count; and, the boat soon after doubling a lofty headland, the monastery of St. Claire appeared, seated near the margin of the sea, where the cliffs, suddenly sinking, formed a low shore within a small bay, almost encircled with woods, among which partial features of the edifice were seen; — the great gate and gothic window of the hall, the cloisters and the side of a chapel more remote; while a venerable arch, which had once led to a part of the fabric, now demolished, stood a majestic ruin detached from the main building, beyond which appeared a grand perspective of the woods. On the grey walls, the moss had fastened, and, round the pointed windows of the chapel, the ivy and the briony hung in many a fantastic wreath.

All without was silent and forsaken; but, while Blanche gazed with admiration on this venerable pile, whose effect was heightened by the strong lights and shadows thrown athwart it by a cloudy sun-set, a sound of many voices, slowly chanting, arose from within. The Count bade his men rest on their oars. The monks were singing the hymn of vespers, and some female voices mingled with the strain, which rose by soft degrees, till the high organ and the choral sounds swelled into full and solemn harmony. The strain, soon after, dropped into sudden silence, and was renewed in a low and still more solemn key, till, at length, the holy chorus

died away, and was heard no more. — Blanche sighed, tears trembled in her eyes, and her thoughts seemed wafted with the sounds to heaven. While a rapt stillness prevailed in the boat, a train of friars, and then of nuns, veiled in white, issued from the cloisters, and passed, under the shade of the woods, to the main body of the edifice.

The Countess was the first of her party to awaken from this pause of silence.

‘These dismal hymns and friars make one quite melancholy,’ said she; ‘twilight is coming on; pray let us return, or it will be dark before we get home.’

The count, looking up, now perceived, that the twilight of evening was anticipated by an approaching storm. In the east a tempest was collecting; a heavy gloom came on, opposing and contrasting the glowing splendour of the setting sun. The clamorous sea-fowl skimmed in fleet circles upon the surface of the sea, dipping their light pinions in the wave, as they fled away in search of shelter. The boatmen pulled hard at their oars; but the thunder, that now muttered at a distance, and the heavy drops, that began to dimple the water, made the Count determine to put back to the monastery for shelter, and the course of the boat was immediately changed. As the clouds approached the west, their lurid darkness changed to a deep ruddy glow, which, by reflection, seemed to fire the tops of the woods and the shattered towers of the monastery.

The appearance of the heavens alarmed the Countess and Mademoiselle Bearn, whose expressions of apprehension distressed the Count, and perplexed his men; while Blanche continued silent, now agitated with fear, and now with admiration, as she viewed the grandeur of the clouds, and their effect on the scenery, and listened to the long, long peals of thunder, that rolled through the air.

The boat having reached the lawn before the monastery, the Count sent a servant to announce his arrival, and to entreat shelter of the Superior, who, soon after, appeared at the great gate, attended by several monks, while the servant returned with a message, expressive at once of hospitality and pride, but of pride disguised in submission. The party immediately disembarked, and, having hastily crossed the lawn — for the shower was now heavy — were received at the gate by the Superior, who, as they entered, stretched forth his hands and gave his blessing; and they passed

into the great hall, where the lady abbess waited, attended by several nuns, clothed, like herself, in black, and veiled in white. The veil of the abbess was, however, thrown half back, and discovered a countenance, whose chaste dignity was sweetened by the smile of welcome, with which she addressed the Countess, whom she led, with Blanche and Mademoiselle Bearn, into the convent parlour, while the Count and Henri were conducted by the Superior to the refectory.

The Countess, fatigued and discontented, received the politeness of the abbess with careless haughtiness, and had followed her, with indolent steps, to the parlour, over which the painted casements and wainscot of larch-wood threw, at all times, a melancholy shade, and where the gloom of evening now loured almost to darkness.

While the lady abbess ordered refreshment, and conversed with the Countess, Blanche withdrew to a window, the lower panes of which, being without painting, allowed her to observe the progress of the storm over the Mediterranean, whose dark waves, that had so lately slept, now came boldly swelling, in long succession, to the shore, where they burst in white foam, and threw up a high spray over the rocks. A red sulphureous tint overspread the long line of clouds, that hung above the western horizon, beneath whose dark skirts the sun looking out, illumined the distant shores of Languedoc, as well as the tufted summits of the nearer woods, and shed a partial gleam on the western waves. The rest of the scene was in deep gloom, except where a sunbeam, darting between the clouds, glanced on the white wings of the sea-fowl, that circled high among them, or touched the swelling sail of a vessel, which was seen labouring in the storm. Blanche, for some time, anxiously watched the progress of the bark, as it threw the waves in foam around it, and, as the lightnings flashed, looked to the opening heavens, with many a sigh for the fate of the poor mariners.

The sun, at length, set, and the heavy clouds, which had long impended, dropped over the splendour of his course; the vessel, however, was yet dimly seen, and Blanche continued to observe it, till the quick succession of flashes, lighting up the gloom of the whole horizon, warned her to retire from the window, and she joined the Abbess, who, having exhausted all her topics of conversation with the Countess, had now leisure to notice her.

But their discourse was interrupted by tremendous peals of thunder; and the bell of the monastery soon after ringing out, summoned the inhabitants to prayer. As Blanche passed the window, she gave another look to the ocean, where, by the momentary flash, that illumined the vast body of the waters, she distinguished the vessel she had observed before, amidst a sea of foam, breaking the billows, the mast now bowing to the waves, and then rising high in air.

She sighed fervently as she gazed, and then followed the Lady Abbess and the Countess to the chapel. Meanwhile, some of the Count's servants, having gone by land to the chateau for carriages, returned soon after vespers had concluded, when, the storm being somewhat abated, the Count and his family returned home. Blanche was surprised to discover how much the windings of the shore had deceived her, concerning the distance of the chateau from the monastery, whose vesper bell she had heard, on the preceding evening, from the windows of the west saloon, and whose towers she would also have seen from thence, had not twilight veiled them.

On their arrival at the chateau, the Countess, affecting more fatigue, than she really felt, withdrew to her apartment, and the Count, with his daughter and Henri, went to the supper-room, where they had not been long, when they heard, in a pause of the gust, a firing of guns, which the Count understanding to be signals of distress from some vessel in the storm, went to a window, that opened towards the Mediterranean, to observe further; but the sea was now involved in utter darkness, and the loud howlings of the tempest had again overcome every other sound. Blanche, remembering the bark, which she had before seen, now joined her father, with trembling anxiety. In a few moments, the report of guns was again borne along the wind, and as suddenly wafted away; a tremendous burst of thunder followed, and, in the flash, that had preceded it, and which seemed to quiver over the whole surface of the waters, a vessel was discovered, tossing amidst the white foam of the waves at some distance from the shore. Impenetrable darkness again involved the scene, but soon a second flash shewed the bark, with one sail unfurled, driving towards the coast. Blanche hung upon her father's arm, with looks full of the agony of united terror and pity, which were unnecessary to awaken the heart of the Count, who gazed upon the sea with a piteous expression, and, perceiving,

that no boat could live in the storm, forbore to send one; but he gave orders to his people to carry torches out upon the cliffs, hoping they might prove a kind of beacon to the vessel, or, at least, warn the crew of the rocks they were approaching. While Henri went out to direct on what part of the cliffs the lights should appear, Blanche remained with her father, at the window, catching, every now and then, as the lightnings flashed, a glimpse of the vessel; and she soon saw, with reviving hope, the torches flaming on the blackness of night, and, as they waved over the cliffs, casting a red gleam on the gasping billows. When the firing of guns was repeated, the torches were tossed high in the air, as if answering the signal, and the firing was then redoubled; but, though the wind bore the sound away, she fancied, as the lightnings glanced, that the vessel was much nearer the shore.

The Count’s servants were now seen, running to and fro, on the rocks; some venturing almost to the point of the crags, and bending over, held out their torches fastened to long poles; while others, whose steps could be traced only by the course of the lights, descended the steep and dangerous path, that wound to the margin of the sea, and, with loud halloos, hailed the mariners, whose shrill whistle, and then feeble voices, were heard, at intervals, mingling with the storm. Sudden shouts from the people on the rocks increased the anxiety of Blanche to an almost intolerable degree: but her suspense, concerning the fate of the mariners, was soon over, when Henri, running breathless into the room, told that the vessel was anchored in the bay below, but in so shattered a condition, that it was feared she would part before the crew could disembark. The Count immediately gave orders for his own boats to assist in bringing them to shore, and that such of these unfortunate strangers as could not be accommodated in the adjacent hamlet should be entertained at the chateau. Among the latter, were Emily St. Aubert, Monsieur Du Pont, Ludovico and Annette, who, having embarked at Leghorn and reached Marseilles, were from thence crossing the Gulf of Lyons, when this storm overtook them. They were received by the Count with his usual benignity, who, though Emily wished to have proceeded immediately to the monastery of St. Claire, would not allow her to leave the chateau, that night; and, indeed, the terror and fatigue she had suffered would scarcely have permitted her to go farther.

In Monsieur Du Pont the Count discovered an old acquaintance, and much joy and congratulation passed between them, after which Emily was introduced by name to the Count’s family, whose hospitable benevolence dissipated the little embarrassment, which her situation had occasioned her, and the party were soon seated at the supper-table. The unaffected kindness of Blanche and the lively joy she expressed on the escape of the strangers, for whom her pity had been so much interested, gradually revived Emily’s languid spirits; and Du Pont, relieved from his terrors for her and for himself, felt the full contrast, between his late situation on a dark and tremendous ocean, and his present one, in a cheerful mansion, where he was surrounded with plenty, elegance and smiles of welcome.

Annette, meanwhile, in the servants’ hall, was telling of all the dangers she had encountered, and congratulating herself so heartily upon her own and Ludovico’s escape, and on her present comforts, that she often made all that part of the chateau ring with merriment and laughter. Ludovico’s spirits were as gay as her own, but he had discretion enough to restrain them, and tried to check hers, though in vain, till her laughter, at length, ascended to MY LADY’S chamber, who sent to enquire what occasioned so much uproar in the chateau, and to command silence.

Emily withdrew early to seek the repose she so much required, but her pillow was long a sleepless one. On this her return to her native country, many interesting remembrances were awakened; all the events and sufferings she had experienced, since she quitted it, came in long succession to her fancy, and were chased only by the image of Valancourt, with whom to believe herself once more in the same land, after they had been so long, and so distantly separated, gave her emotions of indescribable joy, but which afterwards yielded to anxiety and apprehension, when she considered the long period, that had elapsed, since any letter had passed between them, and how much might have happened in this interval to affect her future peace. But the thought, that Valancourt might be now no more, or, if living, might have forgotten her, was so very terrible to her heart, that she would scarcely suffer herself to pause upon the possibility. She determined to inform him, on the following day, of her arrival in France, which it was scarcely possible he could know but by a letter from herself, and, after soothing her spirits with the hope of soon

hearing, that he was well, and unchanged in his affections, she, at length, sunk to repose.

CHAPTER XII

Oft woo’d the gleam of Cynthia, silver-bright,
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of folly,
With freedom by my side, and soft-ey’d melancholy.

GRAY

The Lady Blanche was so much interested for Emily, that, upon hearing she was going to reside in the neighbouring convent, she requested the Count would invite her to lengthen her stay at the chateau. ‘And you know, my dear sir,’ added Blanche, ‘how delighted I shall be with such a companion; for, at present, I have no friend to walk, or to read with, since Mademoiselle Bearn is my mamma’s friend only.’

The Count smiled at the youthful simplicity, with which his daughter yielded to first impressions; and, though he chose to warn her of their danger, he silently applauded the benevolence, that could thus readily expand in confidence to a stranger. He had observed Emily, with attention, on the preceding evening, and was as much pleased with her, as it was possible he could be with any person, on so short an acquaintance. The mention, made of her by *Mons.* Du Pont, had also given him a favourable impression of Emily; but, extremely cautious as to those, whom he introduced to the intimacy of his daughter, he determined, on hearing that the former was no stranger at the convent of St. Claire, to visit the abbess, and, if her account corresponded with his wish, to invite Emily to pass some time at the chateau. On this subject, he was influenced by a consideration of the Lady Blanche’s welfare, still more than by either a wish to oblige her, or to befriend the orphan Emily, for whom, however, he felt considerably interested.

On the following morning, Emily was too much fatigued to appear; but *Mons.* Du Pont was at the breakfast-table, when the Count entered the room, who pressed him, as his former acquaintance, and the son of a very old friend, to prolong his stay at the chateau; an invitation, which Du Pont willingly accepted, since it would allow him to be near Emily; and, though he was not conscious of encouraging a hope, that she would ever return his affection, he had not fortitude enough to attempt, at present, to overcome it.

Emily, when she was somewhat recovered, wandered with her new friend over the grounds belonging to the chateau, as much delighted with the surrounding views, as Blanche, in the benevolence of her heart, had

wished; from thence she perceived, beyond the woods, the towers of the monastery, and remarked, that it was to this convent she designed to go.

‘Ah!’ said Blanche with surprise, ‘I am but just released from a convent, and would you go into one? If you could know what pleasure I feel in wandering here, at liberty, — and in seeing the sky and the fields, and the woods all round me, I think you would not.’ Emily, smiling at the warmth, with which the Lady Blanche spoke, observed, that she did not mean to confine herself to a convent for life.

‘No, you may not intend it now,’ said Blanche; ‘but you do not know to what the nuns may persuade you to consent: I know how kind they will appear, and how happy, for I have seen too much of their art.’

When they returned to the chateau, Lady Blanche conducted Emily to her favourite turret, and from thence they rambled through the ancient chambers, which Blanche had visited before. Emily was amused by observing the structure of these apartments, and the fashion of their old but still magnificent furniture, and by comparing them with those of the castle of Udolpho, which were yet more antique and grotesque. She was also interested by Dorothee the housekeeper, who attended them, whose appearance was almost as antique as the objects around her, and who seemed no less interested by Emily, on whom she frequently gazed with so much deep attention, as scarcely to hear what was said to her.

While Emily looked from one of the casements, she perceived, with surprise, some objects, that were familiar to her memory; — the fields and woods, with the gleaming brook, which she had passed with La Voisin, one evening, soon after the death of Monsieur St. Aubert, in her way from the monastery to her cottage; and she now knew this to be the chateau, which he had then avoided, and concerning which he had dropped some remarkable hints.

Shocked by this discovery, yet scarcely knowing why, she mused for some time in silence, and remembered the emotion, which her father had betrayed on finding himself so near this mansion, and some other circumstances of his conduct, that now greatly interested her. The music, too, which she had formerly heard, and, respecting which La Voisin had given such an odd account, occurred to her, and, desirous of knowing more concerning it, she asked Dorothee whether it returned at midnight, as usual, and whether the musician had yet been discovered.

‘Yes, ma’amselle,’ replied Dorothee, ‘that music is still heard, but the musician has never been found out, nor ever will, I believe; though there are some people, who can guess.’

‘Indeed!’ said Emily, ‘then why do they not pursue the enquiry?’

‘Ah, young lady! enquiry enough has been made — but who can pursue a spirit?’

Emily smiled, and, remembering how lately she had suffered herself to be led away by superstition, determined now to resist its contagion; yet, in spite of her efforts, she felt awe mingle with her curiosity, on this subject; and Blanche, who had hitherto listened in silence, now enquired what this music was, and how long it had been heard.

‘Ever since the death of my lady, madam,’ replied Dorothee.

‘Why, the place is not haunted, surely?’ said Blanche, between jesting and seriousness.

‘I have heard that music almost ever since my dear lady died,’ continued Dorothee, ‘and never before then. But that is nothing to some things I could tell of.’

‘Do, pray, tell them, then,’ said Lady Blanche, now more in earnest than in jest. ‘I am much interested, for I have heard sister Henriette, and sister Sophie, in the convent, tell of such strange appearances, which they themselves had witnessed!’

‘You never heard, my lady, I suppose, what made us leave the chateau, and go and live in a cottage,’ said Dorothee. ‘Never!’ replied Blanche with impatience.

‘Nor the reason, that my lord, the Marquis’ — Dorothee checked herself, hesitated, and then endeavoured to change the topic; but the curiosity of Blanche was too much awakened to suffer the subject thus easily to escape her, and she pressed the old housekeeper to proceed with her account, upon whom, however, no entreaties could prevail; and it was evident, that she was alarmed for the imprudence, into which she had already betrayed herself.

‘I perceive,’ said Emily, smiling, ‘that all old mansions are haunted; I am lately come from a place of wonders; but unluckily, since I left it, I have heard almost all of them explained.’

Blanche was silent; Dorothee looked grave, and sighed; and Emily felt herself still inclined to believe more of the wonderful, than she chose to

acknowledge. Just then, she remembered the spectacle she had witnessed in a chamber of Udolpho, and, by an odd kind of coincidence, the alarming words, that had accidentally met her eye in the MS. papers, which she had destroyed, in obedience to the command of her father; and she shuddered at the meaning they seemed to impart, almost as much as at the horrible appearance, disclosed by the black veil.

The Lady Blanche, meanwhile, unable to prevail with Dorothee to explain the subject of her late hints, had desired, on reaching the door, that terminated the gallery, and which she found fastened on the preceding day, to see the suite of rooms beyond. 'Dear young lady,' said the housekeeper, 'I have told you my reason for not opening them; I have never seen them, since my dear lady died; and it would go hard with me to see them now. Pray, madam, do not ask me again.'

'Certainly I will not,' replied Blanche, 'if that is really your objection.'

'Alas! it is,' said the old woman: 'we all loved her well, and I shall always grieve for her. Time runs round! it is now many years, since she died; but I remember every thing, that happened then, as if it was but yesterday. Many things, that have passed of late years, are gone quite from my memory, while those so long ago, I can see as if in a glass.' She paused, but afterwards, as they walked up the gallery, added to Emily, 'this young lady sometimes brings the late Marchioness to my mind; I can remember, when she looked just as blooming, and very like her, when she smiles. Poor lady! how gay she was, when she first came to the chateau!'

'And was she not gay, afterwards?' said Blanche.

Dorothee shook her head; and Emily observed her, with eyes strongly expressive of the interest she now felt. 'Let us sit down in this window,' said the Lady Blanche, on reaching the opposite end of the gallery: 'and pray, Dorothee, if it is not painful to you, tell us something more about the Marchioness. I should like to look into the glass you spoke of just now, and see a few of the circumstances, which you say often pass over it.'

'No, my lady,' replied Dorothee; 'if you knew as much as I do, you would not, for you would find there a dismal train of them; I often wish I could shut them out, but they will rise to my mind. I see my dear lady on her deathbed, — her very look, — and remember all she said — it was a terrible scene!'

'Why was it so terrible?' said Emily with emotion.

‘Ah, dear young lady! is not death always terrible?’ replied Dorothee.

To some further enquiries of Blanche Dorothee was silent; and Emily, observing the tears in her eyes, forbore to urge the subject, and endeavoured to withdraw the attention of her young friend to some object in the gardens, where the Count, with the Countess and Monsieur Du Pont, appearing, they went down to join them.

When he perceived Emily, he advanced to meet her, and presented her to the Countess, in a manner so benign, that it recalled most powerfully to her mind the idea of her late father, and she felt more gratitude to him, than embarrassment towards the Countess, who, however, received her with one of those fascinating smiles, which her caprice sometimes allowed her to assume, and which was now the result of a conversation the Count had held with her, concerning Emily. Whatever this might be, or whatever had passed in his conversation with the lady abbess, whom he had just visited, esteem and kindness were strongly apparent in his manner, when he addressed Emily, who experienced that sweet emotion, which arises from the consciousness of possessing the approbation of the good; for to the Count’s worth she had been inclined to yield her confidence almost from the first moment, in which she had seen him.

Before she could finish her acknowledgments for the hospitality she had received, and mention of her design of going immediately to the convent, she was interrupted by an invitation to lengthen her stay at the chateau, which was pressed by the Count and the Countess, with an appearance of such friendly sincerity, that, though she much wished to see her old friends at the monastery, and to sigh, once more, over her father’s grave, she consented to remain a few days at the chateau.

To the abbess, however, she immediately wrote, mentioning her arrival in Languedoc and her wish to be received into the convent, as a boarder; she also sent letters to Monsieur Quesnel and to Valancourt, whom she merely informed of her arrival in France; and, as she knew not where the latter might be stationed, she directed her letter to his brother’s seat in Gascony.

In the evening, Lady Blanche and *Mons.* Du Pont walked with Emily to the cottage of La Voisin, which she had now a melancholy pleasure in approaching, for time had softened her grief for the loss of St. Aubert, though it could not annihilate it, and she felt a soothing sadness in

indulging the recollections, which this scene recalled. La Voisin was still living, and seemed to enjoy, as much as formerly, the tranquil evening of a blameless life. He was sitting at the door of his cottage, watching some of his grandchildren, playing on the grass before him, and, now and then, with a laugh, or a commendation, encouraging their sports. He immediately recollected Emily, whom he was much pleased to see, and she was as rejoiced to hear, that he had not lost one of his family, since her departure.

‘Yes, ma’amselle,’ said the old man, ‘we all live merrily together still, thank God! and I believe there is not a happier family to be found in Languedoc, than ours.’

Emily did not trust herself in the chamber, where St. Aubert died; and, after half an hour’s conversation with La Voisin and his family, she left the cottage.

During these the first days of her stay at Chateau-le-Blanc, she was often affected, by observing the deep, but silent melancholy, which, at times, stole over Du Pont; and Emily, pitying the self-delusion, which disarmed him of the will to depart, determined to withdraw herself as soon as the respect she owed the Count and Countess De Villefort would permit. The dejection of his friend soon alarmed the anxiety of the Count, to whom Du Pont, at length, confided the secret of his hopeless affection, which, however, the former could only commiserate, though he secretly determined to befriend his suit, if an opportunity of doing so should ever occur. Considering the dangerous situation of Du Pont, he but feebly opposed his intention of leaving Chateau-le-Blanc, on the following day, but drew from him a promise of a longer visit, when he could return with safety to his peace. Emily herself, though she could not encourage his affection, esteemed him both for the many virtues he possessed, and for the services she had received from him; and it was not without tender emotions of gratitude and pity, that she now saw him depart for his family seat in Gascony; while he took leave of her with a countenance so expressive of love and grief, as to interest the Count more warmly in his cause than before.

In a few days, Emily also left the chateau, but not before the Count and Countess had received her promise to repeat her visit very soon; and she was welcomed by the abbess, with the same maternal kindness she had

formerly experienced, and by the nuns, with much expression of regard. The wellknown scenes of the convent occasioned her many melancholy recollections, but with these were mingled others, that inspired gratitude for having escaped the various dangers, that had pursued her, since she quitted it, and for the good, which she yet possessed; and, though she once more wept over her father's grave, with tears of tender affection, her grief was softened from its former acuteness.

Some time after her return to the monastery, she received a letter from her uncle, *Mons.* Quesnel, in answer to information that she had arrived in France, and to her enquiries, concerning such of her affairs as he had undertaken to conduct during her absence, especially as to the period for which La Vallee had been let, whither it was her wish to return, if it should appear, that her income would permit her to do so. The reply of *Mons.* Quesnel was cold and formal, as she expected, expressing neither concern for the evils she suffered, nor pleasure, that she was now removed from them; nor did he allow the opportunity to pass, of reproving her for her rejection of Count Morano, whom he affected still to believe a man of honour and fortune; nor of vehemently declaiming against Montoni, to whom he had always, till now, felt himself to be inferior. On Emily's pecuniary concerns, he was not very explicit; he informed her, however, that the term, for which La Vallee had been engaged, was nearly expired; but, without inviting her to his own house, added, that her circumstances would by no means allow her to reside there, and earnestly advised her to remain, for the present, in the convent of St. Claire.

To her enquiries respecting poor old Theresa, her late father's servant, he gave no answer. In the postscript to his letter, Monsieur Quesnel mentioned M. Motteville, in whose hands the late St. Aubert had placed the chief of his personal property, as being likely to arrange his affairs nearly to the satisfaction of his creditors, and that Emily would recover much more of her fortune, than she had formerly reason to expect. The letter also inclosed to Emily an order upon a merchant at Narbonne, for a small sum of money.

The tranquillity of the monastery, and the liberty she was suffered to enjoy, in wandering among the woods and shores of this delightful province, gradually restored her spirits to their natural tone, except that anxiety would sometimes intrude, concerning Valancourt, as the time

approached, when it was possible that she might receive an answer to her letter.

CHAPTER XIII

As when a wave, that from a cloud impends,
And, swell’d with tempests, on the ship descends,
White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud,
Howl o’er the masts, and sing through ev’ry shroud:
Pale, trembling, tir’d, the sailors freeze with fears,
And instant death on ev’ry wave appears.
POPE’S HOMER

The Lady Blanche, meanwhile, who was left much alone, became impatient for the company of her new friend, whom she wished to observe sharing in the delight she received from the beautiful scenery around. She had now no person, to whom she could express her admiration and communicate her pleasures, no eye, that sparkled to her smile, or countenance, that reflected her happiness; and she became spiritless and pensive. The Count, observing her dissatisfaction, readily yielded to her entreaties, and reminded Emily of her promised visit; but the silence of Valancourt, which was now prolonged far beyond the period, when a letter might have arrived from Estuviere, oppressed Emily with severe anxiety, and, rendering her averse to society, she would willingly have deferred her acceptance of this invitation, till her spirits should be relieved. The Count and his family, however, pressed to see her; and, as the circumstances, that prompted her wish for solitude, could not be explained, there was an appearance of caprice in her refusal, which she could not persevere in, without offending the friends, whose esteem she valued. At length, therefore, she returned upon a second visit to Chateau-le-Blanc. Here the friendly manner of Count De Villefort encouraged Emily to mention to him her situation, respecting the estates of her late aunt, and to consult him on the means of recovering them. He had little doubt, that the law would decide in her favour, and, advising her to apply to it, offered first to write to an advocate at Avignon, on whose opinion he thought he could rely. His kindness was gratefully accepted by Emily, who, soothed by the courtesy she daily experienced, would have been once more happy, could she have been assured of Valancourt’s welfare and unaltered affection. She had now been above a week at the chateau, without receiving intelligence of him, and, though she knew, that, if he was absent from his brother’s residence, it was scarcely probable her letter had yet reached him, she

could not forbear to admit doubts and fears, that destroyed her peace. Again she would consider of all, that might have happened in the long period, since her first seclusion at Udolpho, and her mind was sometimes so overwhelmed with an apprehension, that Valancourt was no more, or that he lived no longer for her, that the company even of Blanche became intolerably oppressive, and she would sit alone in her apartment for hours together, when the engagements of the family allowed her to do so, without incivility.

In one of these solitary hours, she unlocked a little box, which contained some letters of Valancourt, with some drawings she had sketched, during her stay in Tuscany, the latter of which were no longer interesting to her; but, in the letters, she now, with melancholy indulgence, meant to retrace the tenderness, that had so often soothed her, and rendered her, for a moment, insensible of the distance, which separated her from the writer. But their effect was now changed; the affection they expressed appealed so forcibly to her heart, when she considered that it had, perhaps, yielded to the powers of time and absence, and even the view of the handwriting recalled so many painful recollections, that she found herself unable to go through the first she had opened, and sat musing, with her cheek resting on her arm, and tears stealing from her eyes, when old Dorothee entered the room to inform her, that dinner would be ready, an hour before the usual time. Emily started on perceiving her, and hastily put up the papers, but not before Dorothee had observed both her agitation and her tears.

‘Ah, ma’amselle!’ said she, ‘you, who are so young, — have you reason for sorrow?’

Emily tried to smile, but was unable to speak.

‘Alas! dear young lady, when you come to my age, you will not weep at trifles; and surely you have nothing serious, to grieve you.’

‘No, Dorothee, nothing of any consequence,’ replied Emily. Dorothee, now stooping to pick up something, that had dropped from among the papers, suddenly exclaimed, ‘Holy Mary! what is it I see?’ and then, trembling, sat down in a chair, that stood by the table.

‘What is it you do see?’ said Emily, alarmed by her manner, and looking round the room.

‘It is herself,’ said Dorothee, ‘her very self! just as she looked a little before she died!’

Emily, still more alarmed, began now to fear, that Dorothee was seized with sudden phrensy, but entreated her to explain herself.

‘That picture!’ said she, ‘where did you find it, lady? it is my blessed mistress herself!’

She laid on the table the miniature, which Emily had long ago found among the papers her father had enjoined her to destroy, and over which she had once seen him shed such tender and affecting tears; and, recollecting all the various circumstances of his conduct, that had long perplexed her, her emotions increased to an excess, which deprived her of all power to ask the questions she trembled to have answered, and she could only enquire, whether Dorothee was certain the picture resembled the late marchioness.

‘O, ma’amselle!’ said she, ‘how came it to strike me so, the instant I saw it, if it was not my lady’s likeness? Ah!’ added she, taking up the miniature, ‘these are her own blue eyes — looking so sweet and so mild; and there is her very look, such as I have often seen it, when she had sat thinking for a long while, and then, the tears would often steal down her cheeks — but she never would complain! It was that look so meek, as it were, and resigned, that used to break my heart and make me love her so!’

‘Dorothee!’ said Emily solemnly, ‘I am interested in the cause of that grief, more so, perhaps, than you may imagine; and I entreat, that you will no longer refuse to indulge my curiosity; — it is not a common one.’

As Emily said this, she remembered the papers, with which the picture had been found, and had scarcely a doubt, that they had concerned the Marchioness de Villeroi; but with this supposition came a scruple, whether she ought to enquire further on a subject, which might prove to be the same, that her father had so carefully endeavoured to conceal. Her curiosity, concerning the Marchioness, powerful as it was, it is probable she would now have resisted, as she had formerly done, on unwarily observing the few terrible words in the papers, which had never since been erased from her memory, had she been certain that the history of that lady was the subject of those papers, or, that such simple particulars only as it was probable Dorothee could relate were included in her father’s command. What was known to her could be no secret to many other persons; and, since it appeared very unlikely, that St. Aubert should attempt to conceal what Emily might learn by ordinary means, she at

length concluded, that, if the papers had related to the story of the Marchioness, it was not those circumstances of it, which Dorothee could disclose, that he had thought sufficiently important to wish to have concealed. She, therefore, no longer hesitated to make the enquiries, that might lead to the gratification of her curiosity.

‘Ah, ma’amselle!’ said Dorothee, ‘it is a sad story, and cannot be told now: but what am I saying? I never will tell it. Many years have passed, since it happened; and I never loved to talk of the Marchioness to any body, but my husband. He lived in the family, at that time, as well as myself, and he knew many particulars from me, which nobody else did; for I was about the person of my lady in her last illness, and saw and heard as much, or more than my lord himself. Sweet saint! how patient she was! When she died, I thought I could have died with her!’

‘Dorothee,’ said Emily, interrupting her, ‘what you shall tell, you may depend upon it, shall never be disclosed by me. I have, I repeat it, particular reasons for wishing to be informed on this subject, and am willing to bind myself, in the most solemn manner, never to mention what you shall wish me to conceal.’

Dorothee seemed surprised at the earnestness of Emily’s manner, and, after regarding her for some moments, in silence, said, ‘Young lady! that look of yours pleads for you — it is so like my dear mistress’s, that I can almost fancy I see her before me; if you were her daughter, you could not remind me of her more. But dinner will be ready — had you not better go down?’

‘You will first promise to grant my request,’ said Emily.

‘And ought not you first to tell me, ma’amselle, how this picture fell into your hands, and the reasons you say you have for curiosity about my lady?’

‘Why, no, Dorothee,’ replied Emily, recollecting herself, ‘I have also particular reasons for observing silence, on these subjects, at least, till I know further; and, remember, I do not promise ever to speak upon them; therefore, do not let me induce you to satisfy my curiosity, from an expectation, that I shall gratify yours. What I may judge proper to conceal, does not concern myself alone, or I should have less scruple in revealing it: let a confidence in my honour alone persuade you to disclose what I request.’

‘Well, lady!’ replied Dorothee, after a long pause, during which her eyes were fixed upon Emily, ‘you seem so much interested, — and this picture and that face of yours make me think you have some reason to be so, — that I will trust you — and tell some things, that I never told before to any body, but my husband, though there are people, who have suspected as much. I will tell you the particulars of my lady’s death, too, and some of my own suspicions; but you must first promise me by all the saints’ —

Emily, interrupting her, solemnly promised never to reveal what should be confided to her, without Dorothee’s consent.

‘But there is the horn, ma’amselle, sounding for dinner,’ said Dorothee; ‘I must be gone.’

‘When shall I see you again?’ enquired Emily.

Dorothee mused, and then replied, ‘Why, madam, it may make people curious, if it is known I am so much in your apartment, and that I should be sorry for; so I will come when I am least likely to be observed. I have little leisure in the day, and I shall have a good deal to say; so, if you please, ma’am, I will come, when the family are all in bed.’

‘That will suit me very well,’ replied Emily: ‘Remember, then, to-night’ —

‘Aye, that is well remembered,’ said Dorothee, ‘I fear I cannot come to-night, madam, for there will be the dance of the vintage, and it will be late, before the servants go to rest; for, when they once set in to dance, they will keep it up, in the cool of the air, till morning; at least, it used to be so in my time.’

‘Ah! is it the dance of the vintage?’ said Emily, with a deep sigh, remembering, that it was on the evening of this festival, in the preceding year, that St. Aubert and herself had arrived in the neighbourhood of Chateau-le-Blanc. She paused a moment, overcome by the sudden recollection, and then, recovering herself, added— ‘But this dance is in the open woods; you, therefore, will not be wanted, and can easily come to me.’

Dorothee replied, that she had been accustomed to be present at the dance of the vintage, and she did not wish to be absent now; ‘but if I can get away, madam, I will,’ said she.

Emily then hastened to the dining-room, where the Count conducted himself with the courtesy, which is inseparable from true dignity, and of

which the Countess frequently practised little, though her manner to Emily was an exception to her usual habit. But, if she retained few of the ornamental virtues, she cherished other qualities, which she seemed to consider invaluable. She had dismissed the grace of modesty, but then she knew perfectly well how to manage the stare of assurance; her manners had little of the tempered sweetness, which is necessary to render the female character interesting, but she could occasionally throw into them an affectation of spirits, which seemed to triumph over every person, who approached her. In the country, however, she generally affected an elegant languor, that persuaded her almost to faint, when her favourite read to her a story of fictitious sorrow; but her countenance suffered no change, when living objects of distress solicited her charity, and her heart beat with no transport to the thought of giving them instant relief; — she was a stranger to the highest luxury, of which, perhaps, the human mind can be sensible, for her benevolence had never yet called smiles upon the face of misery.

In the evening, the Count, with all his family, except the Countess and Mademoiselle Bearn, went to the woods to witness the festivity of the peasants. The scene was in a glade, where the trees, opening, formed a circle round the turf they highly overshadowed; between their branches, vines, loaded with ripe clusters, were hung in gay festoons; and, beneath, were tables, with fruit, wine, cheese and other rural fare, — and seats for the Count and his family. At a little distance, were benches for the elder peasants, few of whom, however, could forbear to join the jocund dance, which began soon after sun-set, when several of sixty tripped it with almost as much glee and airy lightness, as those of sixteen.

The musicians, who sat carelessly on the grass, at the foot of a tree, seemed inspired by the sound of their own instruments, which were chiefly flutes and a kind of long guitar. Behind, stood a boy, flourishing a tamborine, and dancing a solo, except that, as he sometimes gaily tossed the instrument, he tripped among the other dancers, when his antic gestures called forth a broader laugh, and heightened the rustic spirit of the scene.

The Count was highly delighted with the happiness he witnessed, to which his bounty had largely contributed, and the Lady Blanche joined the dance with a young gentleman of her father’s party. Du Pont requested Emily’s hand, but her spirits were too much depressed, to permit her to

engage in the present festivity, which called to her remembrance that of the preceding year, when St. Aubert was living, and of the melancholy scenes, which had immediately followed it.

Overcome by these recollections, she, at length, left the spot, and walked slowly into the woods, where the softened music, floating at a distance, soothed her melancholy mind. The moon threw a mellow light among the foliage; the air was balmy and cool, and Emily, lost in thought, strolled on, without observing whither, till she perceived the sounds sinking afar off, and an awful stillness round her, except that, sometimes, the nightingale beguiled the silence with

Liquid notes, that close the eye of day.

At length, she found herself near the avenue, which, on the night of her father’s arrival, Michael had attempted to pass in search of a house, which was still nearly as wild and desolate as it had then appeared; for the Count had been so much engaged in directing other improvements, that he had neglected to give orders, concerning this extensive approach, and the road was yet broken, and the trees overloaded with their own luxuriance.

As she stood surveying it, and remembering the emotions, which she had formerly suffered there, she suddenly recollected the figure, that had been seen stealing among the trees, and which had returned no answer to Michael’s repeated calls; and she experienced somewhat of the fear, that had then assailed her, for it did not appear improbable, that these deep woods were occasionally the haunt of banditti. She, therefore, turned back, and was hastily pursuing her way to the dancers, when she heard steps approaching from the avenue; and, being still beyond the call of the peasants on the green, for she could neither hear their voices, or their music, she quickened her pace; but the persons following gained fast upon her, and, at length, distinguishing the voice of Henri, she walked leisurely, till he came up. He expressed some surprise at meeting her so far from the company; and, on her saying, that the pleasant moonlight had beguiled her to walk farther than she intended, an exclamation burst from the lips of his

companion, and she thought she heard Valancourt speak! It was, indeed, he! and the meeting was such as may be imagined, between persons so affectionate, and so long separated as they had been.

In the joy of these moments, Emily forgot all her past sufferings, and Valancourt seemed to have forgotten, that any person but Emily existed; while Henri was a silent and astonished spectator of the scene.

Valancourt asked a thousand questions, concerning herself and Montoni, which there was now no time to answer; but she learned, that her letter had been forwarded to him, at Paris, which he had previously quitted, and was returning to Gascony, whither the letter also returned, which, at length, informed him of Emily's arrival, and on the receipt of which he had immediately set out for Languedoc. On reaching the monastery, whence she had dated her letter, he found, to his extreme disappointment, that the gates were already closed for the night; and believing, that he should not see Emily, till the morrow, he was returning to his little inn, with the intention of writing to her, when he was overtaken by Henri, with whom he had been intimate at Paris, and was led to her, whom he was secretly lamenting that he should not see, till the following day.

Emily, with Valancourt and Henri, now returned to the green, where the latter presented Valancourt to the Count, who, she fancied, received him with less than his usual benignity, though it appeared, that they were not strangers to each other. He was invited, however, to partake of the diversions of the evening; and, when he had paid his respects to the Count, and while the dancers continued their festivity, he seated himself by Emily, and conversed, without restraint. The lights, which were hung among the trees, under which they sat, allowed her a more perfect view of the countenance she had so frequently in absence endeavoured to recollect, and she perceived, with some regret, that it was not the same as when last she saw it. There was all its wonted intelligence and fire; but it had lost much of the simplicity, and somewhat of the open benevolence, that used to characterise it. Still, however, it was an interesting countenance; but Emily thought she perceived, at intervals, anxiety contract, and melancholy fix the features of Valancourt; sometimes, too, he fell into a momentary musing, and then appeared anxious to dissipate thought; while, at others, as he fixed his eyes on Emily, a kind of sudden distraction seemed to cross his mind. In her he perceived the same goodness and

beautiful simplicity, that had charmed him, on their first acquaintance. The bloom of her countenance was somewhat faded, but all its sweetness remained, and it was rendered more interesting, than ever, by the faint expression of melancholy, that sometimes mingled with her smile.

At his request, she related the most important circumstances, that had occurred to her, since she left France, and emotions of pity and indignation alternately prevailed in his mind, when he heard how much she had suffered from the villany of Montoni. More than once, when she was speaking of his conduct, of which the guilt was rather softened, than exaggerated, by her representation, he started from his seat, and walked away, apparently overcome as much by self accusation as by resentment. Her sufferings alone were mentioned in the few words, which he could address to her, and he listened not to the account, which she was careful to give as distinctly as possible, of the present loss of Madame Montoni's estates, and of the little reason there was to expect their restoration. At length, Valancourt remained lost in thought, and then some secret cause seemed to overcome him with anguish. Again he abruptly left her. When he returned, she perceived, that he had been weeping, and tenderly begged, that he would compose himself. 'My sufferings are all passed now,' said she, 'for I have escaped from the tyranny of Montoni, and I see you well — let me also see you happy.'

Valancourt was more agitated, than before. 'I am unworthy of you, Emily,' said he, 'I am unworthy of you;' — words, by his manner of uttering which Emily was then more shocked than by their import. She fixed on him a mournful and enquiring eye. 'Do not look thus on me,' said he, turning away and pressing her hand; 'I cannot bear those looks.'

'I would ask,' said Emily, in a gentle, but agitated voice, 'the meaning of your words; but I perceive, that the question would distress you now. Let us talk on other subjects. Tomorrow, perhaps, you may be more composed. Observe those moon light woods, and the towers, which appear obscurely in the perspective. You used to be a great admirer of landscape, and I have heard you say, that the faculty of deriving consolation, under misfortune, from the sublime prospects, which neither oppression, or poverty withhold from us, was the peculiar blessing of the innocent.' Valancourt was deeply affected. 'Yes,' replied he, 'I had once a taste for innocent and elegant delights — I had once an uncorrupted heart.' Then,

checking himself, he added, ‘Do you remember our journey together in the Pyrenees?’

‘Can I forget it?’ said Emily.— ‘Would that I could!’ he replied;— ‘that was the happiest period of my life. I then loved, with enthusiasm, whatever was truly great, or good.’ It was some time before Emily could repress her tears, and try to command her emotions. ‘If you wish to forget that journey,’ said she, ‘it must certainly be my wish to forget it also.’ She paused, and then added, ‘You make me very uneasy; but this is not the time for further enquiry; — yet, how can I bear to believe, even for a moment, that you are less worthy of my esteem than formerly? I have still sufficient confidence in your candour, to believe, that, when I shall ask for an explanation, you will give it me.’— ‘Yes,’ said Valancourt, ‘yes, Emily: I have not yet lost my candour: if I had, I could better have disguised my emotions, on learning what were your sufferings — your virtues, while I — I — but I will say no more. I did not mean to have said even so much — I have been surprised into the self-accusation. Tell me, Emily, that you will not forget that journey — will not wish to forget it, and I will be calm. I would not lose the remembrance of it for the whole earth.’

‘How contradictory is this!’ said Emily;— ‘but we may be overheard. My recollection of it shall depend upon yours; I will endeavour to forget, or to recollect it, as you may do. Let us join the Count.’— ‘Tell me first,’ said Valancourt, ‘that you forgive the uneasiness I have occasioned you, this evening, and that you will still love me.’— ‘I sincerely forgive you,’ replied Emily. ‘You best know whether I shall continue to love you, for you know whether you deserve my esteem. At present, I will believe that you do. It is unnecessary to say,’ added she, observing his dejection, ‘how much pain it would give me to believe otherwise. — The young lady, who approaches, is the Count’s daughter.’

Valancourt and Emily now joined the Lady Blanche; and the party, soon after, sat down with the Count, his son, and the Chevalier Du Pont, at a banquet, spread under a gay awning, beneath the trees. At the table also were seated several of the most venerable of the Count’s tenants, and it was a festive repast to all but Valancourt and Emily. When the Count retired to the chateau, he did not invite Valancourt to accompany him, who, therefore, took leave of Emily, and retired to his solitary inn for the night: meanwhile, she soon withdrew to her own apartment, where she

mused, with deep anxiety and concern, on his behaviour, and on the Count's reception of him. Her attention was thus so wholly engaged, that she forgot Dorothee and her appointment, till morning was far advanced, when, knowing that the good old woman would not come, she retired, for a few hours, to repose.

On the following day, when the Count had accidentally joined Emily in one of the walks, they talked of the festival of the preceding evening, and this led him to a mention of Valancourt. 'That is a young man of talents,' said he; 'you were formerly acquainted with him, I perceive.' Emily said, that she was. 'He was introduced to me, at Paris,' said the Count, 'and I was much pleased with him, on our first acquaintance.' He paused, and Emily trembled, between the desire of hearing more and the fear of shewing the Count, that she felt an interest on the subject. 'May I ask,' said he, at length, 'how long you have known Monsieur Valancourt?'— 'Will you allow me to ask your reason for the question, sir?' said she; 'and I will answer it immediately.'— 'Certainly,' said the Count, 'that is but just. I will tell you my reason. I cannot but perceive, that Monsieur Valancourt admires you; in that, however, there is nothing extraordinary; every person, who sees you, must do the same. I am above using commonplace compliments; I speak with sincerity. What I fear, is, that he is a favoured admirer.'— 'Why do you fear it, sir?' said Emily, endeavouring to conceal her emotion.— 'Because,' replied the Count, 'I think him not worthy of your favour.' Emily, greatly agitated, entreated further explanation. 'I will give it,' said he, 'if you will believe, that nothing but a strong interest in your welfare could induce me to hazard that assertion.'— 'I must believe so, sir,' replied Emily.

'But let us rest under these trees,' said the Count, observing the paleness of her countenance; 'here is a seat — you are fatigued.' They sat down, and the Count proceeded. 'Many young ladies, circumstanced as you are, would think my conduct, on this occasion, and on so short an acquaintance, impertinent, instead of friendly; from what I have observed of your temper and understanding, I do not fear such a return from you. Our acquaintance has been short, but long enough to make me esteem you, and feel a lively interest in your happiness. You deserve to be very happy, and I trust that you will be so.' Emily sighed softly, and bowed her thanks. The Count paused again. 'I am unpleasantly circumstanced,' said he; 'but

an opportunity of rendering you important service shall overcome inferior considerations. Will you inform me of the manner of your first acquaintance with the Chevalier Valancourt, if the subject is not too painful?'

Emily briefly related the accident of their meeting in the presence of her father, and then so earnestly entreated the Count not to hesitate in declaring what he knew, that he perceived the violent emotion, against which she was contending, and, regarding her with a look of tender compassion, considered how he might communicate his information with least pain to his anxious auditor.

'The Chevalier and my son,' said he, 'were introduced to each other, at the table of a brother officer, at whose house I also met him, and invited him to my own, whenever he should be disengaged. I did not then know, that he had formed an acquaintance with a set of men, a disgrace to their species, who live by plunder and pass their lives in continual debauchery. I knew several of the Chevalier's family, resident at Paris, and considered them as sufficient pledges for his introduction to my own. But you are ill; I will leave the subject.'— 'No, sir,' said Emily, 'I beg you will proceed: I am only distressed.'— 'ONLY!' said the Count, with emphasis; 'however, I will proceed. I soon learned, that these, his associates, had drawn him into a course of dissipation, from which he appeared to have neither the power, nor the inclination, to extricate himself. He lost large sums at the gaming-table; he became infatuated with play; and was ruined. I spoke tenderly of this to his friends, who assured me, that they had remonstrated with him, till they were weary. I afterwards learned, that, in consideration of his talents for play, which were generally successful, when unopposed by the tricks of villany, — that in consideration of these, the party had initiated him into the secrets of their trade, and allotted him a share of their profits.' 'Impossible!' said Emily suddenly; 'but — pardon me, sir, I scarcely know what I say; allow for the distress of my mind. I must, indeed, I must believe, that you have not been truly informed. The Chevalier had, doubtless, enemies, who misrepresented him.'— 'I should be most happy to believe so,' replied the Count, 'but I cannot. Nothing short of conviction, and a regard for your happiness, could have urged me to repeat these unpleasant reports.'

Emily was silent. She recollected Valancourt's sayings, on the preceding evening, which discovered the pangs of self-reproach, and seemed to confirm all that the Count had related. Yet she had not fortitude enough to dare conviction. Her heart was overwhelmed with anguish at the mere suspicion of his guilt, and she could not endure a belief of it. After a silence, the Count said, 'I perceive, and can allow for, your want of conviction. It is necessary I should give some proof of what I have asserted; but this I cannot do, without subjecting one, who is very dear to me, to danger.'— 'What is the danger you apprehend, sir?' said Emily; 'if I can prevent it, you may safely confide in my honour.'— 'On your honour I am certain I can rely,' said the Count; 'but can I trust your fortitude? Do you think you can resist the solicitation of a favoured admirer, when he pleads, in affliction, for the name of one, who has robbed him of a blessing?'— 'I shall not be exposed to such a temptation, sir,' said Emily, with modest pride, 'for I cannot favour one, whom I must no longer esteem. I, however, readily give my word.' Tears, in the mean time, contradicted her first assertion; and she felt, that time and effort only could eradicate an affection, which had been formed on virtuous esteem, and cherished by habit and difficulty.

'I will trust you then,' said the Count, 'for conviction is necessary to your peace, and cannot, I perceive, be obtained, without this confidence. My son has too often been an eye-witness of the Chevalier's ill conduct; he was very near being drawn in by it; he was, indeed, drawn in to the commission of many follies, but I rescued him from guilt and destruction. Judge then, Mademoiselle St. Aubert, whether a father, who had nearly lost his only son by the example of the Chevalier, has not, from conviction, reason to warn those, whom he esteems, against trusting their happiness in such hands. I have myself seen the Chevalier engaged in deep play with men, whom I almost shuddered to look upon. If you still doubt, I will refer you to my son.'

'I must not doubt what you have yourself witnessed,' replied Emily, sinking with grief, 'or what you assert. But the Chevalier has, perhaps, been drawn only into a transient folly, which he may never repeat. If you had known the justness of his former principles, you would allow for my present incredulity.'

‘Alas!’ observed the Count, ‘it is difficult to believe that, which will make us wretched. But I will not sooth you by flattering and false hopes. We all know how fascinating the vice of gaming is, and how difficult it is, also, to conquer habits; the Chevalier might, perhaps, reform for a while, but he would soon relapse into dissipation — for I fear, not only the bonds of habit would be powerful, but that his morals are corrupted. And — why should I conceal from you, that play is not his only vice? he appears to have a taste for every vicious pleasure.’

The Count hesitated and paused; while Emily endeavoured to support herself, as, with increasing perturbation, she expected what he might further say. A long pause of silence ensued, during which he was visibly agitated; at length, he said, ‘It would be a cruel delicacy, that could prevail with me to be silent — and I will inform you, that the Chevalier’s extravagance has brought him twice into the prisons of Paris, from whence he was last extricated, as I was told upon authority, which I cannot doubt, by a wellknown Parisian Countess, with whom he continued to reside, when I left Paris.’

He paused again; and, looking at Emily, perceived her countenance change, and that she was falling from the seat; he caught her, but she had fainted, and he called loudly for assistance. They were, however, beyond the hearing of his servants at the chateau, and he feared to leave her while he went thither for assistance, yet knew not how otherwise to obtain it; till a fountain at no great distance caught his eye, and he endeavoured to support Emily against the tree, under which she had been sitting, while he went thither for water. But again he was perplexed, for he had nothing near him, in which water could be brought; but while, with increased anxiety, he watched her, he thought he perceived in her countenance symptoms of returning life.

It was long, however, before she revived, and then she found herself supported — not by the Count, but by Valancourt, who was observing her with looks of earnest apprehension, and who now spoke to her in a tone, tremulous with his anxiety. At the sound of his wellknown voice, she raised her eyes, but presently closed them, and a faintness again came over her.

The Count, with a look somewhat stern, waved him to withdraw; but he only sighed heavily, and called on the name of Emily, as he again held the

water, that had been brought, to her lips. On the Count's repeating his action, and accompanying it with words, Valancourt answered him with a look of deep resentment, and refused to leave the place, till she should revive, or to resign her for a moment to the care of any person. In the next instant, his conscience seemed to inform him of what had been the subject of the Count's conversation with Emily, and indignation flashed in his eyes; but it was quickly repressed, and succeeded by an expression of serious anguish, that induced the Count to regard him with more pity than resentment, and the view of which so much affected Emily, when she again revived, that she yielded to the weakness of tears. But she soon restrained them, and, exerting her resolution to appear recovered, she rose, thanked the Count and Henri, with whom Valancourt had entered the garden, for their care, and moved towards the chateau, without noticing Valancourt, who, heart-struck by her manner, exclaimed in a low voice— 'Good God! how have I deserved this? — what has been said, to occasion this change?'

Emily, without replying, but with increased emotion, quickened her steps. 'What has thus disordered you, Emily?' said he, as he still walked by her side: 'give me a few moments' conversation, I entreat you; — I am very miserable!'

Though this was spoken in a low voice, it was overheard by the Count, who immediately replied, that Mademoiselle St. Aubert was then too much indisposed, to attend to any conversation, but that he would venture to promise she would see Monsieur Valancourt on the morrow, if she was better.

Valancourt's cheek was crimsoned: he looked haughtily at the Count, and then at Emily, with successive expressions of surprise, grief and supplication, which she could neither misunderstand, or resist, and she said languidly— 'I shall be better tomorrow, and if you wish to accept the Count's permission, I will see you then.'

'See me!' exclaimed Valancourt, as he threw a glance of mingled pride and resentment upon the Count; and then, seeming to recollect himself, he added— 'But I will come, madam; I will accept the Count's PERMISSION.'

When they reached the door of the chateau, he lingered a moment, for his resentment was now fled; and then, with a look so expressive of

tenderness and grief, that Emily's heart was not proof against it, he bade her good morning, and, bowing slightly to the Count, disappeared.

Emily withdrew to her own apartment, under such oppression of heart as she had seldom known, when she endeavoured to recollect all that the Count had told, to examine the probability of the circumstances he himself believed, and to consider of her future conduct towards Valancourt. But, when she attempted to think, her mind refused controul, and she could only feel that she was miserable. One moment, she sunk under the conviction, that Valancourt was no longer the same, whom she had so tenderly loved, the idea of whom had hitherto supported her under affliction, and cheered her with the hope of happier days, — but a fallen, a worthless character, whom she must teach herself to despise — if she could not forget. Then, unable to endure this terrible supposition, she rejected it, and disdained to believe him capable of conduct, such as the Count had described, to whom she believed he had been misrepresented by some artful enemy; and there were moments, when she even ventured to doubt the integrity of the Count himself, and to suspect, that he was influenced by some selfish motive, to break her connection with Valancourt. But this was the error of an instant, only; the Count's character, which she had heard spoken of by Du Pont and many other persons, and had herself observed, enabled her to judge, and forbade the supposition; had her confidence, indeed, been less, there appeared to be no temptation to betray him into conduct so treacherous, and so cruel. Nor did reflection suffer her to preserve the hope, that Valancourt had been misrepresented to the Count, who had said, that he spoke chiefly from his own observation, and from his son's experience. She must part from Valancourt, therefore, for ever — for what of either happiness or tranquillity could she expect with a man, whose tastes were degenerated into low inclinations, and to whom vice was become habitual? whom she must no longer esteem, though the remembrance of what he once was, and the long habit of loving him, would render it very difficult for her to despise him. 'O Valancourt!' she would exclaim, 'having been separated so long — do we meet, only to be miserable — only to part for ever?'

Amidst all the tumult of her mind, she remembered pertinaciously the seeming candour and simplicity of his conduct, on the preceding night; and, had she dared to trust her own heart, it would have led her to hope

much from this. Still she could not resolve to dismiss him for ever, without obtaining further proof of his ill conduct; yet she saw no probability of procuring it, if, indeed, proof more positive was possible. Something, however, it was necessary to decide upon, and she almost determined to be guided in her opinion solely by the manner, with which Valancourt should receive her hints concerning his late conduct.

Thus passed the hours till dinner-time, when Emily, struggling against the pressure of her grief, dried her tears, and joined the family at table, where the Count preserved towards her the most delicate attention; but the Countess and Mademoiselle Bearn, having looked, for a moment, with surprise, on her dejected countenance, began, as usual, to talk of trifles, while the eyes of Lady Blanche asked much of her friend, who could only reply by a mournful smile.

Emily withdrew as soon after dinner as possible, and was followed by the Lady Blanche, whose anxious enquiries, however, she found herself quite unequal to answer, and whom she entreated to spare her on the subject of her distress. To converse on any topic, was now, indeed, so extremely painful to her, that she soon gave up the attempt, and Blanche left her, with pity of the sorrow, which she perceived she had no power to assuage.

Emily secretly determined to go to her convent in a day or two; for company, especially that of the Countess and Mademoiselle Bearn, was intolerable to her, in the present state of her spirits; and, in the retirement of the convent, as well as the kindness of the abbess, she hoped to recover the command of her mind, and to teach it resignation to the event, which, she too plainly perceived, was approaching.

To have lost Valancourt by death, or to have seen him married to a rival, would, she thought, have given her less anguish, than a conviction of his unworthiness, which must terminate in misery to himself, and which robbed her even of the solitary image her heart so long had cherished. These painful reflections were interrupted, for a moment, by a note from Valancourt, written in evident distraction of mind, entreating, that she would permit him to see her on the approaching evening, instead of the following morning; a request, which occasioned her so much agitation, that she was unable to answer it. She wished to see him, and to terminate her present state of suspense, yet shrunk from the interview, and, incapable

of deciding for herself, she, at length, sent to beg a few moments' conversation with the Count in his library, where she delivered to him the note, and requested his advice. After reading it, he said, that, if she believed herself well enough to support the interview, his opinion was, that, for the relief of both parties, it ought to take place, that evening.

'His affection for you is, undoubtedly, a very sincere one,' added the Count; 'and he appears so much distressed, and you, my amiable friend, are so ill at ease — that the sooner the affair is decided, the better.'

Emily replied, therefore, to Valancourt, that she would see him, and then exerted herself in endeavours to attain fortitude and composure, to bear her through the approaching scene — a scene so afflictingly the reverse of any, to which she had looked forward!

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CHAPTER I

Is all the council that we two have shared,
the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us — Oh! and is all forgot?

And will you rend our ancient love asunder?
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

In the evening, when Emily was at length informed, that Count De Villefort requested to see her, she guessed that Valancourt was below, and, endeavouring to assume composure and to recollect all her spirits, she rose and left the apartment; but on reaching the door of the library, where she imagined him to be, her emotion returned with such energy, that, fearing to trust herself in the room, she returned into the hall, where she continued for a considerable time, unable to command her agitated spirits.

When she could recall them, she found in the library Valancourt, seated with the Count, who both rose on her entrance; but she did not dare to look at Valancourt, and the Count, having led her to a chair, immediately withdrew.

Emily remained with her eyes fixed on the floor, under such oppression of heart, that she could not speak, and with difficulty breathed; while Valancourt threw himself into a chair beside her, and, sighing heavily, continued silent, when, had she raised her eyes, she would have perceived the violent emotions, with which he was agitated.

At length, in a tremulous voice, he said, 'I have solicited to see you this evening, that I might, at least, be spared the further torture of suspense, which your altered manner had occasioned me, and which the hints I have just received from the Count have in part explained. I perceive I have enemies, Emily, who envied me my late happiness, and who have been busy in searching out the means to destroy it: I perceive, too, that time and absence have weakened the affection you once felt for me, and that you can now easily be taught to forget me.'

His last words faltered, and Emily, less able to speak than before, continued silent.

‘O what a meeting is this!’ exclaimed Valancourt, starting from his seat, and pacing the room with hurried steps, ‘what a meeting is this, after our long — long separation!’ Again he sat down, and, after the struggle of a moment, he added in a firm but despairing tone, ‘This is too much — I cannot bear it! Emily, will you not speak to me?’

He covered his face with his hand, as if to conceal his emotion, and took Emily’s, which she did not withdraw. Her tears could no longer be restrained; and, when he raised his eyes and perceived that she was weeping, all his tenderness returned, and a gleam of hope appeared to cross his mind, for he exclaimed, ‘O! you do pity me, then, you do love me! Yes, you are still my own Emily — let me believe those tears, that tell me so!’

Emily now made an effort to recover her firmness, and, hastily drying them, ‘Yes,’ said she, ‘I do pity you — I weep for you — but, ought I to think of you with affection? You may remember, that yester-evening I said, I had still sufficient confidence in your candour to believe, that, when I should request an explanation of your words, you would give it. This explanation is now unnecessary, I understand them too well; but prove, at least, that your candour is deserving of the confidence I give it, when I ask you, whether you are conscious of being the same estimable Valancourt — whom I once loved.’

‘Once loved!’ cried he,— ‘the same — the same!’ He paused in extreme emotion, and then added, in a voice at once solemn, and dejected,— ‘No — I am not the same! — I am lost — I am no longer worthy of you!’

He again concealed his face. Emily was too much affected by this honest confession to reply immediately, and, while she struggled to overcome the pleadings of her heart, and to act with the decisive firmness, which was necessary for her future peace, she perceived all the danger of trusting long to her resolution, in the presence of Valancourt, and was anxious to conclude an interview, that tortured them both; yet, when she considered, that this was probably their last meeting, her fortitude sunk at once, and she experienced only emotions of tenderness and of despondency.

Valancourt, meanwhile, lost in emotions of remorse and grief, which he had neither the power, or the will to express, sat insensible almost of the presence of Emily, his features still concealed, and his breast agitated by convulsive sighs.

‘Spare me the necessity,’ said Emily, recollecting her fortitude, ‘spare me the necessity of mentioning those circumstances of your conduct, which oblige me to break our connection forever. — We must part, I now see you for the last time.’

‘Impossible!’ cried Valancourt, roused from his deep silence, ‘You cannot mean what you say! — you cannot mean to throw me from you forever!’

‘We must part,’ repeated Emily, with emphasis,— ‘and that forever! Your own conduct has made this necessary.’

‘This is the Count’s determination,’ said he haughtily, ‘not yours, and I shall enquire by what authority he interferes between us.’ He now rose, and walked about the room in great emotion.

‘Let me save you from this error,’ said Emily, not less agitated— ‘it is my determination, and, if you reflect a moment on your late conduct, you will perceive, that my future peace requires it.’

‘Your future peace requires, that we should part — part forever!’ said Valancourt, ‘How little did I ever expect to hear you say so!’

‘And how little did I expect, that it would be necessary for me to say so!’ rejoined Emily, while her voice softened into tenderness, and her tears flowed again.— ‘That you — you, Valancourt, would ever fall from my esteem!’

He was silent a moment, as if overwhelmed by the consciousness of no longer deserving this esteem, as well as the certainty of having lost it, and then, with impassioned grief, lamented the criminality of his late conduct and the misery to which it had reduced him, till, overcome by a recollection of the past and a conviction of the future, he burst into tears, and uttered only deep and broken sighs.

The remorse he had expressed, and the distress he suffered could not be witnessed by Emily with indifference, and, had she not called to her recollection all the circumstances, of which Count De Villefort had informed her, and all he had said of the danger of confiding in repentance, formed under the influence of passion, she might perhaps have trusted to the assurances of her heart, and have forgotten his misconduct in the tenderness, which that repentance excited.

Valancourt, returning to the chair beside her, at length, said, in a calm voice, ‘‘Tis true, I am fallen — fallen from my own esteem! but could you,

Emily, so soon, so suddenly resign, if you had not before ceased to love me, or, if your conduct was not governed by the designs, I will say, the selfish designs of another person! Would you not otherwise be willing to hope for my reformation — and could you bear, by estranging me from you, to abandon me to misery — to myself!' — Emily wept aloud.— 'No, Emily — no — you would not do this, if you still loved me. You would find your own happiness in saving mine.'

'There are too many probabilities against that hope,' said Emily, 'to justify me in trusting the comfort of my whole life to it. May I not also ask, whether you could wish me to do this, if you really loved me?'

'Really loved you!' exclaimed Valancourt— 'is it possible you can doubt my love! Yet it is reasonable, that you should do so, since you see, that I am less ready to suffer the horror of parting with you, than that of involving you in my ruin. Yes, Emily — I am ruined — irreparably ruined — I am involved in debts, which I can never discharge!' Valancourt's look, which was wild, as he spoke this, soon settled into an expression of gloomy despair; and Emily, while she was compelled to admire his sincerity, saw, with unutterable anguish, new reasons for fear in the suddenness of his feelings and the extent of the misery, in which they might involve him. After some minutes, she seemed to contend against her grief and to struggle for fortitude to conclude the interview. 'I will not prolong these moments,' said she, 'by a conversation, which can answer no good purpose. Valancourt, farewell!'

'You are not going?' said he, wildly interrupting her— 'You will not leave me thus — you will not abandon me even before my mind has suggested any possibility of compromise between the last indulgence of my despair and the endurance of my loss!' Emily was terrified by the sternness of his look, and said, in a soothing voice, 'You have yourself acknowledged, that it is necessary we should part; — if you wish, that I should believe you love me, you will repeat the acknowledgment.'— 'Never — never,' cried he— 'I was distracted when I made it. O! Emily — this is too much; — though you are not deceived as to my faults, you must be deluded into this exasperation against them. The Count is the barrier between us; but he shall not long remain so.'

'You are, indeed, distracted,' said Emily, 'the Count is not your enemy; on the contrary, he is my friend, and that might, in some degree, induce

you to consider him as yours.’— ‘Your friend!’ said Valancourt, hastily, ‘how long has he been your friend, that he can so easily make you forget your lover? Was it he, who recommended to your favour the Monsieur Du Pont, who, you say, accompanied you from Italy, and who, I say, has stolen your affections? But I have no right to question you; — you are your own mistress. Du Pont, perhaps, may not long triumph over my fallen fortunes!’ Emily, more frightened than before by the frantic looks of Valancourt, said, in a tone scarcely audible, ‘For heaven’s sake be reasonable — be composed. Monsieur Du Pont is not your rival, nor is the Count his advocate. You have no rival; nor, except yourself, an enemy. My heart is wrung with anguish, which must increase while your frantic behaviour shews me, more than ever, that you are no longer the Valancourt I have been accustomed to love.’

He made no reply, but sat with his arms rested on the table and his face concealed by his hands; while Emily stood, silent and trembling, wretched for herself and dreading to leave him in this state of mind.

‘O excess of misery!’ he suddenly exclaimed, ‘that I can never lament my sufferings, without accusing myself, nor remember you, without recollecting the folly and the vice, by which I have lost you! Why was I forced to Paris, and why did I yield to allurements, which were to make me despicable for ever! O! why cannot I look back, without interruption, to those days of innocence and peace, the days of our early love!’ — The recollection seemed to melt his heart, and the frenzy of despair yielded to tears. After a long pause, turning towards her and taking her hand, he said, in a softened voice, ‘Emily, can you bear that we should part — can you resolve to give up an heart, that loves you like mine — an heart, which, though it has erred — widely erred, is not irretrievable from error, as, you well know, it never can be retrievable from love?’ Emily made no reply, but with her tears. ‘Can you,’ continued he, ‘can you forget all our former days of happiness and confidence — when I had not a thought, that I might wish to conceal from you — when I had no taste — no pleasures, in which you did not participate?’

‘O do not lead me to the remembrance of those days,’ said Emily, ‘unless you can teach me to forget the present; I do not mean to reproach you; if I did, I should be spared these tears; but why will you render your

present sufferings more conspicuous, by contrasting them with your former virtues?'

'Those virtues,' said Valancourt, 'might, perhaps, again be mine, if your affection, which nurtured them, was unchanged; — but I fear, indeed, I see, that you can no longer love me; else the happy hours, which we have passed together, would plead for me, and you could not look back upon them unmoved. Yet, why should I torture myself with the remembrance — why do I linger here? Am I not ruined — would it not be madness to involve you in my misfortunes, even if your heart was still my own? I will not distress you further. Yet, before I go,' added he, in a solemn voice, 'let me repeat, that, whatever may be my destiny — whatever I may be doomed to suffer, I must always love you — most fondly love you! I am going, Emily, I am going to leave you — to leave you, forever!' As he spoke the last words, his voice trembled, and he threw himself again into the chair, from which he had risen. Emily was utterly unable to leave the room, or to say farewell. All impression of his criminal conduct and almost of his follies was obliterated from her mind, and she was sensible only of pity and grief.

'My fortitude is gone,' said Valancourt at length; 'I can no longer even struggle to recall it. I cannot now leave you — I cannot bid you an eternal farewell; say, at least, that you will see me once again.' Emily's heart was somewhat relieved by the request, and she endeavoured to believe, that she ought not to refuse it. Yet she was embarrassed by recollecting, that she was a visitor in the house of the Count, who could not be pleased by the return of Valancourt. Other considerations, however, soon overcame this, and she granted his request, on the condition, that he would neither think of the Count, as his enemy, nor Du Pont as his rival. He then left her, with a heart, so much lightened by this short respite, that he almost lost every former sense of misfortune.

Emily withdrew to her own room, that she might compose her spirits and remove the traces of her tears, which would encourage the censorious remarks of the Countess and her favourite, as well as excite the curiosity of the rest of the family. She found it, however, impossible to tranquillize her mind, from which she could not expel the remembrance of the late scene with Valancourt, or the consciousness, that she was to see him again, on the morrow. This meeting now appeared more terrible to her than the

last, for the ingenuous confession he had made of his ill conduct and his embarrassed circumstances, with the strength and tenderness of affection, which this confession discovered, had deeply impressed her, and, in spite of all she had heard and believed to his disadvantage, her esteem began to return. It frequently appeared to her impossible, that he could have been guilty of the depravities, reported of him, which, if not inconsistent with his warmth and impetuosity, were entirely so with his candour and sensibility. Whatever was the criminality, which had given rise to the reports, she could not now believe them to be wholly true, nor that his heart was finally closed against the charms of virtue. The deep consciousness, which he felt as well as expressed of his errors, seemed to justify the opinion; and, as she understood not the instability of youthful dispositions, when opposed by habit, and that professions frequently deceive those, who make, as well as those, who hear them, she might have yielded to the flattering persuasions of her own heart and the pleadings of Valancourt, had she not been guided by the superior prudence of the Count. He represented to her, in a clear light, the danger of her present situation, that of listening to promises of amendment, made under the influence of strong passion, and the slight hope, which could attach to a connection, whose chance of happiness rested upon the retrieval of ruined circumstances and the reform of corrupted habits. On these accounts, he lamented, that Emily had consented to a second interview, for he saw how much it would shake her resolution and increase the difficulty of her conquest.

Her mind was now so entirely occupied by nearer interests, that she forgot the old housekeeper and the promised history, which so lately had excited her curiosity, but which Dorothee was probably not very anxious to disclose, for night came; the hours passed; and she did not appear in Emily’s chamber. With the latter it was a sleepless and dismal night; the more she suffered her memory to dwell on the late scenes with Valancourt, the more her resolution declined, and she was obliged to recollect all the arguments, which the Count had made use of to strengthen it, and all the precepts, which she had received from her deceased father, on the subject of self-command, to enable her to act, with prudence and dignity, on this the most severe occasion of her life. There were moments, when all her fortitude forsook her, and when, remembering the confidence of former

times, she thought it impossible, that she could renounce Valancourt. His reformation then appeared certain; the arguments of Count De Villefort were forgotten; she readily believed all she wished, and was willing to encounter any evil, rather than that of an immediate separation.

Thus passed the night in ineffectual struggles between affection and reason, and she rose, in the morning, with a mind, weakened and irresolute, and a frame, trembling with illness.

CHAPTER II

Come, weep with me; — past hope, past cure, past help!

Valancourt, meanwhile, suffered the tortures of remorse and despair. The sight of Emily had renewed all the ardour, with which he first loved her, and which had suffered a temporary abatement from absence and the passing scenes of busy life. When, on the receipt of her letter, he set out for Languedoc, he then knew, that his own folly had involved him in ruin, and it was no part of his design to conceal this from her. But he lamented only the delay which his ill-conduct must give to their marriage, and did not foresee, that the information could induce her to break their connection forever. While the prospect of this separation overwhelmed his mind, before stung with self-reproach, he awaited their second interview, in a state little short of distraction, yet was still inclined to hope, that his pleadings might prevail upon her not to exact it. In the morning, he sent to know at what hour she would see him; and his note arrived, when she was with the Count, who had sought an opportunity of again conversing with her of Valancourt; for he perceived the extreme distress of her mind, and feared, more than ever, that her fortitude would desert her. Emily having dismissed the messenger, the Count returned to the subject of their late conversation, urging his fear of Valancourt's entreaties, and again pointing out to her the lengthened misery, that must ensue, if she should refuse to encounter some present uneasiness. His repeated arguments could, indeed, alone have protected her from the affection she still felt for Valancourt, and she resolved to be governed by them.

The hour of interview, at length, arrived. Emily went to it, at least, with composure of manner, but Valancourt was so much agitated, that he could not speak, for several minutes, and his first words were alternately those of lamentation, entreaty, and self-reproach. Afterward, he said, 'Emily, I have loved you — I do love you, better than my life; but I am ruined by my own conduct. Yet I would seek to entangle you in a connection, that must be miserable for you, rather than subject myself to the punishment, which is my due, the loss of you. I am a wretch, but I will be a villain no longer. — I will not endeavour to shake your resolution by the pleadings of a selfish passion. I resign you, Emily, and will endeavour to find

consolation in considering, that, though I am miserable, you, at least, may be happy. The merit of the sacrifice is, indeed, not my own, for I should never have attained strength of mind to surrender you, if your prudence had not demanded it.'

He paused a moment, while Emily attempted to conceal the tears, which came to her eyes. She would have said, 'You speak now, as you were wont to do,' but she checked herself.— 'Forgive me, Emily,' said he, 'all the sufferings I have occasioned you, and, sometimes, when you think of the wretched Valancourt, remember, that his only consolation would be to believe, that you are no longer unhappy by his folly.' The tears now fell fast upon her cheek, and he was relapsing into the phrensy of despair, when Emily endeavoured to recall her fortitude and to terminate an interview, which only seemed to increase the distress of both. Perceiving her tears and that she was rising to go, Valancourt struggled, once more, to overcome his own feelings and to sooth hers. 'The remembrance of this sorrow,' said he, 'shall in future be my protection. O! never again will example, or temptation have power to seduce me to evil, exalted as I shall be by the recollection of your grief for me.'

Emily was somewhat comforted by this assurance. 'We are now parting for ever,' said she; 'but, if my happiness is dear to you, you will always remember, that nothing can contribute to it more, than to believe, that you have recovered your own esteem.' Valancourt took her hand; — his eyes were covered with tears, and the farewell he would have spoken was lost in sighs. After a few moments, Emily said, with difficulty and emotion, 'Farewell, Valancourt, may you be happy!' She repeated her 'farewell,' and attempted to withdraw her hand, but he still held it and bathed it with his tears. 'Why prolong these moments?' said Emily, in a voice scarcely audible, 'they are too painful to us both.' 'This is too — too much,' exclaimed Valancourt, resigning her hand and throwing himself into a chair, where he covered his face with his hands and was overcome, for some moments, by convulsive sighs. After a long pause, during which Emily wept in silence, and Valancourt seemed struggling with his grief, she again rose to take leave of him. Then, endeavouring to recover his composure, 'I am again afflicting you,' said he, 'but let the anguish I suffer plead for me.' He then added, in a solemn voice, which frequently trembled with the agitation of his heart, 'Farewell, Emily, you will always

be the only object of my tenderness. Sometimes you will think of the unhappy Valancourt, and it will be with pity, though it may not be with esteem. O! what is the whole world to me, without you — without your esteem!' He checked himself— 'I am falling again into the error I have just lamented. I must not intrude longer upon your patience, or I shall relapse into despair.'

He once more bade Emily adieu, pressed her hand to his lips, looked at her, for the last time, and hurried out of the room.

Emily remained in the chair, where he had left her, oppressed with a pain at her heart, which scarcely permitted her to breathe, and listening to his departing steps, sinking fainter and fainter, as he crossed the hall. She was, at length, roused by the voice of the Countess in the garden, and, her attention being then awakened, the first object, which struck her sight, was the vacant chair, where Valancourt had sat. The tears, which had been, for some time, repressed by the kind of astonishment, that followed his departure, now came to her relief, and she was, at length, sufficiently composed to return to her own room.

CHAPTER III

This is no mortal business, nor no sound
That the earth owes!

SHAKESPEARE

We now return to the mention of Montoni, whose rage and disappointment were soon lost in nearer interests, than any, which the unhappy Emily had awakened. His depredations having exceeded their usual limits, and reached an extent, at which neither the timidity of the then commercial senate of Venice, nor their hope of his occasional assistance would permit them to connive, the same effort, it was resolved, should complete the suppression of his power and the correction of his outrages. While a corps of considerable strength was upon the point of receiving orders to march for Udolpho, a young officer, prompted partly by resentment, for some injury, received from Montoni, and partly by the hope of distinction, solicited an interview with the Minister, who directed the enterprise. To him he represented, that the situation of Udolpho rendered it too strong to be taken by open force, except after some tedious operations; that Montoni had lately shewn how capable he was of adding to its strength all the advantages, which could be derived from the skill of a commander; that so considerable a body of troops, as that allotted to the expedition, could not approach Udolpho without his knowledge, and that it was not for the honour of the republic to have a large part of its regular force employed, for such a time as the siege of Udolpho would require, upon the attack of a handful of banditti. The object of the expedition, he thought, might be accomplished much more safely and speedily by mingling contrivance with force. It was possible to meet Montoni and his party, without their walls, and to attack them then; or, by approaching the fortress, with the secrecy, consistent with the march of smaller bodies of troops, to take advantage either of the treachery, or negligence of some of his party, and to rush unexpectedly upon the whole even in the castle of Udolpho.

This advice was seriously attended to, and the officer, who gave it, received the command of the troops, demanded for his purpose. His first efforts were accordingly those of contrivance alone. In the neighbourhood of Udolpho, he waited, till he had secured the assistance of several of the condottieri, of whom he found none, that he addressed, unwilling to punish their imperious master and to secure their own pardon from the senate. He

learned also the number of Montoni's troops, and that it had been much increased, since his late successes. The conclusion of his plan was soon effected. Having returned with his party, who received the watchword and other assistance from their friends within, Montoni and his officers were surprised by one division, who had been directed to their apartment, while the other maintained the slight combat, which preceded the surrender of the whole garrison. Among the persons, seized with Montoni, was Orsino, the assassin, who had joined him on his first arrival at Udolpho, and whose concealment had been made known to the senate by Count Morano, after the unsuccessful attempt of the latter to carry off Emily. It was, indeed, partly for the purpose of capturing this man, by whom one of the senate had been murdered, that the expedition was undertaken, and its success was so acceptable to them, that Morano was instantly released, notwithstanding the political suspicions, which Montoni, by his secret accusation, had excited against him. The celerity and ease, with which this whole transaction was completed, prevented it from attracting curiosity, or even from obtaining a place in any of the published records of that time; so that Emily, who remained in Languedoc, was ignorant of the defeat and signal humiliation of her late persecutor.

Her mind was now occupied with sufferings, which no effort of reason had yet been able to controul. Count De Villefort, who sincerely attempted whatever benevolence could suggest for softening them, sometimes allowed her the solitude she wished for, sometimes led her into friendly parties, and constantly protected her, as much as possible, from the shrewd enquiries and critical conversation of the Countess. He often invited her to make excursions, with him and his daughter, during which he conversed entirely on questions, suitable to her taste, without appearing to consult it, and thus endeavoured gradually to withdraw her from the subject of her grief, and to awake other interests in her mind. Emily, to whom he appeared as the enlightened friend and protector of her youth, soon felt for him the tender affection of a daughter, and her heart expanded to her young friend Blanche, as to a sister, whose kindness and simplicity compensated for the want of more brilliant qualities. It was long before she could sufficiently abstract her mind from Valancourt to listen to the story, promised by old Dorothee, concerning which her curiosity had once

been so deeply interested; but Dorothee, at length, reminded her of it, and Emily desired, that she would come, that night, to her chamber.

Still her thoughts were employed by considerations, which weakened her curiosity, and Dorothee's tap at the door, soon after twelve, surprised her almost as much as if it had not been appointed. 'I am come, at last, lady,' said she; 'I wonder what it is makes my old limbs shake so, to-night. I thought, once or twice, I should have dropped, as I was a-coming.' Emily seated her in a chair, and desired, that she would compose her spirits, before she entered upon the subject, that had brought her thither. 'Alas,' said Dorothee, 'it is thinking of that, I believe, which has disturbed me so. In my way hither too, I passed the chamber, where my dear lady died, and every thing was so still and gloomy about me, that I almost fancied I saw her, as she appeared upon her deathbed.'

Emily now drew her chair near to Dorothee, who went on. 'It is about twenty years since my lady Marchioness came a bride to the chateau. O! I well remember how she looked, when she came into the great hall, where we servants were all assembled to welcome her, and how happy my lord the Marquis seemed. Ah! who would have thought then! — But, as I was saying, ma'amselle, I thought the Marchioness, with all her sweet looks, did not look happy at heart, and so I told my husband, and he said it was all fancy; so I said no more, but I made my remarks, for all that. My lady Marchioness was then about your age, and, as I have often thought, very like you. Well! my lord the Marquis kept open house, for a long time, and gave such entertainments and there were such gay doings as have never been in the chateau since. I was younger, ma'amselle, then, than I am now, and was as gay at the best of them. I remember I danced with Philip, the butler, in a pink gown, with yellow ribbons, and a coif, not such as they wear now, but plaited high, with ribbons all about it. It was very becoming truly; — my lord, the Marquis, noticed me. Ah! he was a good-natured gentleman then — who would have thought that he!' —

'But the Marchioness, Dorothee,' said Emily, 'you was telling me of her.'

'O yes, my lady Marchioness, I thought she did not seem happy at heart, and once, soon after the marriage, I caught her crying in her chamber; but, when she saw me, she dried her eyes, and pretended to smile. I did not dare then to ask what was the matter; but, the next time I saw her crying, I

did, and she seemed displeased; — so I said no more. I found out, some time after, how it was. Her father, it seems, had commanded her to marry my lord, the Marquis, for his money, and there was another nobleman, or else a chevalier, that she liked better and that was very fond of her, and she fretted for the loss of him, I fancy, but she never told me so. My lady always tried to conceal her tears from the Marquis, for I have often seen her, after she has been so sorrowful, look so calm and sweet, when he came into the room! But my lord, all of a sudden, grew gloomy and fretful, and very unkind sometimes to my lady. This afflicted her very much, as I saw, for she never complained, and she used to try so sweetly to oblige him and to bring him into a good humour, that my heart has often ached to see it. But he used to be stubborn, and give her harsh answers, and then, when she found it all in vain, she would go to her own room, and cry so! I used to hear her in the anti-room, poor dear lady! but I seldom ventured to go to her. I used, sometimes, to think my lord was jealous. To be sure my lady was greatly admired, but she was too good to deserve suspicion. Among the many chevaliers, that visited at the chateau, there was one, that I always thought seemed just suited for my lady; he was so courteous, yet so spirited, and there was such a grace, as it were, in all he did, or said. I always observed, that, whenever he had been there, the Marquis was more gloomy and my lady more thoughtful, and it came into my head, that this was the chevalier she ought to have married, but I never could learn for certain.'

'What was the chevalier's name, Dorothee?' said Emily.

'Why that I will not tell even to you, ma'amselle, for evil may come of it. I once heard from a person, who is since dead, that the Marchioness was not in law the wife of the Marquis, for that she had before been privately married to the gentleman she was so much attached to, and was afterwards afraid to own it to her father, who was a very stern man; but this seems very unlikely, and I never gave much faith to it. As I was saying, the Marquis was most out of humour, as I thought, when the chevalier I spoke of had been at the chateau, and, at last, his ill treatment of my lady made her quite miserable. He would see hardly any visitors at the castle, and made her live almost by herself. I was her constant attendant, and saw all she suffered, but still she never complained.

‘After matters had gone on thus, for near a year, my lady was taken ill, and I thought her long fretting had made her so, — but, alas! I fear it was worse than that.’

‘Worse! Dorothee,’ said Emily, ‘can that be possible?’

‘I fear it was so, madam, there were strange appearances. But I will only tell what happened. My lord, the Marquis— ‘

‘Hush, Dorothee, what sounds were those?’ said Emily.

Dorothee changed countenance, and, while they both listened, they heard, on the stillness of the night, music of uncommon sweetness.

‘I have surely heard that voice before!’ said Emily, at length.

‘I have often heard it, and at this same hour,’ said Dorothee, solemnly, ‘and, if spirits ever bring music — that is surely the music of one!’

Emily, as the sounds drew nearer, knew them to be the same she had formerly heard at the time of her father’s death, and, whether it was the remembrance they now revived of that melancholy event, or that she was struck with superstitious awe, it is certain she was so much affected, that she had nearly fainted.

‘I think I once told you, madam,’ said Dorothee, ‘that I first heard this music, soon after my lady’s death! I well remember the night!’— ‘Hark! it comes again!’ said Emily, ‘let us open the window, and listen.’

They did so; but, soon, the sounds floated gradually away into distance, and all was again still; they seemed to have sunk among the woods, whose tufted tops were visible upon the clear horizon, while every other feature of the scene was involved in the nightshade, which, however, allowed the eye an indistinct view of some objects in the garden below.

As Emily leaned on the window, gazing with a kind of thrilling awe upon the obscurity beneath, and then upon the cloudless arch above, enlightened only by the stars, Dorothee, in a low voice, resumed her narrative.

‘I was saying, ma’amselle, that I well remember when first I heard that music. It was one night, soon after my lady’s death, that I had sat up later than usual, and I don’t know how it was, but I had been thinking a great deal about my poor mistress, and of the sad scene I had lately witnessed. The chateau was quite still, and I was in the chamber at a good distance from the rest of the servants, and this, with the mournful things I had been thinking of, I suppose, made me low spirited, for I felt very lonely and

forlorn, as it were, and listened often, wishing to hear a sound in the chateau, for you know, ma'amselle, when one can hear people moving, one does not so much mind, about one's fears. But all the servants were gone to bed, and I sat, thinking and thinking, till I was almost afraid to look round the room, and my poor lady's countenance often came to my mind, such as I had seen her when she was dying, and, once or twice, I almost thought I saw her before me, — when suddenly I heard such sweet music! It seemed just at my window, and I shall never forget what I felt. I had not power to move from my chair, but then, when I thought it was my dear lady's voice, the tears came to my eyes. I had often heard her sing, in her lifetime, and to be sure she had a very fine voice; it had made me cry to hear her, many a time, when she has sat in her oriel, of an evening, playing upon her lute such sad songs, and singing so. O! it went to one's heart! I have listened in the anti-chamber, for the hour together, and she would sometimes sit playing, with the window open, when it was summer time, till it was quite dark, and when I have gone in, to shut it, she has hardly seemed to know what hour it was. But, as I said, madam,' continued Dorothee, 'when first I heard the music, that came just now, I thought it was my late lady's, and I have often thought so again, when I have heard it, as I have done at intervals, ever since. Sometimes, many months have gone by, but still it has returned.'

'It is extraordinary,' observed Emily, 'that no person has yet discovered the musician.'

'Aye, ma'amselle, if it had been any thing earthly it would have been discovered long ago, but who could have courage to follow a spirit, and if they had, what good could it do? — for spirits, YOU KNOW, ma'am, can take any shape, or no shape, and they will be here, one minute, and, the next perhaps, in a quite different place!'

'Pray resume your story of the Marchioness,' said Emily, 'and acquaint me with the manner of her death.'

'I will, ma'am,' said Dorothee, 'but shall we leave the window?'

'This cool air refreshes me,' replied Emily, 'and I love to hear it creep along the woods, and to look upon this dusky landscape. You was speaking of my lord, the Marquis, when the music interrupted us.'

'Yes, madam, my lord, the Marquis, became more and more gloomy; and my lady grew worse and worse, till, one night, she was taken very ill,

indeed. I was called up, and, when I came to her bedside, I was shocked to see her countenance — it was so changed! She looked piteously up at me, and desired I would call the Marquis again, for he was not yet come, and tell him she had something particular to say to him. At last, he came, and he did, to be sure, seem very sorry to see her, but he said very little. My lady told him she felt herself to be dying, and wished to speak with him alone, and then I left the room, but I shall never forget his look as I went.'

'When I returned, I ventured to remind my lord about sending for a doctor, for I supposed he had forgot to do so, in his grief; but my lady said it was then too late; but my lord, so far from thinking so, seemed to think light of her disorder — till she was seized with such terrible pains! O, I never shall forget her shriek! My lord then sent off a man and horse for the doctor, and walked about the room and all over the chateau in the greatest distress; and I staid by my dear lady, and did what I could to ease her sufferings. She had intervals of ease, and in one of these she sent for my lord again; when he came, I was going, but she desired I would not leave her. O! I shall never forget what a scene passed — I can hardly bear to think of it now! My lord was almost distracted, for my lady behaved with so much goodness, and took such pains to comfort him, that, if he ever had suffered a suspicion to enter his head, he must now have been convinced he was wrong. And to be sure he did seem to be overwhelmed with the thought of his treatment of her, and this affected her so much, that she fainted away.

'We then got my lord out of the room; he went into his library, and threw himself on the floor, and there he staid, and would hear no reason, that was talked to him. When my lady recovered, she enquired for him, but, afterwards, said she could not bear to see his grief, and desired we would let her die quietly. She died in my arms, ma'amselle, and she went off as peacefully as a child, for all the violence of her disorder was passed.'

Dorothee paused, and wept, and Emily wept with her; for she was much affected by the goodness of the late Marchioness, and by the meek patience, with which she had suffered.

'When the doctor came,' resumed Dorothee, 'alas! he came too late; he appeared greatly shocked to see her, for soon after her death a frightful blackness spread all over her face. When he had sent the attendants out of

the room, he asked me several odd questions about the Marchioness, particularly concerning the manner, in which she had been seized, and he often shook his head at my answers, and seemed to mean more, than he chose to say. But I understood him too well. However, I kept my remarks to myself, and only told them to my husband, who bade me hold my tongue. Some of the other servants, however, suspected what I did, and strange reports were whispered about the neighbourhood, but nobody dared to make any stir about them. When my lord heard that my lady was dead, he shut himself up, and would see nobody but the doctor, who used to be with him alone, sometimes for an hour together; and, after that, the doctor never talked with me again about my lady. When she was buried in the church of the convent, at a little distance yonder, if the moon was up you might see the towers here, ma'amselle, all my lord's vassals followed the funeral, and there was not a dry eye among them, for she had done a deal of good among the poor. My lord, the Marquis, I never saw any body so melancholy as he was afterwards, and sometimes he would be in such fits of violence, that we almost thought he had lost his senses. He did not stay long at the chateau, but joined his regiment, and, soon after, all the servants, except my husband and I, received notice to go, for my lord went to the wars. I never saw him after, for he would not return to the chateau, though it is such a fine place, and never finished those fine rooms he was building on the west side of it, and it has, in a manner, been shut up ever since, till my lord the Count came here.'

'The death of the Marchioness appears extraordinary,' said Emily, who was anxious to know more than she dared to ask.

'Yes, madam,' replied Dorothee, 'it was extraordinary; I have told you all I saw, and you may easily guess what I think, I cannot say more, because I would not spread reports, that might offend my lord the Count.'

'You are very right,' said Emily;— 'where did the Marquis die?'— 'In the north of France, I believe, ma'amselle,' replied Dorothee. 'I was very glad, when I heard my lord the Count was coming, for this had been a sad desolate place, these many years, and we heard such strange noises, sometimes, after my lady's death, that, as I told you before, my husband and I left it for a neighbouring cottage. And now, lady, I have told you all this sad history, and all my thoughts, and you have promised, you know, never to give the least hint about it.'— 'I have,' said Emily, 'and I will be

faithful to my promise, Dorothee; — what you have told has interested me more than you can imagine. I only wish I could prevail upon you to tell the name of the chevalier, whom you thought so deserving of the Marchioness.'

Dorothee, however, steadily refused to do this, and then returned to the notice of Emily's likeness to the late Marchioness. 'There is another picture of her,' added she, 'hanging in a room of the suite, which was shut up. It was drawn, as I have heard, before she was married, and is much more like you than the miniature.' When Emily expressed a strong desire to see this, Dorothee replied, that she did not like to open those rooms; but Emily reminded her, that the Count had talked the other day of ordering them to be opened; of which Dorothee seemed to consider much, and then she owned, that she should feel less, if she went into them with Emily first, than otherwise, and at length promised to shew the picture.

The night was too far advanced and Emily was too much affected by the narrative of the scenes, which had passed in those apartments, to wish to visit them at this hour, but she requested that Dorothee would return on the following night, when they were not likely to be observed, and conduct her thither. Besides her wish to examine the portrait, she felt a thrilling curiosity to see the chamber, in which the Marchioness had died, and which Dorothee had said remained, with the bed and furniture, just as when the corpse was removed for interment. The solemn emotions, which the expectation of viewing such a scene had awakened, were in unison with the present tone of her mind, depressed by severe disappointment. Cheerful objects rather added to, than removed this depression; but, perhaps, she yielded too much to her melancholy inclination, and imprudently lamented the misfortune, which no virtue of her own could have taught her to avoid, though no effort of reason could make her look unmoved upon the self-degradation of him, whom she had once esteemed and loved.

Dorothee promised to return, on the following night, with the keys of the chambers, and then wished Emily good repose, and departed. Emily, however, continued at the window, musing upon the melancholy fate of the Marchioness and listening, in awful expectation, for a return of the music. But the stillness of the night remained long unbroken, except by the murmuring sounds of the woods, as they waved in the breeze, and then by

the distant bell of the convent, striking one. She now withdrew from the window, and, as she sat at her bedside, indulging melancholy reveries, which the loneliness of the hour assisted, the stillness was suddenly interrupted not by music, but by very uncommon sounds, that seemed to come either from the room, adjoining her own, or from one below. The terrible catastrophe, that had been related to her, together with the mysterious circumstances, said to have since occurred in the chateau, had so much shocked her spirits, that she now sunk, for a moment, under the weakness of superstition. The sounds, however, did not return, and she retired, to forget in sleep the disastrous story she had heard.

CHAPTER IV

Now it is the time of night,
That, the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his spite,
In the church-way path to glide.

SHAKESPEARE

On the next night, about the same hour as before, Dorothee came to Emily's chamber, with the keys of that suite of rooms, which had been particularly appropriated to the late Marchioness. These extended along the north side of the chateau, forming part of the old building; and, as Emily's room was in the south, they had to pass over a great extent of the castle, and by the chambers of several of the family, whose observations Dorothee was anxious to avoid, since it might excite enquiry, and raise reports, such as would displease the Count. She, therefore, requested, that Emily would wait half an hour, before they ventured forth, that they might be certain all the servants were gone to bed. It was nearly one, before the chateau was perfectly still, or Dorothee thought it prudent to leave the chamber. In this interval, her spirits seemed to be greatly affected by the remembrance of past events, and by the prospect of entering again upon places, where these had occurred, and in which she had not been for so many years. Emily too was affected, but her feelings had more of solemnity, and less of fear. From the silence, into which reflection and expectation had thrown them, they, at length, roused themselves, and left the chamber. Dorothee, at first, carried the lamp, but her hand trembled so much with infirmity and alarm, that Emily took it from her, and offered her arm, to support her feeble steps.

They had to descend the great staircase, and, after passing over a wide extent of the chateau, to ascend another, which led to the suite of rooms they were in quest of. They stepped cautiously along the open corridor, that ran round the great hall, and into which the chambers of the Count, Countess, and the Lady Blanche, opened, and, from thence, descending the chief staircase, they crossed the hall itself. Proceeding through the servants hall, where the dying embers of a wood fire still glimmered on the hearth, and the supper table was surrounded by chairs, that obstructed their passage, they came to the foot of the back staircase. Old Dorothee here paused, and looked around; 'Let us listen,' said she, 'if any thing is stirring; Ma'amselle, do you hear any voice?' 'None,' said Emily, 'there certainly is no person up in the chateau, besides ourselves.'— 'No,

ma’amselle,’ said Dorothee, ‘but I have never been here at this hour before, and, after what I know, my fears are not wonderful.’— ‘What do you know?’ said Emily.— ‘O, ma’amselle, we have no time for talking now; let us go on. That door on the left is the one we must open.’

They proceeded, and, having reached the top of the staircase, Dorothee applied the key to the lock. ‘Ah,’ said she, as she endeavoured to turn it, ‘so many years have passed since this was opened, that I fear it will not move.’ Emily was more successful, and they presently entered a spacious and ancient chamber.

‘Alas!’ exclaimed Dorothee, as she entered, ‘the last time I passed through this door — I followed my poor lady’s corpse!’

Emily, struck with the circumstance, and affected by the dusky and solemn air of the apartment, remained silent, and they passed on through a long suite of rooms, till they came to one more spacious than the rest, and rich in the remains of faded magnificence.

‘Let us rest here awhile, madam,’ said Dorothee faintly, ‘we are going into the chamber, where my lady died! that door opens into it. Ah, ma’amselle! why did you persuade me to come?’

Emily drew one of the massy armchairs, with which the apartment was furnished, and begged Dorothee would sit down, and try to compose her spirits.

‘How the sight of this place brings all that passed formerly to my mind!’ said Dorothee; ‘it seems as if it was but yesterday since all that sad affair happened!’

‘Hark! what noise is that?’ said Emily.

Dorothee, half starting from her chair, looked round the apartment, and they listened — but, every thing remaining still, the old woman spoke again upon the subject of her sorrow. ‘This saloon, ma’amselle, was in my lady’s time the finest apartment in the chateau, and it was fitted up according to her own taste. All this grand furniture, but you can now hardly see what it is for the dust, and our light is none of the best — ah! how I have seen this room lighted up in my lady’s time! — all this grand furniture came from Paris, and was made after the fashion of some in the Louvre there, except those large glasses, and they came from some outlandish place, and that rich tapestry. How the colours are faded already! — since I saw it last!’

‘I understood, that was twenty years ago,’ observed Emily.

‘Thereabout, madam,’ said Dorothee, ‘and well remembered, but all the time between then and now seems as nothing. That tapestry used to be greatly admired at, it tells the stories out of some famous book, or other, but I have forgot the name.’

Emily now rose to examine the figures it exhibited, and discovered, by verses in the Provencal tongue, wrought underneath each scene, that it exhibited stories from some of the most celebrated ancient romances.

Dorothee’s spirits being now more composed, she rose, and unlocked the door that led into the late Marchioness’s apartment, and Emily passed into a lofty chamber, hung round with dark arras, and so spacious, that the lamp she held up did not shew its extent; while Dorothee, when she entered, had dropped into a chair, where, sighing deeply, she scarcely trusted herself with the view of a scene so affecting to her. It was some time before Emily perceived, through the dusk, the bed on which the Marchioness was said to have died; when, advancing to the upper end of the room, she discovered the high canopied tester of dark green damask, with the curtains descending to the floor in the fashion of a tent, half drawn, and remaining apparently, as they had been left twenty years before; and over the whole bedding was thrown a counterpane, or pall, of black velvet, that hung down to the floor. Emily shuddered, as she held the lamp over it, and looked within the dark curtains, where she almost expected to have seen a human face, and, suddenly remembering the horror she had suffered upon discovering the dying Madame Montoni in the turret-chamber of Udolpho, her spirits fainted, and she was turning from the bed, when Dorothee, who had now reached it, exclaimed, ‘Holy Virgin! methinks I see my lady stretched upon that pall — as when last I saw her!’

Emily, shocked by this exclamation, looked involuntarily again within the curtains, but the blackness of the pall only appeared; while Dorothee was compelled to support herself upon the side of the bed, and presently tears brought her some relief.

‘Ah!’ said she, after she had wept awhile, ‘it was here I sat on that terrible night, and held my lady’s hand, and heard her last words, and saw all her sufferings — HERE she died in my arms!’

‘Do not indulge these painful recollections,’ said Emily, ‘let us go. Shew me the picture you mentioned, if it will not too much affect you.’

‘It hangs in the oriel,’ said Dorothee rising, and going towards a small door near the bed’s head, which she opened, and Emily followed with the light, into the closet of the late Marchioness.

‘Alas! there she is, ma’amselle,’ said Dorothee, pointing to a portrait of a lady, ‘there is her very self! just as she looked when she came first to the chateau. You see, madam, she was all blooming like you, then — and so soon to be cut off!’

While Dorothee spoke, Emily was attentively examining the picture, which bore a strong resemblance to the miniature, though the expression of the countenance in each was somewhat different; but still she thought she perceived something of that pensive melancholy in the portrait, which so strongly characterised the miniature.

‘Pray, ma’amselle, stand beside the picture, that I may look at you together,’ said Dorothee, who, when the request was complied with, exclaimed again at the resemblance. Emily also, as she gazed upon it, thought that she had somewhere seen a person very like it, though she could not now recollect who this was.

In this closet were many memorials of the departed Marchioness; a robe and several articles of her dress were scattered upon the chairs, as if they had just been thrown off. On the floor were a pair of black satin slippers, and, on the dressing-table, a pair of gloves and a long black veil, which, as Emily took it up to examine, she perceived was dropping to pieces with age.

‘Ah!’ said Dorothee, observing the veil, ‘my lady’s hand laid it there; it has never been moved since!’

Emily, shuddering, immediately laid it down again. ‘I well remember seeing her take it off,’ continued Dorothee, ‘it was on the night before her death, when she had returned from a little walk I had persuaded her to take in the gardens, and she seemed refreshed by it. I told her how much better she looked, and I remember what a languid smile she gave me; but, alas! she little thought, or I either, that she was to die, that night.’

Dorothee wept again, and then, taking up the veil, threw it suddenly over Emily, who shuddered to find it wrapped round her, descending even to her feet, and, as she endeavoured to throw it off, Dorothee intreated that she

would keep it on for one moment. ‘I thought,’ added she, ‘how like you would look to my dear mistress in that veil; — may your life, ma’amselle, be a happier one than hers!’

Emily, having disengaged herself from the veil, laid it again on the dressing-table, and surveyed the closet, where every object, on which her eye fixed, seemed to speak of the Marchioness. In a large oriel window of painted glass, stood a table, with a silver crucifix, and a prayer-book open; and Emily remembered with emotion what Dorothee had mentioned concerning her custom of playing on her lute in this window, before she observed the lute itself, lying on a corner of the table, as if it had been carelessly placed there by the hand, that had so often awakened it.

‘This is a sad forlorn place!’ said Dorothee, ‘for, when my dear lady died, I had no heart to put it to rights, or the chamber either; and my lord never came into the rooms after, so they remain just as they did when my lady was removed for interment.’

While Dorothee spoke, Emily was still looking on the lute, which was a Spanish one, and remarkably large; and then, with a hesitating hand, she took it up, and passed her fingers over the chords. They were out of tune, but uttered a deep and full sound. Dorothee started at their wellknown tones, and, seeing the lute in Emily’s hand, said, ‘This is the lute my lady Marchioness loved so! I remember when last she played upon it — it was on the night that she died. I came as usual to undress her, and, as I entered the bedchamber, I heard the sound of music from the oriel, and perceiving it was my lady’s, who was sitting there, I stepped softly to the door, which stood a little open, to listen; for the music — though it was mournful — was so sweet! There I saw her, with the lute in her hand, looking upwards, and the tears fell upon her cheeks, while she sung a vesper hymn, so soft, and so solemn! and her voice trembled, as it were, and then she would stop for a moment, and wipe away her tears, and go on again, lower than before. O! I had often listened to my lady, but never heard any thing so sweet as this; it made me cry, almost, to hear it. She had been at prayers, I fancy, for there was the book open on the table beside her — aye, and there it lies open still! Pray, let us leave the oriel, ma’amselle,’ added Dorothee, ‘this is a heart-breaking place!’

Having returned into the chamber, she desired to look once more upon the bed, when, as they came opposite to the open door, leading into the

saloon, Emily, in the partial gleam, which the lamp threw into it, thought she saw something glide along into the obscurer part of the room. Her spirits had been much affected by the surrounding scene, or it is probable this circumstance, whether real or imaginary, would not have affected her in the degree it did; but she endeavoured to conceal her emotion from Dorothee, who, however, observing her countenance change, enquired if she was ill.

'Let us go,' said Emily, faintly, 'the air of these rooms is unwholesome;' but, when she attempted to do so, considering that she must pass through the apartment where the phantom of her terror had appeared, this terror increased, and, too faint to support herself, she sad down on the side of the bed.

Dorothee, believing that she was only affected by a consideration of the melancholy catastrophe, which had happened on this spot, endeavoured to cheer her; and then, as they sat together on the bed, she began to relate other particulars concerning it, and this without reflecting, that it might increase Emily's emotion, but because they were particularly interesting to herself. 'A little before my lady's death,' said she, 'when the pains were gone off, she called me to her, and stretching out her hand to me, I sat down just there — where the curtain falls upon the bed. How well I remember her look at the time — death was in it! — I can almost fancy I see her now. — There she lay, ma'amselle — her face was upon the pillow there! This black counterpane was not upon the bed then; it was laid on, after her death, and she was laid out upon it.'

Emily turned to look within the dusky curtains, as if she could have seen the countenance of which Dorothee spoke. The edge of the white pillow only appeared above the blackness of the pall, but, as her eyes wandered over the pall itself, she fancied she saw it move. Without speaking, she caught Dorothee's arm, who, surprised by the action, and by the look of terror that accompanied it, turned her eyes from Emily to the bed, where, in the next moment she, too, saw the pall slowly lifted, and fall again.

Emily attempted to go, but Dorothee stood fixed and gazing upon the bed; and, at length, said— 'It is only the wind, that waves it, ma'amselle; we have left all the doors open: see how the air waves the lamp, too. — It is only the wind.'

She had scarcely uttered these words, when the pall was more violently agitated than before; but Emily, somewhat ashamed of her terrors, stepped back to the bed, willing to be convinced that the wind only had occasioned her alarm; when, as she gazed within the curtains, the pall moved again, and, in the next moment, the apparition of a human countenance rose above it.

Screaming with terror, they both fled, and got out of the chamber as fast as their trembling limbs would bear them, leaving open the doors of all the rooms, through which they passed. When they reached the staircase, Dorothee threw open a chamber door, where some of the female servants slept, and sunk breathless on the bed; while Emily, deprived of all presence of mind, made only a feeble attempt to conceal the occasion of her terror from the astonished servants; and, though Dorothee, when she could speak, endeavoured to laugh at her own fright, and was joined by Emily, no remonstrances could prevail with the servants, who had quickly taken the alarm, to pass even the remainder of the night in a room so near to these terrific chambers.

Dorothee having accompanied Emily to her own apartment, they then began to talk over, with some degree of coolness, the strange circumstance, that had just occurred; and Emily would almost have doubted her own perceptions, had not those of Dorothee attested their truth. Having now mentioned what she had observed in the outer chamber, she asked the housekeeper, whether she was certain no door had been left unfastened, by which a person might secretly have entered the apartments? Dorothee replied, that she had constantly kept the keys of the several doors in her own possession; that, when she had gone her rounds through the castle, as she frequently did, to examine if all was safe, she had tried these doors among the rest, and had always found them fastened. It was, therefore, impossible, she added, that any person could have got admittance into the apartments; and, if they could — it was very improbable they should have chose to sleep in a place so cold and forlorn.

Emily observed, that their visit to these chambers had, perhaps, been watched, and that some person, for a frolic, had followed them into the rooms, with a design to frighten them, and, while they were in the oriel, had taken the opportunity of concealing himself in the bed.

Dorothee allowed, that this was possible, till she recollected, that, on entering the apartments, she had turned the key of the outer door, and this, which had been done to prevent their visit being noticed by any of the family, who might happen to be up, must effectually have excluded every person, except themselves, from the chambers; and she now persisted in affirming, that the ghastly countenance she had seen was nothing human, but some dreadful apparition.

Emily was very solemnly affected. Of whatever nature might be the appearance she had witnessed, whether human or supernatural, the fate of the deceased Marchioness was a truth not to be doubted; and this unaccountable circumstance, occurring in the very scene of her sufferings, affected Emily's imagination with a superstitious awe, to which, after having detected the fallacies at Udolpho, she might not have yielded, had she been ignorant of the unhappy story, related by the housekeeper. Her she now solemnly conjured to conceal the occurrence of this night, and to make light of the terror she had already betrayed, that the Count might not be distressed by reports, which would certainly spread alarm and confusion among his family. 'Time,' she added, 'may explain this mysterious affair; meanwhile let us watch the event in silence.'

Dorothee readily acquiesced; but she now recollected that she had left all the doors of the north suite of rooms open, and, not having courage to return alone to lock even the outer one, Emily, after some effort, so far conquered her own fears, that she offered to accompany her to the foot of the back staircase, and to wait there while Dorothee ascended, whose resolution being reassured by this circumstance, she consented to go, and they left Emily's apartment together.

No sound disturbed the stillness, as they passed along the halls and galleries; but, on reaching the foot of the back staircase, Dorothee's resolution failed again; having, however, paused a moment to listen, and no sound being heard above, she ascended, leaving Emily below, and, scarcely suffering her eye to glance within the first chamber, she fastened the door, which shut up the whole suite of apartments, and returned to Emily.

As they stepped along the passage, leading into the great hall, a sound of lamentation was heard, which seemed to come from the hall itself, and they stopped in new alarm to listen, when Emily presently distinguished

the voice of Annette, whom she found crossing the hall, with another female servant, and so terrified by the report, which the other maids had spread, that, believing she could be safe only where her lady was, she was going for refuge to her apartment. Emily’s endeavours to laugh, or to argue her out of these terrors, were equally vain, and, in compassion to her distress, she consented that she should remain in her room during the night.

CHAPTER V

Hail, mildly-pleasing Solitude!
Companion of the wise and good —

This is the balmy breath of morn,
Just as the dew-bent rose is born.

But chief when evening scenes decay
And the faint landscape swims away,
Thine is the doubtful, soft decline,
And that best hour of musing thine.

THOMSON

Emily’s injunctions to Annette to be silent on the subject of her terror were ineffectual, and the occurrence of the preceding night spread such alarm among the servants, who now all affirmed, that they had frequently heard unaccountable noises in the chateau, that a report soon reached the Count of the north side of the castle being haunted. He treated this, at first, with ridicule, but, perceiving, that it was productive of serious evil, in the confusion it occasioned among his household, he forbade any person to repeat it, on pain of punishment.

The arrival of a party of his friends soon withdrew his thoughts entirely from this subject, and his servants had now little leisure to brood over it, except, indeed, in the evenings after supper, when they all assembled in their hall, and related stories of ghosts, till they feared to look round the room; started, if the echo of a closing door murmured along the passage, and refused to go singly to any part of the castle.

On these occasions Annette made a distinguished figure. When she told not only of all the wonders she had witnessed, but of all that she had imagined, in the castle of Udolpho, with the story of the strange disappearance of Signora Laurentini, she made no trifling impression on the mind of her attentive auditors. Her suspicions, concerning Montoni, she would also have freely disclosed, had not Ludovico, who was now in the service of the Count, prudently checked her loquacity, whenever it pointed to that subject.

Among the visitors at the chateau was the Baron de Saint Foix, an old friend of the Count, and his son, the Chevalier St. Foix, a sensible and amiable young man, who, having in the preceding year seen the Lady Blanche, at Paris, had become her declared admirer. The friendship, which the Count had long entertained for his father, and the equality of their circumstances made him secretly approve of the connection; but, thinking his daughter at this time too young to fix her choice for life, and wishing to prove the sincerity and strength of the Chevalier’s attachment, he then rejected his suit, though without forbidding his future hope. This young man now came, with the Baron, his father, to claim the reward of a steady

affection, a claim, which the Count admitted and which Blanche did not reject.

While these visitors were at the chateau, it became a scene of gaiety and splendour. The pavilion in the woods was fitted up and frequented, in the fine evenings, as a supper-room, when the hour usually concluded with a concert, at which the Count and Countess, who were scientific performers, and the Chevaliers Henri and St. Foix, with the Lady Blanche and Emily, whose voices and fine taste compensated for the want of more skilful execution, usually assisted. Several of the Count's servants performed on horns and other instruments, some of which, placed at a little distance among the woods, spoke, in sweet response, to the harmony, that proceeded from the pavilion.

At any other period, these parties would have been delightful to Emily; but her spirits were now oppressed with a melancholy, which she perceived that no kind of what is called amusement had power to dissipate, and which the tender and, frequently, pathetic, melody of these concerts sometimes increased to a very painful degree.

She was particularly fond of walking in the woods, that hung on a promontory, overlooking the sea. Their luxuriant shade was soothing to her pensive mind, and, in the partial views, which they afforded of the Mediterranean, with its winding shores and passing sails, tranquil beauty was united with grandeur. The paths were rude and frequently overgrown with vegetation, but their tasteful owner would suffer little to be done to them, and scarcely a single branch to be lopped from the venerable trees. On an eminence, in one of the most sequestered parts of these woods, was a rustic seat, formed of the trunk of a decayed oak, which had once been a noble tree, and of which many lofty branches still flourishing united with beech and pines to over-canopy the spot. Beneath their deep umbrage, the eye passed over the tops of other woods, to the Mediterranean, and, to the left, through an opening, was seen a ruined watchtower, standing on a point of rock, near the sea, and rising from among the tufted foliage.

Hither Emily often came alone in the silence of evening, and, soothed by the scenery and by the faint murmur, that rose from the waves, would sit, till darkness obliged her to return to the chateau. Frequently, also, she

visited the watchtower, which commanded the entire prospect, and, when she leaned against its broken walls, and thought of Valancourt, she not once imagined, what was so true, that this tower had been almost as frequently his resort, as her own, since his estrangement from the neighbouring chateau.

One evening, she lingered here to a late hour. She had sat on the steps of the building, watching, in tranquil melancholy, the gradual effect of evening over the extensive prospect, till the gray waters of the Mediterranean and the massy woods were almost the only features of the scene, that remained visible; when, as she gazed alternately on these, and on the mild blue of the heavens, where the first pale star of evening appeared, she personified the hour in the following lines: —

SONG OF THE EVENING HOUR

Last of the Hours, that track the fading Day,
I move along the realms of twilight air,
And hear, remote, the choral song decay
Of sister-nymphs, who dance around his car.

Then, as I follow through the azure void,
His partial splendour from my straining eye
Sinks in the depth of space; my only guide
His faint ray dawning on the farthest sky;

Save that sweet, lingering strain of gayer Hours,
Whose close my voice prolongs in dying notes,
While mortals on the green earth own its pow’rs,
As downward on the evening gale it floats.

When fades along the West the Sun’s last beam,
As, weary, to the nether world he goes,
And mountain-summits catch the purple gleam,
And slumbering ocean faint and fainter glows,

Silent upon the globe’s broad shade I steal,
And o’er its dry turf shed the cooling dews,
And ev’ry fever’d herb and flow’ret heal,
And all their fragrance on the air diffuse.

Where’er I move, a tranquil pleasure reigns;
O’er all the scene the dusky tints I send,
That forests wild and mountains, stretching plains
And peopled towns, in soft confusion blend.

Wide o’er the world I waft the fresh’ning wind,
Low breathing through the woods and twilight vale,
In whispers soft, that woo the pensive mind
Of him, who loves my lonely steps to hail.

His tender oaten reed I watch to hear,
Stealing its sweetness o’er some plaining rill,
Or soothing ocean’s wave, when storms are near,
Or swelling in the breeze from distant hill!

I wake the fairy elves, who shun the light;
When, from their blossom’d beds, they slily peep,
And spy my pale star, leading on the night, —
Forth to their games and revelry they leap;

Send all the prison’d sweets abroad in air,
That with them slumber’d in the flow’ret’s cell;
Then to the shores and moonlight brooks repair,
Till the high larks their matin-carol swell.

The wood-nymphs hail my airs and temper’d shade,
With ditties soft and lightly sportive dance,
On river margin of some bow’ry glade,
And strew their fresh buds as my steps advance:

But, swift I pass, and distant regions trace,
For moonbeams silver all the eastern cloud,
And Day’s last crimson vestige fades apace;
Down the steep west I fly from Midnight’s shroud.

The moon was now rising out of the sea. She watched its gradual progress, the extending line of radiance it threw upon the waters, the sparkling oars,

the sail faintly silvered, and the wood-tops and the battlements of the watchtower, at whose foot she was sitting, just tinted with the rays. Emily's spirits were in harmony with this scene. As she sat meditating, sounds stole by her on the air, which she immediately knew to be the music and the voice she had formerly heard at midnight, and the emotion of awe, which she felt, was not unmixed with terror, when she considered her remote and lonely situation. The sounds drew nearer. She would have risen to leave the place, but they seemed to come from the way she must have taken towards the chateau, and she awaited the event in trembling expectation. The sounds continued to approach, for some time, and then ceased. Emily sat listening, gazing and unable to move, when she saw a figure emerge from the shade of the woods and pass along the bank, at some little distance before her. It went swiftly, and her spirits were so overcome with awe, that, though she saw, she did not much observe it.

Having left the spot, with a resolution never again to visit it alone, at so late an hour, she began to approach the chateau, when she heard voices calling her from the part of the wood, which was nearest to it. They were the shouts of the Count's servants, who were sent to search for her; and when she entered the supper-room, where he sat with Henri and Blanche, he gently reproached her with a look, which she blushed to have deserved.

This little occurrence deeply impressed her mind, and, when she withdrew to her own room, it recalled so forcibly the circumstances she had witnessed, a few nights before, that she had scarcely courage to remain alone. She watched to a late hour, when, no sound having renewed her fears, she, at length, sunk to repose. But this was of short continuance, for she was disturbed by a loud and unusual noise, that seemed to come from the gallery, into which her chamber opened. Groans were distinctly heard, and, immediately after, a dead weight fell against the door, with a violence, that threatened to burst it open. She called loudly to know who was there, but received no answer, though, at intervals, she still thought she heard something like a low moaning. Fear deprived her of the power to move. Soon after, she heard footsteps in a remote part of the gallery, and, as they approached, she called more loudly than before, till the steps paused at her door. She then distinguished the voices of several of the servants, who seemed too much engaged by some circumstance without, to attend to her calls; but, Annette soon after entering the room for water,

Emily understood, that one of the maids had fainted, whom she immediately desired them to bring into her room, where she assisted to restore her. When this girl had recovered her speech, she affirmed, that, as she was passing up the back staircase, in the way to her chamber, she had seen an apparition on the second landing-place; she held the lamp low, she said, that she might pick her way, several of the stairs being infirm and even decayed, and it was upon raising her eyes, that she saw this appearance. It stood for a moment in the corner of the landing-place, which she was approaching, and then, gliding up the stairs, vanished at the door of the apartment, that had been lately opened. She heard afterwards a hollow sound.

‘Then the devil has got a key to that apartment,’ said Dorothee, ‘for it could be nobody but he; I locked the door myself!’

The girl, springing down the stairs and passing up the great staircase, had run, with a faint scream, till she reached the gallery, where she fell, groaning, at Emily’s door.

Gently chiding her for the alarm she had occasioned, Emily tried to make her ashamed of her fears; but the girl persisted in saying, that she had seen an apparition, till she went to her own room, whither she was accompanied by all the servants present, except Dorothee, who, at Emily’s request, remained with her during the night. Emily was perplexed, and Dorothee was terrified, and mentioned many occurrences of former times, which had long since confirmed her superstitions; among these, according to her belief, she had once witnessed an appearance, like that just described, and on the very same spot, and it was the remembrance of it, that had made her pause, when she was going to ascend the stairs with Emily, and which had increased her reluctance to open the north apartments. Whatever might be Emily’s opinions, she did not disclose them, but listened attentively to all that Dorothee communicated, which occasioned her much thought and perplexity.

From this night the terror of the servants increased to such an excess, that several of them determined to leave the chateau, and requested their discharge of the Count, who, if he had any faith in the subject of their alarm, thought proper to dissemble it, and, anxious to avoid the inconvenience that threatened him, employed ridicule and then argument to convince them they had nothing to apprehend from supernatural agency.

But fear had rendered their minds inaccessible to reason; and it was now, that Ludovico proved at once his courage and his gratitude for the kindness he had received from the Count, by offering to watch, during a night, in the suite of rooms, reputed to be haunted. He feared, he said, no spirits, and, if any thing of human form appeared — he would prove that he dreaded that as little.

The Count paused upon the offer, while the servants, who heard it, looked upon one another in doubt and amazement, and Annette, terrified for the safety of Ludovico, employed tears and entreaties to dissuade him from his purpose.

‘You are a bold fellow,’ said the Count, smiling, ‘Think well of what you are going to encounter, before you finally determine upon it. However, if you persevere in your resolution, I will accept your offer, and your intrepidity shall not go unrewarded.’

‘I desire no reward, your excellenza,’ replied Ludovico, ‘but your approbation. Your excellenza has been sufficiently good to me already; but I wish to have arms, that I may be equal to my enemy, if he should appear.’

‘Your sword cannot defend you against a ghost,’ replied the Count, throwing a glance of irony upon the other servants, ‘neither can bars, or bolts; for a spirit, you know, can glide through a keyhole as easily as through a door.’

‘Give me a sword, my lord Count,’ said Ludovico, ‘and I will lay all the spirits, that shall attack me, in the red sea.’

‘Well,’ said the Count, ‘you shall have a sword, and good cheer, too; and your brave comrades here will, perhaps, have courage enough to remain another night in the chateau, since your boldness will certainly, for this night, at least, confine all the malice of the spectre to yourself.’

Curiosity now struggled with fear in the minds of several of his fellow servants, and, at length, they resolved to await the event of Ludovico’s rashness.

Emily was surprised and concerned, when she heard of his intention, and was frequently inclined to mention what she had witnessed in the north apartments to the Count, for she could not entirely divest herself of fears for Ludovico’s safety, though her reason represented these to be absurd. The necessity, however, of concealing the secret, with which Dorothee had entrusted her, and which must have been mentioned, with the late

occurrence, in excuse for her having so privately visited the north apartments, kept her entirely silent on the subject of her apprehension; and she tried only to sooth Annette, who held, that Ludovico was certainly to be destroyed; and who was much less affected by Emily's consolatory efforts, than by the manner of old Dorothee, who often, as she exclaimed Ludovico, sighed, and threw up her eyes to heaven.

CHAPTER VI

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound!
Whose soft dominion o’er this castle sways,
And all the widely-silent places round,
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.

THOMSON

The Count gave orders for the north apartments to be opened and prepared for the reception of Ludovico; but Dorothee, remembering what she had lately witnessed there, feared to obey, and, not one of the other servants daring to venture thither, the rooms remained shut up till the time when Ludovico was to retire thither for the night, an hour, for which the whole household waited with impatience.

After supper, Ludovico, by the order of the Count, attended him in his closet, where they remained alone for near half an hour, and, on leaving which, his Lord delivered to him a sword.

‘It has seen service in mortal quarrels,’ said the Count, jocosely, ‘you will use it honourably, no doubt, in a spiritual one. Tomorrow, let me hear that there is not one ghost remaining in the chateau.’

Ludovico received it with a respectful bow. ‘You shall be obeyed, my Lord,’ said he; ‘I will engage, that no spectre shall disturb the peace of the chateau after this night.’

They now returned to the supper-room, where the Count’s guests awaited to accompany him and Ludovico to the door of the north apartments, and Dorothee, being summoned for the keys, delivered them to Ludovico, who then led the way, followed by most of the inhabitants of the chateau. Having reached the back staircase, several of the servants shrunk back, and refused to go further, but the rest followed him to the top of the staircase, where a broad landing-place allowed them to flock round him, while he applied the key to the door, during which they watched him with as much eager curiosity as if he had been performing some magical rite.

Ludovico, unaccustomed to the lock, could not turn it, and Dorothee, who had lingered far behind, was called forward, under whose hand the door opened slowly, and, her eye glancing within the dusky chamber, she uttered a sudden shriek, and retreated. At this signal of alarm, the greater part of the crowd hurried down the stairs, and the Count, Henri and Ludovico were left alone to pursue the enquiry, who instantly rushed into the apartment, Ludovico with a drawn sword, which he had just time to

draw from the scabbard, the Count with the lamp in his hand, and Henri carrying a basket, containing provisions for the courageous adventurer.

Having looked hastily round the first room, where nothing appeared to justify alarm, they passed on to the second; and, here too all being quiet, they proceeded to a third with a more tempered step. The Count had now leisure to smile at the discomposure, into which he had been surprised, and to ask Ludovico in which room he designed to pass the night.

‘There are several chambers beyond these, your excellenza,’ said Ludovico, pointing to a door, ‘and in one of them is a bed, they say. I will pass the night there, and when I am weary of watching, I can lie down.’

‘Good;’ said the Count; ‘let us go on. You see these rooms shew nothing, but damp walls and decaying furniture. I have been so much engaged since I came to the chateau, that I have not looked into them till now. Remember, Ludovico, to tell the housekeeper, tomorrow, to throw open these windows. The damask hangings are dropping to pieces, I will have them taken down, and this antique furniture removed.’

‘Dear sir!’ said Henri, ‘here is an armchair so massy with gilding, that it resembles one of the state chairs at the Louvre, more then any thing else.’

‘Yes,’ said the Count, stopping a moment to survey it, ‘there is a history belonging to that chair, but I have not time to tell it. — Let us pass on. This suite runs to a greater extent than I had imagined; it is many years since I was in them. But where is the bedroom you speak of, Ludovico? — these are only anti-chambers to the great drawing-room. I remember them in their splendour!’

‘The bed, my Lord,’ replied Ludovico, ‘they told me, was in a room that opens beyond the saloon, and terminates the suite.’

‘O, here is the saloon,’ said the Count, as they entered the spacious apartment, in which Emily and Dorothee had rested. He here stood for a moment, surveying the reliques of faded grandeur, which it exhibited — the sumptuous tapestry — the long and low sophas of velvet, with frames heavily carved and gilded — the floor inlaid with small squares of fine marble, and covered in the centre with a piece of very rich tapestry-work — the casements of painted glass, and the large Venetian mirrors, of a size and quality, such as at that period France could not make, which reflected, on every side, the spacious apartment. These had formerly also reflected a gay and brilliant scene, for this had been the stateroom of the chateau, and

here the Marchioness had held the assemblies, that made part of the festivities of her nuptials. If the wand of a magician could have recalled the vanished groups, many of them vanished even from the earth! that once had passed over these polished mirrors, what a varied and contrasted picture would they have exhibited with the present! Now, instead of a blaze of lights, and a splendid and busy crowd, they reflected only the rays of the one glimmering lamp, which the Count held up, and which scarcely served to shew the three forlorn figures, that stood surveying the room, and the spacious and dusky walls around them.

‘Ah!’ said the Count to Henri, awaking from his deep reverie, ‘how the scene is changed since last I saw it! I was a young man, then, and the Marchioness was alive and in her bloom; many other persons were here, too, who are now no more! There stood the orchestra; here we tripped in many a sprightly maze — the walls echoing to the dance! Now, they resound only one feeble voice — and even that will, ere long, be heard no more! My son, remember, that I was once as young as yourself, and that you must pass away like those, who have preceded you — like those, who, as they sung and danced in this once gay apartment, forgot, that years are made up of moments, and that every step they took carried them nearer to their graves. But such reflections are useless, I had almost said criminal, unless they teach us to prepare for eternity, since, otherwise, they cloud our present happiness, without guiding us to a future one. But enough of this; let us go on.’

Ludovico now opened the door of the bedroom, and the Count, as he entered, was struck with the funereal appearance, which the dark arras gave to it. He approached the bed, with an emotion of solemnity, and, perceiving it to be covered with the pall of black velvet, paused; ‘What can this mean?’ said he, as he gazed upon it.

‘I have heard, my Lord,’ said Ludovico, as he stood at the feet, looking within the canopied curtains, ‘that the Lady Marchioness de Villeroi died in this chamber, and remained here till she was removed to be buried; and this, perhaps, Signor, may account for the pall.’

The Count made no reply, but stood for a few moments engaged in thought, and evidently much affected. Then, turning to Ludovico, he asked him with a serious air, whether he thought his courage would support him through the night? ‘If you doubt this,’ added the Count, ‘do not be

ashamed to own it; I will release you from your engagement, without exposing you to the triumphs of your fellow-servants.'

Ludovico paused; pride, and something very like fear, seemed struggling in his breast; pride, however, was victorious; — he blushed, and his hesitation ceased.

'No, my Lord,' said he, 'I will go through with what I have begun; and I am grateful for your consideration. On that hearth I will make a fire, and, with the good cheer in this basket, I doubt not I shall do well.'

'Be it so,' said the Count; 'but how will you beguile the tediousness of the night, if you do not sleep?'

'When I am weary, my Lord,' replied Ludovico, 'I shall not fear to sleep; in the meanwhile, I have a book, that will entertain me.'

'Well,' said the Count, 'I hope nothing will disturb you; but if you should be seriously alarmed in the night, come to my apartment. I have too much confidence in your good sense and courage, to believe you will be alarmed on slight grounds; or suffer the gloom of this chamber, or its remote situation, to overcome you with ideal terrors. Tomorrow, I shall have to thank you for an important service; these rooms shall then be thrown open, and my people will be convinced of their error. Good night, Ludovico; let me see you early in the morning, and remember what I lately said to you.'

'I will, my Lord; good night to your excellenza; let me attend you with the light.'

He lighted the Count and Henri through the chambers to the outer door; on the landing-place stood a lamp, which one of the affrighted servants had left, and Henri, as he took it up, again bade Ludovico good night, who, having respectfully returned the wish, closed the door upon them, and fastened it. Then, as he retired to the bedchamber, he examined the rooms, through which he passed, with more minuteness than he had done before, for he apprehended, that some person might have concealed himself in them, for the purpose of frightening him. No one, however, but himself, was in these chambers, and, leaving open the doors, through which he passed, he came again to the great drawing-room, whose spaciousness and silent gloom somewhat awed him. For a moment he stood, looking back through the long suite of rooms he had quitted, and, as he turned, perceiving a light and his own figure, reflected in one of the large mirrors,

he started. Other objects too were seen obscurely on its dark surface, but he paused not to examine them, and returned hastily into the bedroom, as he surveyed which, he observed the door of the oriel, and opened it. All within was still. On looking round, his eye was arrested by the portrait of the deceased Marchioness, upon which he gazed, for a considerable time, with great attention and some surprise; and then, having examined the closet, he returned into the bedroom, where he kindled a wood fire, the bright blaze of which revived his spirits, which had begun to yield to the gloom and silence of the place, for gusts of wind alone broke at intervals this silence. He now drew a small table and a chair near the fire, took a bottle of wine, and some cold provision out of his basket, and regaled himself. When he had finished his repast, he laid his sword upon the table, and, not feeling disposed to sleep, drew from his pocket the book he had spoken of. — It was a volume of old Provencal tales. Having stirred the fire upon the hearth, he began to read, and his attention was soon wholly occupied by the scenes, which the page disclosed.

The Count, meanwhile, had returned to the supper-room, whither those of the party, who had attended him to the north apartment, had retreated, upon hearing Dorothee's scream, and who were now earnest in their enquiries concerning those chambers. The Count rallied his guests on their precipitate retreat, and on the superstitious inclination which had occasioned it, and this led to the question, Whether the spirit, after it has quitted the body, is ever permitted to revisit the earth; and if it is, whether it was possible for spirits to become visible to the sense. The Baron was of opinion, that the first was probable, and the last was possible, and he endeavoured to justify this opinion by respectable authorities, both ancient and modern, which he quoted. The Count, however, was decidedly against him, and a long conversation ensued, in which the usual arguments on these subjects were on both sides brought forward with skill, and discussed with candour, but without converting either party to the opinion of his opponent. The effect of their conversation on their auditors was various. Though the Count had much the superiority of the Baron in point of argument, he had considerably fewer adherents; for that love, so natural to the human mind, of whatever is able to distend its faculties with wonder and astonishment, attached the majority of the company to the side of the Baron; and, though many of the Count's propositions were unanswerable,

his opponents were inclined to believe this the consequence of their own want of knowledge, on so abstracted a subject, rather than that arguments did not exist, which were forcible enough to conquer his.

Blanche was pale with attention, till the ridicule in her father's glance called a blush upon her countenance, and she then endeavoured to forget the superstitious tales she had been told in her convent. Meanwhile, Emily had been listening with deep attention to the discussion of what was to her a very interesting question, and, remembering the appearance she had witnessed in the apartment of the late Marchioness, she was frequently chilled with awe. Several times she was on the point of mentioning what she had seen, but the fear of giving pain to the Count, and the dread of his ridicule, restrained her; and, awaiting in anxious expectation the event of Ludovico's intrepidity, she determined that her future silence should depend upon it.

When the party had separated for the night, and the Count retired to his dressing-room, the remembrance of the desolate scenes he had lately witnessed in his own mansion deeply affected him, but at length he was aroused from his reverie and his silence. 'What music is that I hear?' — said he suddenly to his valet, 'Who plays at this late hour?'

The man made no reply, and the Count continued to listen, and then added, 'That is no common musician; he touches the instrument with a delicate hand; who is it, Pierre?'

'My lord!' said the man, hesitatingly.

'Who plays that instrument?' repeated the Count.

'Does not your lordship know, then?' said the valet.

'What mean you?' said the Count, somewhat sternly.

'Nothing, my Lord, I meant nothing,' rejoined the man submissively— 'Only — that music — goes about the house at midnight often, and I thought your lordship might have heard it before.'

'Music goes about the house at midnight! Poor fellow! — does nobody dance to the music, too?'

'It is not in the chateau, I believe, my Lord; the sounds come from the woods, they say, though they seem so near; — but then a spirit can do any thing!'

'Ah, poor fellow!' said the Count, 'I perceive you are as silly as the rest of them; tomorrow, you will be convinced of your ridiculous error. But

hark! — what voice is that?’

‘O my Lord! that is the voice we often hear with the music.’

‘Often!’ said the Count, ‘How often, pray? It is a very fine one.’

‘Why, my Lord, I myself have not heard it more than two or three times, but there are those who have lived here longer, that have heard it often enough.’

‘What a swell was that!’ exclaimed the Count, as he still listened, ‘And now, what a dying cadence! This is surely something more than mortal!’

‘That is what they say, my Lord,’ said the valet; ‘they say it is nothing mortal, that utters it; and if I might say my thoughts’ —

‘Peace!’ said the Count, and he listened till the strain died away.

‘This is strange!’ said he, as he turned from the window, ‘Close the casements, Pierre.’

Pierre obeyed, and the Count soon after dismissed him, but did not so soon lose the remembrance of the music, which long vibrated in his fancy in tones of melting sweetness, while surprise and perplexity engaged his thoughts.

Ludovico, meanwhile, in his remote chamber, heard, now and then, the faint echo of a closing door, as the family retired to rest, and then the hall clock, at a great distance, strike twelve. ‘It is midnight,’ said he, and he looked suspiciously round the spacious chamber. The fire on the hearth was now nearly expiring, for his attention having been engaged by the book before him, he had forgotten every thing besides; but he soon added fresh wood, not because he was cold, though the night was stormy, but because he was cheerless; and, having again trimmed his lamp, he poured out a glass of wine, drew his chair nearer to the crackling blaze, tried to be deaf to the wind, that howled mournfully at the casements, endeavoured to abstract his mind from the melancholy, that was stealing upon him, and again took up his book. It had been lent to him by Dorothee, who had formerly picked it up in an obscure corner of the Marquis’s library, and who, having opened it and perceived some of the marvels it related, had carefully preserved it for her own entertainment, its condition giving her some excuse for detaining it from its proper station. The damp corner into which it had fallen, had caused the cover to be disfigured and mouldy, and the leaves to be so discoloured with spots, that it was not without difficulty the letters could be traced. The fictions of the Provencal writers, whether

drawn from the Arabian legends, brought by the Saracens into Spain, or recounting the chivalric exploits performed by the crusaders, whom the Troubadors accompanied to the east, were generally splendid and always marvellous, both in scenery and incident; and it is not wonderful, that Dorothee and Ludovico should be fascinated by inventions, which had captivated the careless imagination in every rank of society, in a former age. Some of the tales, however, in the book now before Ludovico, were of simple structure, and exhibited nothing of the magnificent machinery and heroic manners, which usually characterized the fables of the twelfth century, and of this description was the one he now happened to open, which, in its original style, was of great length, but which may be thus shortly related. The reader will perceive, that it is strongly tinctured with the superstition of the times.

THE PROVENCAL TALE

‘There lived, in the province of Bretagne, a noble Baron, famous for his magnificence and courtly hospitalities. His castle was graced with ladies of exquisite beauty, and thronged with illustrious knights; for the honour he paid to feats of chivalry invited the brave of distant countries to enter his lists, and his court was more splendid than those of many princes. Eight minstrels were retained in his service, who used to sing to their harps romantic fictions, taken from the Arabians, or adventures of chivalry, that befel knights during the crusades, or the martial deeds of the Baron, their lord; — while he, surrounded by his knights and ladies, banqueted in the great hall of his castle, where the costly tapestry, that adorned the walls with pictured exploits of his ancestors, the casements of painted glass, enriched with armorial bearings, the gorgeous banners, that waved along the roof, the sumptuous canopies, the profusion of gold and silver, that glittered on the sideboards, the numerous dishes, that covered the tables, the number and gay liveries of the attendants, with the chivalric and splendid attire of the guests, united to form a scene of magnificence, such as we may not hope to see in these DEGENERATE DAYS.

‘Of the Baron, the following adventure is related. One night, having retired late from the banquet to his chamber, and dismissed his attendants, he was surprised by the appearance of a stranger of a noble air, but of a sorrowful and dejected countenance. Believing, that this person had been secreted in the apartment, since it appeared impossible he could have lately passed the anti-room, unobserved by the pages in waiting, who would have prevented this intrusion on their lord, the Baron, calling loudly for his people, drew his sword, which he had not yet taken from his side, and stood upon his defence. The stranger slowly advancing, told him, that there was nothing to fear; that he came with no hostile design, but to communicate to him a terrible secret, which it was necessary for him to know.

‘The Baron, appeased by the courteous manners of the stranger, after surveying him, for some time, in silence, returned his sword into the

scabbard, and desired him to explain the means, by which he had obtained access to the chamber, and the purpose of this extraordinary visit.

‘Without answering either of these enquiries, the stranger said, that he could not then explain himself, but that, if the Baron would follow him to the edge of the forest, at a short distance from the castle walls, he would there convince him, that he had something of importance to disclose.

‘This proposal again alarmed the Baron, who could scarcely believe, that the stranger meant to draw him to so solitary a spot, at this hour of the night, without harbouring a design against his life, and he refused to go, observing, at the same time, that, if the stranger’s purpose was an honourable one, he would not persist in refusing to reveal the occasion of his visit, in the apartment where they were.

‘While he spoke this, he viewed the stranger still more attentively than before, but observed no change in his countenance, or any symptom, that might intimate a consciousness of evil design. He was habited like a knight, was of a tall and majestic stature, and of dignified and courteous manners. Still, however, he refused to communicate the subject of his errand in any place, but that he had mentioned, and, at the same time, gave hints concerning the secret he would disclose, that awakened a degree of solemn curiosity in the Baron, which, at length, induced him to consent to follow the stranger, on certain conditions.

‘“Sir knight,” said he, “I will attend you to the forest, and will take with me only four of my people, who shall witness our conference.”

‘To this, however, the Knight objected.

‘“What I would disclose,” said he, with solemnity, “is to you alone. There are only three living persons, to whom the circumstance is known; it is of more consequence to you and your house, than I shall now explain. In future years, you will look back to this night with satisfaction or repentance, accordingly as you now determine. As you would hereafter prosper — follow me; I pledge you the honour of a knight, that no evil shall befall you; — if you are contented to dare futurity — remain in your chamber, and I will depart as I came.”

‘“Sir knight,” replied the Baron, “how is it possible, that my future peace can depend upon my present determination?”

‘“That is not now to be told,” said the stranger, “I have explained myself to the utmost. It is late; if you follow me it must be quickly; — you will

do well to consider the alternative.”

‘The Baron mused, and, as he looked upon the knight, he perceived his countenance assume a singular solemnity.’

[Here Ludovico thought he heard a noise, and he threw a glance round the chamber, and then held up the lamp to assist his observation; but, not perceiving any thing to confirm his alarm, he took up the book again and pursued the story.]

‘The Baron paced his apartment, for some time, in silence, impressed by the last words of the stranger, whose extraordinary request he feared to grant, and feared, also, to refuse. At length, he said, “Sir knight, you are utterly unknown to me; tell me yourself, — is it reasonable, that I should trust myself alone with a stranger, at this hour, in a solitary forest? Tell me, at least, who you are, and who assisted to secrete you in this chamber.”

‘The knight frowned at these latter words, and was a moment silent; then, with a countenance somewhat stern, he said,

‘“I am an English knight; I am called Sir Bevys of Lancaster, — and my deeds are not unknown at the Holy City, whence I was returning to my native land, when I was benighted in the neighbouring forest.”

‘“Your name is not unknown to fame,” said the Baron, “I have heard of it.” (The Knight looked haughtily.) “But why, since my castle is known to entertain all true knights, did not your herald announce you? Why did you not appear at the banquet, where your presence would have been welcomed, instead of hiding yourself in my castle, and stealing to my chamber, at midnight?”

‘The stranger frowned, and turned away in silence; but the Baron repeated the questions.

‘“I come not,” said the Knight, “to answer enquiries, but to reveal facts. If you would know more, follow me, and again I pledge the honour of a Knight, that you shall return in safety. — Be quick in your determination — I must be gone.”

‘After some further hesitation, the Baron determined to follow the stranger, and to see the result of his extraordinary request; he, therefore, again drew forth his sword, and, taking up a lamp, bade the Knight lead on. The latter obeyed, and, opening the door of the chamber, they passed into the anti-room, where the Baron, surprised to find all his pages asleep,

stopped, and, with hasty violence, was going to reprimand them for their carelessness, when the Knight waved his hand, and looked so expressively upon the Baron, that the latter restrained his resentment, and passed on.

‘The Knight, having descended a staircase, opened a secret door, which the Baron had believed was known only to himself, and, proceeding through several narrow and winding passages, came, at length, to a small gate, that opened beyond the walls of the castle. Meanwhile, the Baron followed in silence and amazement, on perceiving that these secret passages were so well known to a stranger, and felt inclined to return from an adventure, that appeared to partake of treachery, as well as danger. Then, considering that he was armed, and observing the courteous and noble air of his conductor, his courage returned, he blushed, that it had failed him for a moment, and he resolved to trace the mystery to its source.

‘He now found himself on the heathy platform, before the great gates of his castle, where, on looking up, he perceived lights glimmering in the different casements of the guests, who were retiring to sleep; and, while he shivered in the blast, and looked on the dark and desolate scene around him, he thought of the comforts of his warm chamber, rendered cheerful by the blaze of wood, and felt, for a moment, the full contrast of his present situation.’

[Here Ludovico paused a moment, and, looking at his own fire, gave it a brightening stir.]

‘The wind was strong, and the Baron watched his lamp with anxiety, expecting every moment to see it extinguished; but, though the flame wavered, it did not expire, and he still followed the stranger, who often sighed as he went, but did not speak.

‘When they reached the borders of the forest, the Knight turned, and raised his head, as if he meant to address the Baron, but then, closing his lips in silence, he walked on.

‘As they entered, beneath the dark and spreading boughs, the Baron, affected by the solemnity of the scene, hesitated whether to proceed, and demanded how much further they were to go. The Knight replied only by a gesture, and the Baron, with hesitating steps and a suspicious eye, followed through an obscure and intricate path, till, having proceeded a

considerable way, he again demanded whither they were going, and refused to proceed unless he was informed.

‘As he said this, he looked at his own sword, and at the Knight alternately, who shook his head, and whose dejected countenance disarmed the Baron, for a moment, of suspicion.

‘“A little further is the place, whither I would lead you,” said the stranger; “no evil shall befall you — I have sworn it on the honour of a knight.”

‘The Baron, reassured, again followed in silence, and they soon arrived at a deep recess of the forest, where the dark and lofty chesnuts entirely excluded the sky, and which was so overgrown with underwood, that they proceeded with difficulty. The Knight sighed deeply as he passed, and sometimes paused; and having, at length, reached a spot, where the trees crowded into a knot, he turned, and, with a terrific look, pointing to the ground, the Baron saw there the body of a man, stretched at its length, and weltering in blood; a ghastly wound was on the forehead, and death appeared already to have contracted the features.

‘The Baron, on perceiving the spectacle, started in horror, looked at the Knight for explanation, and was then going to raise the body and examine if there were yet any remains of life; but the stranger, waving his hand, fixed upon him a look so earnest and mournful, as not only much surprised him, but made him desist.

‘But, what were the Baron’s emotions, when, on holding the lamp near the features of the corpse, he discovered the exact resemblance of the stranger his conductor, to whom he now looked up in astonishment and enquiry? As he gazed, he perceived the countenance of the Knight change, and begin to fade, till his whole form gradually vanished from his astonished sense! While the Baron stood, fixed to the spot, a voice was heard to utter these words:— ‘

[Ludovico started, and laid down the book, for he thought he heard a voice in the chamber, and he looked toward the bed, where, however, he saw only the dark curtains and the pall. He listened, scarcely daring to draw his breath, but heard only the distant roaring of the sea in the storm, and the blast, that rushed by the casements; when, concluding, that he had been deceived by its sighings, he took up his book to finish the story.]

‘While the Baron stood, fixed to the spot, a voice was heard to utter these words: — *

(* This repetition seems to be intentional. Ludovico is picking up the thread.)

‘The body of Sir Bevys of Lancaster, a noble knight of England, lies before you. He was, this night, waylaid and murdered, as he journeyed from the Holy City towards his native land. Respect the honour of knighthood and the law of humanity; inter the body in christian ground, and cause his murderers to be punished. As ye observe, or neglect this, shall peace and happiness, or war and misery, light upon you and your house for ever!’

‘The Baron, when he recovered from the awe and astonishment, into which this adventure had thrown him, returned to his castle, whither he caused the body of Sir Bevys to be removed; and, on the following day, it was interred, with the honours of knighthood, in the chapel of the castle, attended by all the noble knights and ladies, who graced the court of Baron de Brunne.’

Ludovico, having finished this story, laid aside the book, for he felt drowsy, and, after putting more wood on the fire and taking another glass of wine, he reposed himself in the armchair on the hearth. In his dream he still beheld the chamber where he really was, and, once or twice, started from imperfect slumbers, imagining he saw a man’s face, looking over the high back of his armchair. This idea had so strongly impressed him, that, when he raised his eyes, he almost expected to meet other eyes, fixed upon his own, and he quitted his seat and looked behind the chair, before he felt perfectly convinced, that no person was there.

Thus closed the hour.

CHAPTER VII

Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber;
Thou hast no figures, nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
Therefore thou sleep’st so sound.

SHAKESPEARE

The Count, who had slept little during the night, rose early, and, anxious to speak with Ludovico, went to the north apartment; but, the outer door having been fastened, on the preceding night, he was obliged to knock loudly for admittance. Neither the knocking, or his voice was heard; but, considering the distance of this door from the bedroom, and that Ludovico, wearied with watching, had probably fallen into a deep sleep, the Count was not surprised on receiving no answer, and, leaving the door, he went down to walk in his grounds.

It was a gray autumnal morning. The sun, rising over Provence, gave only a feeble light, as his rays struggled through the vapours that ascended from the sea, and floated heavily over the wood-tops, which were now varied with many a mellow tint of autumn. The storm was passed, but the waves were yet violently agitated, and their course was traced by long lines of foam, while not a breeze fluttered in the sails of the vessels, near the shore, that were weighing anchor to depart. The still gloom of the hour was pleasing to the Count, and he pursued his way through the woods, sunk in deep thought.

Emily also rose at an early hour, and took her customary walk along the brow of the promontory, that overhung the Mediterranean. Her mind was now not occupied with the occurrences of the chateau, and Valancourt was the subject of her mournful thoughts; whom she had not yet taught herself to consider with indifference, though her judgment constantly reproached her for the affection, that lingered in her heart, after her esteem for him was departed. Remembrance frequently gave her his parting look and the tones of his voice, when he had bade her a last farewel; and, some accidental associations now recalling these circumstances to her fancy, with peculiar energy, she shed bitter tears to the recollection.

Having reached the watchtower, she seated herself on the broken steps, and, in melancholy dejection, watched the waves, half hid in vapour, as they came rolling towards the shore, and threw up their light spray round the rocks below. Their hollow murmur and the obscuring mists, that came in wreaths up the cliffs, gave a solemnity to the scene, which was in

harmony with the temper of her mind, and she sat, given up to the remembrance of past times, till this became too painful, and she abruptly quitted the place. On passing the little gate of the watchtower, she observed letters, engraved on the stone postern, which she paused to examine, and, though they appeared to have been rudely cut with a pen-knife, the characters were familiar to her; at length, recognizing the handwriting of Valancourt, she read, with trembling anxiety the following lines, entitled

SHIPWRECK

‘Til solemn midnight! On this lonely steep,
Beneath this watchtow’r’s desolated wall,
Where mystic shapes the wonderer appall,
I rest; and view below the desert deep,
As through tempestuous clouds the moon’s cold light
Gleams on the wave. Viewless, the winds of night
With loud mysterious force the billows sweep,
And sullen roar the surges, far below.
In the still pauses of the gust I hear
The voice of spirits, rising sweet and slow,
And oft among the clouds their forms appear.
But hark! what shriek of death comes in the gale,
And in the distant ray what glimmering sail
Bends to the storm? — Now sinks the note of fear!
Ah! wretched mariners! — no more shall day
Unclose his cheering eye to light ye on your way!

From these lines it appeared, that Valancourt had visited the tower; that he had probably been here on the preceding night, for it was such an one as they described, and that he had left the building very lately, since it had not long been light, and without light it was impossible these letters could have been cut. It was thus even probable, that he might be yet in the gardens.

As these reflections passed rapidly over the mind of Emily, they called up a variety of contending emotions, that almost overcame her spirits; but her first impulse was to avoid him, and, immediately leaving the tower, she returned, with hasty steps, towards the chateau. As she passed along, she remembered the music she had lately heard near the tower, with the figure, which had appeared, and, in this moment of agitation, she was inclined to believe, that she had then heard and seen Valancourt; but other recollections soon convinced her of her error. On turning into a thicker part of the woods, she perceived a person, walking slowly in the gloom at

some little distance, and, her mind engaged by the idea of him, she started and paused, imagining this to be Valancourt. The person advanced with quicker steps, and, before she could recover recollection enough to avoid him, he spoke, and she then knew the voice of the Count, who expressed some surprise, on finding her walking at so early an hour, and made a feeble effort to rally her on her love of solitude. But he soon perceived this to be more a subject of concern than of light laughter, and, changing his manner, affectionately expostulated with Emily, on thus indulging unavailing regret; who, though she acknowledged the justness of all he said, could not restrain her tears, while she did so, and he presently quitted the topic. Expressing surprise at not having yet heard from his friend, the Advocate at Avignon, in answer to the questions proposed to him, respecting the estates of the late Madame Montoni, he, with friendly zeal, endeavoured to cheer Emily with hopes of establishing her claim to them; while she felt, that the estates could now contribute little to the happiness of a life, in which Valancourt had no longer an interest.

When they returned to the chateau, Emily retired to her apartment, and Count De Villefort to the door of the north chambers. This was still fastened, but, being now determined to arouse Ludovico, he renewed his calls more loudly than before, after which a total silence ensued, and the Count, finding all his efforts to be heard ineffectual, at length began to fear, that some accident had befallen Ludovico, whom terror of an imaginary being might have deprived of his senses. He, therefore, left the door with an intention of summoning his servants to force it open, some of whom he now heard moving in the lower part of the chateau.

To the Count’s enquiries, whether they had seen or heard Ludovico, they replied in affright, that not one of them had ventured on the north side of the chateau, since the preceding night.

‘He sleeps soundly then,’ said the Count, ‘and is at such a distance from the outer door, which is fastened, that to gain admittance to the chambers it will be necessary to force it. Bring an instrument, and follow me.’

The servants stood mute and dejected, and it was not till nearly all the household were assembled, that the Count’s orders were obeyed. In the mean time, Dorothee was telling of a door, that opened from a gallery, leading from the great staircase into the last anti-room of the saloon, and, this being much nearer to the bedchamber, it appeared probable, that

Ludovico might be easily awakened by an attempt to open it. Thither, therefore, the Count went, but his voice was as ineffectual at this door as it had proved at the remoter one; and now, seriously interested for Ludovico, he was himself going to strike upon the door with the instrument, when he observed its singular beauty, and withheld the blow. It appeared, on the first glance, to be of ebony, so dark and close was its grain and so high its polish; but it proved to be only of larch wood, of the growth of Provence, then famous for its forests of larch. The beauty of its polished hue and of its delicate carvings determined the Count to spare this door, and he returned to that leading from the back staircase, which being, at length, forced, he entered the first anti-room, followed by Henri and a few of the most courageous of his servants, the rest awaiting the event of the enquiry on the stairs and landing-place.

All was silent in the chambers, through which the Count passed, and, having reached the saloon, he called loudly upon Ludovico; after which, still receiving no answer, he threw open the door of the bedroom, and entered.

The profound stillness within confirmed his apprehensions for Ludovico, for not even the breathings of a person in sleep were heard; and his uncertainty was not soon terminated, since the shutters being all closed, the chamber was too dark for any object to be distinguished in it.

The Count bade a servant open them, who, as he crossed the room to do so, stumbled over something, and fell to the floor, when his cry occasioned such panic among the few of his fellows, who had ventured thus far, that they instantly fled, and the Count and Henri were left to finish the adventure.

Henri then sprung across the room, and, opening a window-shutter, they perceived, that the man had fallen over a chair near the hearth, in which Ludovico had been sitting; — for he sat there no longer, nor could any where be seen by the imperfect light, that was admitted into the apartment. The Count, seriously alarmed, now opened other shutters, that he might be enabled to examine further, and, Ludovico not yet appearing, he stood for a moment, suspended in astonishment and scarcely trusting his senses, till, his eyes glancing on the bed, he advanced to examine whether he was there asleep. No person, however, was in it, and he proceeded to the oriel, where

every thing remained as on the preceding night, but Ludovico was no where to be found.

The Count now checked his amazement, considering, that Ludovico might have left the chambers, during the night, overcome by the terrors, which their lonely desolation and the recollected reports, concerning them, had inspired. Yet, if this had been the fact, the man would naturally have sought society, and his fellow servants had all declared they had not seen him; the door of the outer room also had been found fastened, with the key on the inside; it was impossible, therefore, for him to have passed through that, and all the outer doors of this suite were found, on examination, to be bolted and locked, with the keys also within them. The Count, being then compelled to believe, that the lad had escaped through the casements, next examined them, but such as opened wide enough to admit the body of a man were found to be carefully secured either by iron bars, or by shutters, and no vestige appeared of any person having attempted to pass them; neither was it probable, that Ludovico would have incurred the risque of breaking his neck, by leaping from a window, when he might have walked safely through a door.

The Count’s amazement did not admit of words; but he returned once more to examine the bedroom, where was no appearance of disorder, except that occasioned by the late overthrow of the chair, near which had stood a small table, and on this Ludovico’s sword, his lamp, the book he had been reading, and the remnant of his flask of wine still remained. At the foot of the table, too, was the basket with some fragments of provision and wood.

Henri and the servant now uttered their astonishment without reserve, and, though the Count said little, there was a seriousness in his manner, that expressed much. It appeared, that Ludovico must have quitted these rooms by some concealed passage, for the Count could not believe, that any supernatural means had occasioned this event, yet, if there was any such passage, it seemed inexplicable why he should retreat through it, and it was equally surprising, that not even the smallest vestige should appear, by which his progress could be traced. In the rooms every thing remained as much in order as if he had just walked out by the common way.

The Count himself assisted in lifting the arras, with which the bedchamber, saloon and one of the anti-rooms were hung, that he might

discover if any door had been concealed behind it; but, after a laborious search, none was found, and he, at length, quitted the apartments, having secured the door of the last anti-chamber, the key of which he took into his own possession. He then gave orders, that strict search should be made for Ludovico not only in the chateau, but in the neighbourhood, and, retiring with Henri to his closet, they remained there in conversation for a considerable time, and whatever was the subject of it, Henri from this hour lost much of his vivacity, and his manners were particularly grave and reserved, whenever the topic, which now agitated the Count's family with wonder and alarm, was introduced.

On the disappearing of Ludovico, Baron St. Foix seemed strengthened in all his former opinions concerning the probability of apparitions, though it was difficult to discover what connection there could possibly be between the two subjects, or to account for this effect otherwise than by supposing, that the mystery attending Ludovico, by exciting awe and curiosity, reduced the mind to a state of sensibility, which rendered it more liable to the influence of superstition in general. It is, however, certain, that from this period the Baron and his adherents became more bigoted to their own systems than before, while the terrors of the Count's servants increased to an excess, that occasioned many of them to quit the mansion immediately, and the rest remained only till others could be procured to supply their places.

The most strenuous search after Ludovico proved unsuccessful, and, after several days of indefatigable enquiry, poor Annette gave herself up to despair, and the other inhabitants of the chateau to amazement.

Emily, whose mind had been deeply affected by the disastrous fate of the late Marchioness and with the mysterious connection, which she fancied had existed between her and St. Aubert, was particularly impressed by the late extraordinary event, and much concerned for the loss of Ludovico, whose integrity and faithful services claimed both her esteem and gratitude. She was now very desirous to return to the quiet retirement of her convent, but every hint of this was received with real sorrow by the Lady Blanche, and affectionately set aside by the Count, for whom she felt much of the respectful love and admiration of a daughter, and to whom, by Dorothee's consent, she, at length, mentioned the appearance, which they had witnessed in the chamber of the deceased Marchioness. At any other

period, he would have smiled at such a relation, and have believed, that its object had existed only in the distempered fancy of the relater; but he now attended to Emily with seriousness, and, when she concluded, requested of her a promise, that this occurrence should rest in silence. ‘Whatever may be the cause and the import of these extraordinary occurrences,’ added the Count, ‘time only can explain them. I shall keep a wary eye upon all that passes in the chateau, and shall pursue every possible means of discovering the fate of Ludovico. Meanwhile, we must be prudent and be silent. I will myself watch in the north chambers, but of this we will say nothing, till the night arrives, when I purpose doing so.’

The Count then sent for Dorothee, and required of her also a promise of silence, concerning what she had already, or might in future witness of an extraordinary nature; and this ancient servant now related to him the particulars of the Marchioness de Villeroi’s death, with some of which he appeared to be already acquainted, while by others he was evidently surprised and agitated. After listening to this narrative, the Count retired to his closet, where he remained alone for several hours; and, when he again appeared, the solemnity of his manner surprised and alarmed Emily, but she gave no utterance to her thoughts.

On the week following the disappearance of Ludovico, all the Count’s guests took leave of him, except the Baron, his son *Mons.* St. Foix, and Emily; the latter of whom was soon after embarrassed and distressed by the arrival of another visitor, *Mons.* Du Pont, which made her determine upon withdrawing to her convent immediately. The delight, that appeared in his countenance, when he met her, told that he brought back the same ardour of passion, which had formerly banished him from Chateau-le-Blanc. He was received with reserve by Emily, and with pleasure by the Count, who presented him to her with a smile, that seemed intended to plead his cause, and who did not hope the less for his friend, from the embarrassment she betrayed.

But M. Du Pont, with truer sympathy, seemed to understand her manner, and his countenance quickly lost its vivacity, and sunk into the languor of despondency.

On the following day, however, he sought an opportunity of declaring the purport of his visit, and renewed his suit; a declaration, which was received with real concern by Emily, who endeavoured to lessen the pain

she might inflict by a second rejection, with assurances of esteem and friendship; yet she left him in a state of mind, that claimed and excited her tenderest compassion; and, being more sensible than ever of the impropriety of remaining longer at the chateau, she immediately sought the Count, and communicated to him her intention of returning to the convent.

‘My dear Emily,’ said he ‘I observe, with extreme concern, the illusion you are encouraging — an illusion common to young and sensible minds. Your heart has received a severe shock; you believe you can never entirely recover it, and you will encourage this belief, till the habit of indulging sorrow will subdue the strength of your mind, and discolour your future views with melancholy and regret. Let me dissipate this illusion, and awaken you to a sense of your danger.’

Emily smiled mournfully, ‘I know what you would say, my dear sir,’ said she, ‘and am prepared to answer you. I feel, that my heart can never know a second affection; and that I must never hope even to recover its tranquillity — if I suffer myself to enter into a second engagement.’

‘I know, that you feel all this,’ replied the Count; ‘and I know, also, that time will overcome these feelings, unless you cherish them in solitude, and, pardon me, with romantic tenderness. Then, indeed, time will only confirm habit. I am particularly empowered to speak on this subject, and to sympathize in your sufferings,’ added the Count, with an air of solemnity, ‘for I have known what it is to love, and to lament the object of my love. Yes,’ continued he, while his eyes filled with tears, ‘I have suffered! — but those times have passed away — long passed! and I can now look back upon them without emotion.’

‘My dear sir,’ said Emily, timidly, ‘what mean those tears? — they speak, I fear, another language — they plead for me.’

‘They are weak tears, for they are useless ones,’ replied the Count, drying them, ‘I would have you superior to such weakness. These, however, are only faint traces of a grief, which, if it had not been opposed by long continued effort, might have led me to the verge of madness! Judge, then, whether I have not cause to warn you of an indulgence, which may produce so terrible an effect, and which must certainly, if not opposed, overcloud the years, that otherwise might be happy. M. Du Pont is a sensible and amiable man, who has long been tenderly attached to you;

his family and fortune are unexceptionable; — after what I have said, it is unnecessary to add, that I should rejoice in your felicity, and that I think M. Du Pont would promote it. Do not weep, Emily,' continued the Count, taking her hand, 'there IS happiness reserved for you.'

He was silent a moment; and then added, in a firmer voice, 'I do not wish, that you should make a violent effort to overcome your feelings; all I, at present, ask, is, that you will check the thoughts, that would lead you to a remembrance of the past; that you will suffer your mind to be engaged by present objects; that you will allow yourself to believe it possible you may yet be happy; and that you will sometimes think with complacency of poor Du Pont, and not condemn him to the state of despondency, from which, my dear Emily, I am endeavouring to withdraw you.'

'Ah! my dear sir,' said Emily, while her tears still fell, 'do not suffer the benevolence of your wishes to mislead *Mons.* Du Pont with an expectation that I can ever accept his hand. If I understand my own heart, this never can be; your instruction I can obey in almost every other particular, than that of adopting a contrary belief.'

'Leave me to understand your heart,' replied the Count, with a faint smile. 'If you pay me the compliment to be guided by my advice in other instances, I will pardon your incredulity, respecting your future conduct towards *Mons.* Du Pont. I will not even press you to remain longer at the chateau than your own satisfaction will permit; but though I forbear to oppose your present retirement, I shall urge the claims of friendship for your future visits.'

Tears of gratitude mingled with those of tender regret, while Emily thanked the Count for the many instances of friendship she had received from him; promised to be directed by his advice upon every subject but one, and assured him of the pleasure, with which she should, at some future period, accept the invitation of the Countess and himself — If *Mons.* Du Pont was not at the chateau.

The Count smiled at this condition. 'Be it so,' said he, 'meanwhile the convent is so near the chateau, that my daughter and I shall often visit you; and if, sometimes, we should dare to bring you another visitor — will you forgive us?'

Emily looked distressed, and remained silent.

‘Well,’ rejoined the Count, ‘I will pursue this subject no further, and must now entreat your forgiveness for having pressed it thus far. You will, however, do me the justice to believe, that I have been urged only by a sincere regard for your happiness, and that of my amiable friend *Mons.* Du Pont.’

Emily, when she left the Count, went to mention her intended departure to the Countess, who opposed it with polite expressions of regret; after which, she sent a note to acquaint the lady abbess, that she should return to the convent; and thither she withdrew on the evening of the following day. M. Du Pont, in extreme regret, saw her depart, while the Count endeavoured to cheer him with a hope, that Emily would sometimes regard him with a more favourable eye.

She was pleased to find herself once more in the tranquil retirement of the convent, where she experienced a renewal of all the maternal kindness of the abbess, and of the sisterly attentions of the nuns. A report of the late extraordinary occurrence at the chateau had already reached them, and, after supper, on the evening of her arrival, it was the subject of conversation in the convent parlour, where she was requested to mention some particulars of that unaccountable event. Emily was guarded in her conversation on this subject, and briefly related a few circumstances concerning Ludovico, whose disappearance, her auditors almost unanimously agreed, had been effected by supernatural means.

‘A belief had so long prevailed,’ said a nun, who was called sister Frances, ‘that the chateau was haunted, that I was surprised, when I heard the Count had the temerity to inhabit it. Its former possessor, I fear, had some deed of conscience to atone for; let us hope, that the virtues of its present owner will preserve him from the punishment due to the errors of the last, if, indeed, he was a criminal.’

‘Of what crime, then, was he suspected?’ said a Mademoiselle Feydeau, a boarder at the convent.

‘Let us pray for his soul!’ said a nun, who had till now sat in silent attention. ‘If he was criminal, his punishment in this world was sufficient.’

There was a mixture of wildness and solemnity in her manner of delivering this, which struck Emily exceedingly; but Mademoiselle repeated her question, without noticing the solemn eagerness of the nun.

‘I dare not presume to say what was his crime,’ replied sister Frances; ‘but I have heard many reports of an extraordinary nature, respecting the late Marquis de Villeroi, and among others, that, soon after the death of his lady, he quitted Chateau-le-Blanc, and never afterwards returned to it. I was not here at the time, so I can only mention it from report, and so many years have passed since the Marchioness died, that few of our sisterhood, I believe, can do more.’

‘But I can,’ said the nun, who had before spoke, and whom they called sister Agnes.

‘You then,’ said Mademoiselle Feydeau, ‘are possibly acquainted with circumstances, that enable you to judge, whether he was criminal or not, and what was the crime imputed to him.’

‘I am,’ replied the nun; ‘but who shall dare to scrutinize my thoughts — who shall dare to pluck out my opinion? God only is his judge, and to that judge he is gone!’

Emily looked with surprise at sister Frances, who returned her a significant glance.

‘I only requested your opinion,’ said Mademoiselle Feydeau, mildly; ‘if the subject is displeasing to you, I will drop it.’

‘Displeasing!’ — said the nun, with emphasis.— ‘We are idle talkers; we do not weigh the meaning of the words we use; DISPLEASING is a poor word. I will go pray.’ As she said this she rose from her seat, and with a profound sigh quitted the room.

‘What can be the meaning of this?’ said Emily, when she was gone.

‘It is nothing extraordinary,’ replied sister Frances, ‘she is often thus; but she had no meaning in what she says. Her intellects are at times deranged. Did you never see her thus before?’

‘Never,’ said Emily. ‘I have, indeed, sometimes, thought, that there was the melancholy of madness in her look, but never before perceived it in her speech. Poor soul, I will pray for her!’

‘Your prayers then, my daughter, will unite with ours,’ observed the lady abbess, ‘she has need of them.’

‘Dear lady,’ said Mademoiselle Feydeau, addressing the abbess, ‘what is your opinion of the late Marquis? The strange circumstances, that have occurred at the chateau, have so much awakened my curiosity, that I shall

be pardoned the question. What was his imputed crime, and what the punishment, to which sister Agnes alluded?'

'We must be cautious of advancing our opinion,' said the abbess, with an air of reserve, mingled with solemnity, 'we must be cautious of advancing our opinion on so delicate a subject. I will not take upon me to pronounce, that the late Marquis was criminal, or to say what was the crime of which he was suspected; but, concerning the punishment our daughter Agnes hinted, I know of none he suffered. She probably alluded to the severe one, which an exasperated conscience can inflict. Beware, my children, of incurring so terrible a punishment — it is the purgatory of this life! The late Marchioness I knew well; she was a pattern to such as live in the world; nay, our sacred order need not have blushed to copy her virtues! Our holy convent received her mortal part; her heavenly spirit, I doubt not, ascended to its sanctuary!'

As the abbess spoke this, the last bell of vespers struck up, and she rose. 'Let us go, my children,' said she, 'and intercede for the wretched; let us go and confess our sins, and endeavour to purify our souls for the heaven, to which SHE is gone!'

Emily was affected by the solemnity of this exhortation, and, remembering her father, 'The heaven, to which HE, too, is gone!' said she, faintly, as she suppressed her sighs, and followed the abbess and the nuns to the chapel.

CHAPTER VIII

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn’d,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,

I will speak to thee.

HAMLET

Count de Villefort, at length, received a letter from the advocate at Avignon, encouraging Emily to assert her claim to the estates of the late Madame Montoni; and, about the same time, a messenger arrived from Monsieur Quesnel with intelligence, that made an appeal to the law on this subject unnecessary, since it appeared, that the only person, who could have opposed her claim, was now no more. A friend of Monsieur Quesnel, who resided at Venice, had sent him an account of the death of Montoni who had been brought to trial with Orsino, as his supposed accomplice in the murder of the Venetian nobleman. Orsino was found guilty, condemned and executed upon the wheel, but, nothing being discovered to criminate Montoni, and his colleagues, on this charge, they were all released, except Montoni, who, being considered by the senate as a very dangerous person, was, for other reasons, ordered again into confinement, where, it was said, he had died in a doubtful and mysterious manner, and not without suspicion of having been poisoned. The authority, from which M. Quesnel had received this information, would not allow him to doubt its truth, and he told Emily, that she had now only to lay claim to the estates of her late aunt, to secure them, and added, that he would himself assist in the necessary forms of this business. The term, for which La Vallee had been let being now also nearly expired, he acquainted her with the circumstance, and advised her to take the road thither, through Tholouse, where he promised to meet her, and where it would be proper for her to take possession of the estates of the late Madame Montoni; adding, that he would spare her any difficulties, that might occur on that occasion from the want of knowledge on the subject, and that he believed it would be necessary for her to be at Tholouse, in about three weeks from the present time.

An increase of fortune seemed to have awakened this sudden kindness in M. Quesnel towards his niece, and it appeared, that he entertained more respect for the rich heiress, than he had ever felt compassion for the poor and unfriended orphan.

The pleasure, with which she received this intelligence, was clouded when she considered, that he, for whose sake she had once regretted the want of fortune, was no longer worthy of sharing it with her; but, remembering the friendly admonition of the Count, she checked this melancholy reflection, and endeavoured to feel only gratitude for the unexpected good, that now attended her; while it formed no inconsiderable part of her satisfaction to know, that La Vallee, her native home, which was endeared to her by it's having been the residence of her parents, would soon be restored to her possession. There she meant to fix her future residence, for, though it could not be compared with the chateau at Tholouse, either for extent, or magnificence, its pleasant scenes and the tender remembrances, that haunted them, had claims upon her heart, which she was not inclined to sacrifice to ostentation. She wrote immediately to thank M. Quesnel for the active interest he took in her concerns, and to say, that she would meet him at Tholouse at the appointed time.

When Count de Villefort, with Blanche, came to the convent to give Emily the advice of the advocate, he was informed of the contents of M. Quesnel's letter, and gave her his sincere congratulations, on the occasion; but she observed, that, when the first expression of satisfaction had faded from his countenance, an unusual gravity succeeded, and she scarcely hesitated to enquire its cause.

'It has no new occasion,' replied the Count; 'I am harassed and perplexed by the confusion, into which my family is thrown by their foolish superstition. Idle reports are floating round me, which I can neither admit to be true, or prove to be false; and I am, also, very anxious about the poor fellow, Ludovico, concerning whom I have not been able to obtain information. Every part of the chateau and every part of the neighbourhood, too, has, I believe, been searched, and I know not what further can be done, since I have already offered large rewards for the discovery of him. The keys of the north apartment I have not suffered to be out of my possession, since he disappeared, and I mean to watch in those chambers, myself, this very night.'

Emily, seriously alarmed for the Count, united her entreaties with those of the Lady Blanche, to dissuade him from his purpose.

'What should I fear?' said he. 'I have no faith in supernatural combats, and for human opposition I shall be prepared; nay, I will even promise not

to watch alone.’

‘But who, dear sir, will have courage enough to watch with you?’ said Emily.

‘My son,’ replied the Count. ‘If I am not carried off in the night,’ added he, smiling, ‘you shall hear the result of my adventure, tomorrow.’

The Count and Lady Blanche, shortly afterwards, took leave of Emily, and returned to the chateau, where he informed Henri of his intention, who, not without some secret reluctance, consented to be the partner of his watch; and, when the design was mentioned after supper, the Countess was terrified, and the Baron, and M. Du Pont joined with her in entreating, that he would not tempt his fate, as Ludovico had done. ‘We know not,’ added the Baron, ‘the nature, or the power of an evil spirit; and that such a spirit haunts those chambers can now, I think, scarcely be doubted. Beware, my lord, how you provoke its vengeance, since it has already given us one terrible example of its malice. I allow it may be probable, that the spirits of the dead are permitted to return to the earth only on occasions of high import; but the present import may be your destruction.’

The Count could not forbear smiling; ‘Do you think then, Baron,’ said he, ‘that my destruction is of sufficient importance to draw back to earth the soul of the departed? Alas! my good friend, there is no occasion for such means to accomplish the destruction of any individual. Wherever the mystery rests, I trust I shall, this night, be able to detect it. You know I am not superstitious.’

‘I know that you are incredulous,’ interrupted the Baron.

‘Well, call it what you will, I mean to say, that, though you know I am free from superstition — if any thing supernatural has appeared, I doubt not it will appear to me, and if any strange event hangs over my house, or if any extraordinary transaction has formerly been connected with it, I shall probably be made acquainted with it. At all events I will invite discovery; and, that I may be equal to a mortal attack, which in good truth, my friend, is what I most expect, I shall take care to be well armed.’

The Count took leave of his family, for the night, with an assumed gaiety, which but ill concealed the anxiety, that depressed his spirits, and retired to the north apartments, accompanied by his son and followed by the Baron, M. Du Pont and some of the domestics, who all bade him good night at the outer door. In these chambers every thing appeared as when he

had last been here; even in the bedroom no alteration was visible, where he lighted his own fire, for none of the domestics could be prevailed upon to venture thither. After carefully examining the chamber and the oriel, the Count and Henri drew their chairs upon the hearth, set a bottle of wine and a lamp before them, laid their swords upon the table, and, stirring the wood into a blaze, began to converse on indifferent topics. But Henri was often silent and abstracted, and sometimes threw a glance of mingled awe and curiosity round the gloomy apartment; while the Count gradually ceased to converse, and sat either lost in thought, or reading a volume of Tacitus, which he had brought to beguile the tediousness of the night.

CHAPTER IV

Give thy thoughts no tongue.

SHAKESPEARE

The Baron St. Foix, whom anxiety for his friend had kept awake, rose early to enquire the event of the night, when, as he passed the Count's closet, hearing steps within, he knocked at the door, and it was opened by his friend himself. Rejoicing to see him in safety, and curious to learn the occurrences of the night, he had not immediately leisure to observe the unusual gravity, that overspread the features of the Count, whose reserved answers first occasioned him to notice it. The Count, then smiling, endeavoured to treat the subject of his curiosity with levity, but the Baron was serious, and pursued his enquiries so closely, that the Count, at length, resuming his gravity, said, 'Well, my friend, press the subject no further, I entreat you; and let me request also, that you will hereafter be silent upon any thing you may think extraordinary in my future conduct. I do not scruple to tell you, that I am unhappy, and that the watch of the last night has not assisted me to discover Ludovico; upon every occurrence of the night you must excuse my reserve.'

'But where is Henri?' said the Baron, with surprise and disappointment at this denial.

'He is well in his own apartment,' replied the Count. 'You will not question him on this topic, my friend, since you know my wish.'

'Certainly not,' said the Baron, somewhat chagrined, 'since it would be displeasing to you; but methinks, my friend, you might rely on my discretion, and drop this unusual reserve. However, you must allow me to suspect, that you have seen reason to become a convert to my system, and are no longer the incredulous knight you lately appeared to be.'

'Let us talk no more upon this subject,' said the Count; 'you may be assured, that no ordinary circumstance has imposed this silence upon me towards a friend, whom I have called so for near thirty years; and my present reserve cannot make you question either my esteem, or the sincerity of my friendship.'

'I will not doubt either,' said the Baron, 'though you must allow me to express my surprise, at this silence.'

‘To me I will allow it,’ replied the Count, ‘but I earnestly entreat that you will forbear to notice it to my family, as well as every thing remarkable you may observe in my conduct towards them.’

The Baron readily promised this, and, after conversing for some time on general topics, they descended to the breakfast-room, where the Count met his family with a cheerful countenance, and evaded their enquiries by employing light ridicule, and assuming an air of uncommon gaiety, while he assured them, that they need not apprehend any evil from the north chambers, since Henri and himself had been permitted to return from them in safety.

Henri, however, was less successful in disguising his feelings. From his countenance an expression of terror was not entirely faded; he was often silent and thoughtful, and when he attempted to laugh at the eager enquiries of Mademoiselle Bearn, it was evidently only an attempt.

In the evening, the Count called, as he had promised, at the convent, and Emily was surprised to perceive a mixture of playful ridicule and of reserve in his mention of the north apartment. Of what had occurred there, however, he said nothing, and, when she ventured to remind him of his promise to tell her the result of his enquiries, and to ask if he had received any proof, that those chambers were haunted, his look became solemn, for a moment, then, seeming to recollect himself, he smiled, and said, ‘My dear Emily, do not suffer my lady abbess to infect your good understanding with these fancies; she will teach you to expect a ghost in every dark room. But believe me,’ added he, with a profound sigh, ‘the apparition of the dead comes not on light, or sportive errands, to terrify, or to surprise the timid.’ He paused, and fell into a momentary thoughtfulness, and then added, ‘We will say no more on this subject.’

Soon after, he took leave, and, when Emily joined some of the nuns, she was surprised to find them acquainted with a circumstance, which she had carefully avoided to mention, and expressing their admiration of his intrepidity in having dared to pass a night in the apartment, whence Ludovico had disappeared; for she had not considered with what rapidity a tale of wonder circulates. The nuns had acquired their information from peasants, who brought fruit to the monastery, and whose whole attention had been fixed, since the disappearance of Ludovico, on what was passing in the castle.

Emily listened in silence to the various opinions of the nuns, concerning the conduct of the Count, most of whom condemned it as rash and presumptuous, affirming, that it was provoking the vengeance of an evil spirit, thus to intrude upon its haunts.

Sister Frances contended, that the Count had acted with the bravery of a virtuous mind. He knew himself guiltless of aught, that should provoke a good spirit, and did not fear the spells of an evil one, since he could claim the protection of an higher Power, of Him, who can command the wicked, and will protect the innocent.

‘The guilty cannot claim that protection!’ said sister Agnes, ‘let the Count look to his conduct, that he do not forfeit his claim! Yet who is he, that shall dare to call himself innocent! — all earthly innocence is but comparative. Yet still how wide asunder are the extremes of guilt, and to what an horrible depth may we fall! Oh!’ —

The nun, as she concluded, uttered a shuddering sigh, that startled Emily, who, looking up, perceived the eyes of Agnes fixed on hers, after which the sister rose, took her hand, gazed earnestly upon her countenance, for some moments, in silence, and then said,

‘You are young — you are innocent! I mean you are yet innocent of any great crime! — But you have passions in your heart, — scorpions; they sleep now — beware how you awaken them! — they will sting you, even unto death!’

Emily, affected by these words and by the solemnity, with which they were delivered, could not suppress her tears.

‘Ah! is it so?’ exclaimed Agnes, her countenance softening from its sternness— ‘so young, and so unfortunate! We are sisters, then indeed. Yet, there is no bond of kindness among the guilty,’ she added, while her eyes resumed their wild expression, ‘no gentleness, — no peace, no hope! I knew them all once — my eyes could weep — but now they burn, for now, my soul is fixed, and fearless! — I lament no more!’

‘Rather let us repent, and pray,’ said another nun. ‘We are taught to hope, that prayer and penitence will work our salvation. There is hope for all who repent!’

‘Who repent and turn to the true faith,’ observed sister Frances.

‘For all but me!’ replied Agnes solemnly, who paused, and then abruptly added, ‘My head burns, I believe I am not well. O! could I strike from my

memory all former scenes — the figures, that rise up, like furies, to torment me! — I see them, when I sleep, and, when I am awake, they are still before my eyes! I see them now — now!’

She stood in a fixed attitude of horror, her straining eyes moving slowly round the room, as if they followed something. One of the nuns gently took her hand, to lead her from the parlour. Agnes became calm, drew her other hand across her eyes, looked again, and, sighing deeply, said, ‘They are gone — they are gone! I am feverish, I know not what I say. I am thus, sometimes, but it will go off again, I shall soon be better. Was not that the vesper-bell?’

‘No,’ replied Frances, ‘the evening service is passed. Let Margaret lead you to your cell.’

‘You are right,’ replied sister Agnes, ‘I shall be better there. Good night, my sisters, remember me in your orisons.’

When they had withdrawn, Frances, observing Emily’s emotion, said, ‘Do not be alarmed, our sister is often thus deranged, though I have not lately seen her so frantic; her usual mood is melancholy. This fit has been coming on, for several days; seclusion and the customary treatment will restore her.’

‘But how rationally she conversed, at first!’ observed Emily, ‘her ideas followed each other in perfect order.’

‘Yes,’ replied the nun, ‘this is nothing new; nay, I have sometimes known her argue not only with method, but with acuteness, and then, in a moment, start off into madness.’

‘Her conscience seems afflicted,’ said Emily, ‘did you ever hear what circumstance reduced her to this deplorable condition?’

‘I have,’ replied the nun, who said no more till Emily repeated the question, when she added in a low voice, and looking significantly towards the other boarders, ‘I cannot tell you now, but, if you think it worth your while, come to my cell, to-night, when our sisterhood are at rest, and you shall hear more; but remember we rise to midnight prayers, and come either before, or after midnight.’

Emily promised to remember, and, the abbess soon after appearing, they spoke no more of the unhappy nun.

The Count meanwhile, on his return home, had found M. Du Pont in one of those fits of despondency, which his attachment to Emily frequently

occasioned him, an attachment, that had subsisted too long to be easily subdued, and which had already outlived the opposition of his friends. M. Du Pont had first seen Emily in Gascony, during the lifetime of his parent, who, on discovering his son's partiality for Mademoiselle St. Aubert, his inferior in point of fortune, forbade him to declare it to her family, or to think of her more. During the life of his father, he had observed the first command, but had found it impracticable to obey the second, and had, sometimes, soothed his passion by visiting her favourite haunts, among which was the fishing-house, where, once or twice, he addressed her in verse, concealing his name, in obedience to the promise he had given his father. There too he played the pathetic air, to which she had listened with such surprise and admiration; and there he found the miniature, that had since cherished a passion fatal to his repose. During his expedition into Italy, his father died; but he received his liberty at a moment, when he was the least enabled to profit by it, since the object, that rendered it most valuable, was no longer within the reach of his vows. By what accident he discovered Emily, and assisted to release her from a terrible imprisonment, has already appeared, and also the unavailing hope, with which he then encouraged his love, and the fruitless efforts, that he had since made to overcome it.

The Count still endeavoured, with friendly zeal, to sooth him with a belief, that patience, perseverance and prudence would finally obtain for him happiness and Emily: 'Time,' said he, 'will wear away the melancholy impression, which disappointment has left on her mind, and she will be sensible of your merit. Your services have already awakened her gratitude, and your sufferings her pity; and trust me, my friend, in a heart so sensible as hers, gratitude and pity lead to love. When her imagination is rescued from its present delusion, she will readily accept the homage of a mind like yours.'

Du Pont sighed, while he listened to these words; and, endeavouring to hope what his friend believed, he willingly yielded to an invitation to prolong his visit at the chateau, which we now leave for the monastery of St. Claire.

When the nuns had retired to rest, Emily stole to her appointment with sister Frances, whom she found in her cell, engaged in prayer, before a little table, where appeared the image she was addressing, and, above, the

dim lamp that gave light to the place. Turning her eyes, as the door opened, she beckoned to Emily to come in, who, having done so, seated herself in silence beside the nun's little mattress of straw, till her orisons should conclude. The latter soon rose from her knees, and, taking down the lamp and placing it on the table, Emily perceived there a human scull and bones, lying beside an hour-glass; but the nun, without observing her emotion, sat down on the mattress by her, saying, 'Your curiosity, sister, has made you punctual, but you have nothing remarkable to hear in the history of poor Agnes, of whom I avoided to speak in the presence of my lay-sisters, only because I would not publish her crime to them.'

'I shall consider your confidence in me as a favour,' said Emily, 'and will not misuse it.'

'Sister Agnes,' resumed the nun, 'is of a noble family, as the dignity of her air must already have informed you, but I will not dishonour their name so much as to reveal it. Love was the occasion of her crime and of her madness. She was beloved by a gentleman of inferior fortune, and her father, as I have heard, bestowing her on a nobleman, whom she disliked, an ill-governed passion proved her destruction. — Every obligation of virtue and of duty was forgotten, and she prophaned her marriage vows; but her guilt was soon detected, and she would have fallen a sacrifice to the vengeance of her husband, had not her father contrived to convey her from his power. By what means he did this, I never could learn; but he secreted her in this convent, where he afterwards prevailed with her to take the veil, while a report was circulated in the world, that she was dead, and the father, to save his daughter, assisted the rumour, and employed such means as induced her husband to believe she had become a victim to his jealousy. You look surprised,' added the nun, observing Emily's countenance; 'I allow the story is uncommon, but not, I believe, without a parallel.'

'Pray proceed,' said Emily, 'I am interested.'

'The story is already told,' resumed the nun, 'I have only to mention, that the long struggle, which Agnes suffered, between love, remorse and a sense of the duties she had taken upon herself in becoming of our order, at length unsettled her reason. At first, she was frantic and melancholy by quick alternatives; then, she sunk into a deep and settled melancholy,

which still, however, has, at times, been interrupted by fits of wildness, and, of late, these have again been frequent.’

Emily was affected by the history of the sister, some parts of whose story brought to her remembrance that of the Marchioness de Villeroi, who had also been compelled by her father to forsake the object of her affections, for a nobleman of his choice; but, from what Dorothee had related, there appeared no reason to suppose, that she had escaped the vengeance of a jealous husband, or to doubt for a moment the innocence of her conduct. But Emily, while she sighed over the misery of the nun, could not forbear shedding a few tears to the misfortunes of the Marchioness; and, when she returned to the mention of sister Agnes, she asked Frances if she remembered her in her youth, and whether she was then beautiful.

‘I was not here at the time, when she took the vows,’ replied Frances, ‘which is so long ago, that few of the present sisterhood, I believe, were witnesses of the ceremony; nay, ever our lady mother did not then preside over the convent: but I can remember, when sister Agnes was a very beautiful woman. She retains that air of high rank, which always distinguished her, but her beauty, you must perceive, is fled; I can scarcely discover even a vestige of the loveliness, that once animated her features.’

‘It is strange,’ said Emily, ‘but there are moments, when her countenance has appeared familiar to my memory! You will think me fanciful, and I think myself so, for I certainly never saw sister Agnes, before I came to this convent, and I must, therefore, have seen some person, whom she strongly resembles, though of this I have no recollection.’

‘You have been interested by the deep melancholy of her countenance,’ said Frances, ‘and its impression has probably deluded your imagination; for I might as reasonably think I perceive a likeness between you and Agnes, as you, that you have seen her any where but in this convent, since this has been her place of refuge, for nearly as many years as make your age.’

‘Indeed!’ said Emily.

‘Yes,’ rejoined Frances, ‘and why does that circumstance excite your surprise?’

Emily did not appear to notice this question, but remained thoughtful, for a few moments, and then said, ‘It was about that same period that the

Marchioness de Villeroi expired.’

‘That is an odd remark,’ said Frances.

Emily, recalled from her reverie, smiled, and gave the conversation another turn, but it soon came back to the subject of the unhappy nun, and Emily remained in the cell of sister Frances, till the midnight bell aroused her; when, apologizing for having interrupted the sister’s repose, till this late hour, they quitted the cell together. Emily returned to her chamber, and the nun, bearing a glimmering taper, went to her devotion in the chapel.

Several days followed, during which Emily saw neither the Count, or any of his family; and, when, at length, he appeared, she remarked, with concern, that his air was unusually disturbed.

‘My spirits are harassed,’ said he, in answer to her anxious enquiries, ‘and I mean to change my residence, for a little while, an experiment, which, I hope, will restore my mind to its usual tranquillity. My daughter and myself will accompany the Baron St. Foix to his chateau. It lies in a valley of the Pyrenees, that opens towards Gascony, and I have been thinking, Emily, that, when you set out for La Vallee, we may go part of the way together; it would be a satisfaction to me to guard you towards your home.’

She thanked the Count for his friendly consideration, and lamented, that the necessity for her going first to Tholouse would render this plan impracticable. ‘But, when you are at the Baron’s residence,’ she added, ‘you will be only a short journey from La Vallee, and I think, sir, you will not leave the country without visiting me; it is unnecessary to say with what pleasure I should receive you and the Lady Blanche.’

‘I do not doubt it,’ replied the Count, ‘and I will not deny myself and Blanche the pleasure of visiting you, if your affairs should allow you to be at La Vallee, about the time when we can meet you there.’

When Emily said that she should hope to see the Countess also, she was not sorry to learn that this lady was going, accompanied by Mademoiselle Bearn, to pay a visit, for a few weeks, to a family in lower Languedoc.

The Count, after some further conversation on his intended journey and on the arrangement of Emily’s, took leave; and many days did not succeed this visit, before a second letter from M. Quesnel informed her, that he was then at Tholouse, that La Vallee was at liberty, and that he wished her

to set off for the former place, where he awaited her arrival, with all possible dispatch, since his own affairs pressed him to return to Gascony. Emily did not hesitate to obey him, and, having taken an affecting leave of the Count’s family, in which M. Du Pont was still included, and of her friends at the convent, she set out for Tholouse, attended by the unhappy Annette, and guarded by a steady servant of the Count.

CHAPTER X

Lull’d in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are link’d by many a hidden chain:
Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise!
Each stamps its image as the other flies!

PLEASURES OF MEMORY

Emily pursued her journey, without any accident, along the plains of Languedoc towards the north-west; and, on this her return to Tholouse, which she had last left with Madame Montoni, she thought much on the melancholy fate of her aunt, who, but for her own imprudence, might now have been living in happiness there! Montoni, too, often rose to her fancy, such as she had seen him in his days of triumph, bold, spirited and commanding; such also as she had since beheld him in his days of vengeance; and now, only a few short months had passed — and he had no longer the power, or the will to afflict; — he had become a clod of earth, and his life was vanished like a shadow! Emily could have wept at his fate, had she not remembered his crimes; for that of her unfortunate aunt she did weep, and all sense of her errors was overcome by the recollection of her misfortunes.

Other thoughts and other emotions succeeded, as Emily drew near the wellknown scenes of her early love, and considered, that Valancourt was lost to her and to himself, for ever. At length, she came to the brow of the hill, whence, on her departure for Italy, she had given a farewell look to this beloved landscape, amongst whose woods and fields she had so often walked with Valancourt, and where he was then to inhabit, when she would be far, far away! She saw, once more, that chain of the Pyrenees, which overlooked La Vallee, rising, like faint clouds, on the horizon. ‘There, too, is Gascony, extended at their feet!’ said she, ‘O my father, — my mother! And there, too, is the Garonne!’ she added, drying the tears, that obscured her sight,— ‘and Tholouse, and my aunt’s mansion — and the groves in her garden! — O my friends! are ye all lost to me — must I never, never see ye more!’ Tears rushed again to her eyes, and she continued to weep, till an abrupt turn in the road had nearly occasioned the carriage to overset, when, looking up, she perceived another part of the wellknown scene around Tholouse, and all the reflections and anticipations, which she had suffered, at the moment, when she bade it last adieu, came with recollected force to her heart. She remembered how anxiously she had looked forward to the futurity, which was to decide her happiness

concerning Valancourt, and what depressing fears had assailed her; the very words she had uttered, as she withdrew her last look from the prospect, came to her memory. ‘Could I but be certain,’ she had then said, ‘that I should ever return, and that Valancourt would still live for me — I should go in peace!’

Now, that futurity, so anxiously anticipated, was arrived, she was returned — but what a dreary blank appeared! — Valancourt no longer lived for her! She had no longer even the melancholy satisfaction of contemplating his image in her heart, for he was no longer the same Valancourt she had cherished there — the solace of many a mournful hour, the animating friend, that had enabled her to bear up against the oppression of Montoni — the distant hope, that had beamed over her gloomy prospect! On perceiving this beloved idea to be an illusion of her own creation, Valancourt seemed to be annihilated, and her soul sickened at the blank, that remained. His marriage with a rival, even his death, she thought she could have endured with more fortitude, than this discovery; for then, amidst all her grief, she could have looked in secret upon the image of goodness, which her fancy had drawn of him, and comfort would have mingled with her suffering!

Drying her tears, she looked, once more, upon the landscape, which had excited them, and perceived, that she was passing the very bank, where she had taken leave of Valancourt, on the morning of her departure from Tholouse, and she now saw him, through her returning tears, such as he had appeared, when she looked from the carriage to give him a last adieu — saw him leaning mournfully against the high trees, and remembered the fixed look of mingled tenderness and anguish, with which he had then regarded her. This recollection was too much for her heart, and she sunk back in the carriage, nor once looked up, till it stopped at the gates of what was now her own mansion.

These being opened, and by the servant, to whose care the chateau had been entrusted, the carriage drove into the court, where, alighting, she hastily passed through the great hall, now silent and solitary, to a large oak parlour, the common sitting room of the late Madame Montoni, where, instead of being received by M. Quesnel, she found a letter from him, informing her that business of consequence had obliged him to leave Tholouse two days before. Emily was, upon the whole, not sorry to be

spared his presence, since his abrupt departure appeared to indicate the same indifference, with which he had formerly regarded her. This letter informed her, also, of the progress he had made in the settlement of her affairs, and concluded with directions, concerning the forms of some business, which remained for her to transact. But M. Quesnel's unkindness did not long occupy her thoughts, which returned the remembrance of the persons she had been accustomed to see in this mansion, and chiefly of the ill-guided and unfortunate Madame Montoni. In the room, where she now sat, she had breakfasted with her on the morning of their departure for Italy; and the view of it brought most forcibly to her recollection all she had herself suffered, at that time, and the many gay expectations, which her aunt had formed, respecting the journey before her. While Emily's mind was thus engaged, her eyes wandered unconsciously to a large window, that looked upon the garden, and here new memorials of the past spoke to her heart, for she saw extended before her the very avenue, in which she had parted with Valancourt, on the eve of her journey; and all the anxiety, the tender interest he had shewn, concerning her future happiness, his earnest remonstrances against her committing herself to the power of Montoni, and the truth of his affection, came afresh to her memory. At this moment, it appeared almost impossible, that Valancourt could have become unworthy of her regard, and she doubted all that she had lately heard to his disadvantage, and even his own words, which had confirmed Count De Villefort's report of him. Overcome by the recollections, which the view of this avenue occasioned, she turned abruptly from the window, and sunk into a chair beside it, where she sat, given up to grief, till the entrance of Annette, with coffee, aroused her.

'Dear madam, how melancholy this place looks now,' said Annette, 'to what it used to do! It is dismal coming home, when there is nobody to welcome one!'

This was not the moment, in which Emily could bear the remark; her tears fell again, and, as soon as she had taken the coffee, she retired to her apartment, where she endeavoured to repose her fatigued spirits. But busy memory would still supply her with the visions of former times: she saw Valancourt interesting and benevolent, as he had been wont to appear in the days of their early love, and, amidst the scenes, where she had believed

that they should sometimes pass their years together! — but, at length, sleep closed these afflicting scenes from her view.

On the following morning, serious occupation recovered her from such melancholy reflections; for, being desirous of quitting Tholouse, and of hastening on to La Vallee, she made some enquiries into the condition of the estate, and immediately dispatched a part of the necessary business concerning it, according to the directions of *Mons.* Quesnel. It required a strong effort to abstract her thoughts from other interests sufficiently to attend to this, but she was rewarded for her exertions by again experiencing, that employment is the surest antidote to sorrow.

This day was devoted entirely to business; and, among other concerns, she employed means to learn the situation of all her poor tenants, that she might relieve their wants, or confirm their comforts.

In the evening, her spirits were so much strengthened, that she thought she could bear to visit the gardens, where she had so often walked with Valancourt; and, knowing, that, if she delayed to do so, their scenes would only affect her the more, whenever they should be viewed, she took advantage of the present state of her mind, and entered them.

Passing hastily the gate leading from the court into the gardens, she hurried up the great avenue, scarcely permitting her memory to dwell for a moment on the circumstance of her having here parted with Valancourt, and soon quitted this for other walks less interesting to her heart. These brought her, at length, to the flight of steps, that led from the lower garden to the terrace, on seeing which, she became agitated, and hesitated whether to ascend, but, her resolution returning, she proceeded.

‘Ah!’ said Emily, as she ascended, ‘these are the same high trees, that used to wave over the terrace, and these the same flowery thickets — the liburnum, the wild rose, and the cerinthe — which were wont to grow beneath them! Ah! and there, too, on that bank, are the very plants, which Valancourt so carefully reared! — O, when last I saw them!’ — she checked the thought, but could not restrain her tears, and, after walking slowly on for a few moments, her agitation, upon the view of this wellknown scene, increased so much, that she was obliged to stop, and lean upon the wall of the terrace. It was a mild, and beautiful evening. The sun was setting over the extensive landscape, to which his beams, sloping from beneath a dark cloud, that overhung the west, gave rich and partial

colouring, and touched the tufted summits of the groves, that rose from the garden below, with a yellow gleam.

Emily and Valancourt had often admired together this scene, at the same hour; and it was exactly on this spot, that, on the night preceding her departure for Italy, she had listened to his remonstrances against the journey, and to the pleadings of passionate affection. Some observations, which she made on the landscape, brought this to her remembrance, and with it all the minute particulars of that conversation; — the alarming doubts he had expressed concerning Montoni, doubts, which had since been fatally confirmed; the reasons and entreaties he had employed to prevail with her to consent to an immediate marriage; the tenderness of his love, the paroxysms of this grief, and the conviction that he had repeatedly expressed, that they should never meet again in happiness! All these circumstances rose afresh to her mind, and awakened the various emotions she had then suffered. Her tenderness for Valancourt became as powerful as in the moments, when she thought, that she was parting with him and happiness together, and when the strength of her mind had enabled her to triumph over present suffering, rather than to deserve the reproach of her conscience by engaging in a clandestine marriage.— ‘Alas!’ said Emily, as these recollections came to her mind, ‘and what have I gained by the fortitude I then practised? — am I happy now? — He said, we should meet no more in happiness; but, O! he little thought his own misconduct would separate us, and lead to the very evil he then dreaded!’

Her reflections increased her anguish, while she was compelled to acknowledge, that the fortitude she had formerly exerted, if it had not conducted her to happiness, had saved her from irretrievable misfortune — from Valancourt himself! But in these moments she could not congratulate herself on the prudence, that had saved her; she could only lament, with bitterest anguish, the circumstances, which had conspired to betray Valancourt into a course of life so different from that, which the virtues, the tastes, and the pursuits of his early years had promised; but she still loved him too well to believe, that his heart was even now depraved, though his conduct had been criminal. An observation, which had fallen from M. St. Aubert more than once, now occurred to her. ‘This young

man,’ said he, speaking of Valancourt, ‘has never been at Paris;’ a remark, that had surprised her at the time it was uttered, but which she now understood, and she exclaimed sorrowfully, ‘O Valancourt! if such a friend as my father had been with you at Paris — your noble, ingenuous nature would not have fallen!’

The sun was now set, and, recalling her thoughts from their melancholy subject, she continued her walk; for the pensive shade of twilight was pleasing to her, and the nightingales from the surrounding groves began to answer each other in the long-drawn, plaintive note, which always touched her heart; while all the fragrance of the flowery thickets, that bounded the terrace, was awakened by the cool evening air, which floated so lightly among their leaves, that they scarcely trembled as it passed.

Emily came, at length, to the steps of the pavilion, that terminated the terrace, and where her last interview with Valancourt, before her departure from Tholouse, had so unexpectedly taken place. The door was now shut, and she trembled, while she hesitated whether to open it; but her wish to see again a place, which had been the chief scene of her former happiness, at length overcoming her reluctance to encounter the painful regret it would renew, she entered. The room was obscured by a melancholy shade; but through the open lattices, darkened by the hanging foliage of the vines, appeared the dusky landscape, the Garonne reflecting the evening light, and the west still glowing. A chair was placed near one of the balconies, as if some person had been sitting there, but the other furniture of the pavilion remained exactly as usual, and Emily thought it looked as if it had not once been moved since she set out for Italy. The silent and deserted air of the place added solemnity to her emotions, for she heard only the low whisper of the breeze, as it shook the leaves of the vines, and the very faint murmur of the Garonne.

She seated herself in a chair, near the lattice, and yielded to the sadness of her heart, while she recollected the circumstances of her parting interview with Valancourt, on this spot. It was here too, that she had passed some of the happiest hours of her life with him, when her aunt favoured the connection, for here she had often sat and worked, while he conversed, or read; and she now well remembered with what discriminating judgment, with what tempered energy, he used to repeat some of the sublimest passages of their favourite authors; how often he

would pause to admire with her their excellence, and with what tender delight he would listen to her remarks, and correct her taste.

‘And is it possible,’ said Emily, as these recollections returned— ‘is it possible, that a mind, so susceptible of whatever is grand and beautiful, could stoop to low pursuits, and be subdued by frivolous temptations?’

She remembered how often she had seen the sudden tear start in his eye, and had heard his voice tremble with emotion, while he related any great or benevolent action, or repeated a sentiment of the same character. ‘And such a mind,’ said she, ‘such a heart, were to be sacrificed to the habits of a great city!’

These recollections becoming too painful to be endured, she abruptly left the pavilion, and, anxious to escape from the memorials of her departed happiness, returned towards the chateau. As she passed along the terrace, she perceived a person, walking, with a slow step, and a dejected air, under the trees, at some distance. The twilight, which was now deep, would not allow her to distinguish who it was, and she imagined it to be one of the servants, till, the sound of her steps seeming to reach him, he turned half round, and she thought she saw Valancourt!

Whoever it was, he instantly struck among the thickets on the left, and disappeared, while Emily, her eyes fixed on the place, whence he had vanished, and her frame trembling so excessively, that she could scarcely support herself, remained, for some moments, unable to quit the spot, and scarcely conscious of existence. With her recollection, her strength returned, and she hurried toward the house, where she did not venture to enquire who had been in the gardens, lest she should betray her emotion; and she sat down alone, endeavouring to recollect the figure, air and features of the person she had just seen. Her view of him, however, had been so transient, and the gloom had rendered it so imperfect, that she could remember nothing with exactness; yet the general appearance of his figure, and his abrupt departure, made her still believe, that this person was Valancourt. Sometimes, indeed, she thought, that her fancy, which had been occupied by the idea of him, had suggested his image to her uncertain sight: but this conjecture was fleeting. If it was himself whom she had seen, she wondered much, that he should be at Tholouse, and more, how he had gained admittance into the garden; but as often as her impatience prompted her to enquire whether any stranger had been admitted, she was

restrained by an unwillingness to betray her doubts; and the evening was passed in anxious conjecture, and in efforts to dismiss the subject from her thoughts. But, these endeavours were ineffectual, and a thousand inconsistent emotions assailed her, whenever she fancied that Valancourt might be near her; now, she dreaded it to be true, and now she feared it to be false; and, while she constantly tried to persuade herself, that she wished the person, whom she had seen, might not be Valancourt, her heart as constantly contradicted her reason.

The following day was occupied by the visits of several neighbouring families, formerly intimate with Madame Montoni, who came to condole with Emily on her death, to congratulate her upon the acquisition of these estates, and to enquire about Montoni, and concerning the strange reports they had heard of her own situation; all which was done with the utmost decorum, and the visitors departed with as much composure as they had arrived.

Emily was wearied by these formalities, and disgusted by the subservient manners of many persons, who had thought her scarcely worthy of common attention, while she was believed to be a dependant on Madame Montoni.

‘Surely,’ said she, ‘there is some magic in wealth, which can thus make persons pay their court to it, when it does not even benefit themselves. How strange it is, that a fool or a knave, with riches, should be treated with more respect by the world, than a good man, or a wise man in poverty!’

It was evening, before she was left alone, and she then wished to have refreshed her spirits in the free air of her garden; but she feared to go thither, lest she should meet again the person, whom she had seen on the preceding night, and he should prove to be Valancourt. The suspense and anxiety she suffered, on this subject, she found all her efforts unable to controul, and her secret wish to see Valancourt once more, though unseen by him, powerfully prompted her to go, but prudence and a delicate pride restrained her, and she determined to avoid the possibility of throwing herself in his way, by forbearing to visit the gardens, for several days.

When, after near a week, she again ventured thither, she made Annette her companion, and confined her walk to the lower grounds, but often started as the leaves rustled in the breeze, imagining, that some person was among the thickets; and, at the turn of every alley, she looked forward with

apprehensive expectation. She pursued her walk thoughtfully and silently, for her agitation would not suffer her to converse with Annette, to whom, however, thought and silence were so intolerable, that she did not scruple at length to talk to her mistress.

‘Dear madam,’ said she, ‘why do you start so? one would think you knew what has happened.’

‘What has happened?’ said Emily, in a faltering voice, and trying to command her emotion.

‘The night before last, you know, madam’ —

‘I know nothing, Annette,’ replied her lady in a more hurried voice.

‘The night before last, madam, there was a robber in the garden.’

‘A robber!’ said Emily, in an eager, yet doubting tone.

‘I suppose he was a robber, madam. What else could he be?’

‘Where did you see him, Annette?’ rejoined Emily, looking round her, and turning back towards the chateau.

‘It was not I that saw him, madam, it was Jean the gardener. It was twelve o’clock at night, and, as he was coming across the court to go the back way into the house, what should he see — but somebody walking in the avenue, that fronts the garden gate! So, with that, Jean guessed how it was, and he went into the house for his gun.’

‘His gun!’ exclaimed Emily.

‘Yes, madam, his gun; and then he came out into the court to watch him. Presently, he sees him come slowly down the avenue, and lean over the garden gate, and look up at the house for a long time; and I warrant he examined it well, and settled what window he should break in at.’

‘But the gun,’ said Emily— ‘the gun!’

‘Yes, madam, all in good time. Presently, Jean says, the robber opened the gate, and was coming into the court, and then he thought proper to ask him his business: so he called out again, and bade him say who he was, and what he wanted. But the man would do neither; but turned upon his heel, and passed into the garden again. Jean knew then well enough how it was, and so he fired after him.’

‘Fired!’ exclaimed Emily.

‘Yes, madam, fired off his gun; but, Holy Virgin! what makes you look so pale, madam? The man was not killed, — I dare say; but if he was, his comrades carried him off: for, when Jean went in the morning, to look for

the body, it was gone, and nothing to be seen but a track of blood on the ground. Jean followed it, that he might find out where the man got into the garden, but it was lost in the grass, and' —

Annette was interrupted: for Emily's spirits died away, and she would have fallen to the ground, if the girl had not caught her, and supported her to a bench, close to them.

When, after a long absence, her senses returned, Emily desired to be led to her apartment; and, though she trembled with anxiety to enquire further on the subject of her alarm, she found herself too ill at present, to dare the intelligence which it was possible she might receive of Valancourt. Having dismissed Annette, that she might weep and think at liberty, she endeavoured to recollect the exact air of the person, whom she had seen on the terrace, and still her fancy gave her the figure of Valancourt. She had, indeed, scarcely a doubt, that it was he whom she had seen, and at whom the gardener had fired: for the manner of the latter person, as described by Annette, was not that of a robber; nor did it appear probable, that a robber would have come alone, to break into a house so spacious as this.

When Emily thought herself sufficiently recovered, to listen to what Jean might have to relate, she sent for him; but he could inform her of no circumstance, that might lead to a knowledge of the person, who had been shot, or of the consequence of the wound; and, after severely reprimanding him, for having fired with bullets, and ordering diligent enquiry to be made in the neighbourhood for the discovery of the wounded person, she dismissed him, and herself remained in the same state of terrible suspense. All the tenderness she had ever felt for Valancourt, was recalled by the sense of his danger; and the more she considered the subject, the more her conviction strengthened, that it was he, who had visited the gardens, for the purpose of soothing the misery of disappointed affection, amidst the scenes of his former happiness.

'Dear madam,' said Annette, when she returned, 'I never saw you so affected before! I dare say the man is not killed.'

Emily shuddered, and lamented bitterly the rashness of the gardener in having fired.

'I knew you would be angry enough about that, madam, or I should have told you before; and he knew so too; for, says he, "Annette, say nothing about this to my lady. She lies on the other side of the house, so did not

hear the gun, perhaps; but she would be angry with me, if she knew, seeing there is blood. But then," says he, "how is one to keep the garden clear, if one is afraid to fire at a robber, when one sees him?"'

'No more of this,' said Emily, 'pray leave me.'

Annette obeyed, and Emily returned to the agonizing considerations, that had assailed her before, but which she, at length, endeavoured to sooth by a new remark. If the stranger was Valancourt, it was certain he had come alone, and it appeared, therefore, that he had been able to quit the gardens, without assistance; a circumstance which did not seem probable, had his wound been dangerous. With this consideration, she endeavoured to support herself, during the enquiries, that were making by her servants in the neighbourhood; but day after day came, and still closed in uncertainty, concerning this affair: and Emily, suffering in silence, at length, drooped, and sunk under the pressure of her anxiety. She was attacked by a slow fever, and when she yielded to the persuasion of Annette to send for medical advice, the physicians prescribed little beside air, gentle exercise and amusement: but how was this last to be obtained? She, however, endeavoured to abstract her thoughts from the subject of her anxiety, by employing them in promoting that happiness in others, which she had lost herself; and, when the evening was fine, she usually took an airing, including in her ride the cottages of some of her tenants, on whose condition she made such observations, as often enabled her, unasked, to fulfil their wishes.

Her indisposition and the business she engaged in, relative to this estate, had already protracted her stay at Tholouse, beyond the period she had formerly fixed for her departure to La Vallee; and now she was unwilling to leave the only place, where it seemed possible, that certainty could be obtained on the subject of her distress. But the time was come, when her presence was necessary at La Vallee, a letter from the Lady Blanche now informing her, that the Count and herself, being then at the chateau of the Baron St. Foix, purposed to visit her at La Vallee, on their way home, as soon as they should be informed of her arrival there. Blanche added, that they made this visit, with the hope of inducing her to return with them to Chateau-le-Blanc.

Emily, having replied to the letter of her friend, and said that she should be at La Vallee in a few days, made hasty preparations for the journey;

and, in thus leaving Tholouse, endeavoured to support herself with a belief, that, if any fatal accident had happened to Valancourt, she must in this interval have heard of it.

On the evening before her departure, she went to take leave of the terrace and the pavilion. The day had been sultry, but a light shower, that fell just before sun-set, had cooled the air, and given that soft verdure to the woods and pastures, which is so refreshing to the eye; while the rain drops, still trembling on the shrubs, glittered in the last yellow gleam, that lighted up the scene, and the air was filled with fragrance, exhaled by the late shower, from herbs and flowers and from the earth itself. But the lovely prospect, which Emily beheld from the terrace, was no longer viewed by her with delight; she sighed deeply as her eye wandered over it, and her spirits were in a state of such dejection, that she could not think of her approaching return to La Vallee, without tears, and seemed to mourn again the death of her father, as if it had been an event of yesterday. Having reached the pavilion, she seated herself at the open lattice, and, while her eyes settled on the distant mountains, that overlooked Gascony, still gleaming on the horizon, though the sun had now left the plains below, ‘Alas!’ said she, ‘I return to your long-lost scenes, but shall meet no more the parents, that were wont to render them delightful! — no more shall see the smile of welcome, or hear the wellknown voice of fondness: — all will now be cold and silent in what was once my happy home.’

Tears stole down her cheek, as the remembrance of what that home had been, returned to her; but, after indulging her sorrow for some time, she checked it, accusing herself of ingratitude in forgetting the friends, that she possessed, while she lamented those that were departed; and she, at length, left the pavilion and the terrace, without having observed a shadow of Valancourt or of any other person.

CHAPTER XI

Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
Ah fields belov’d in vain!
Where once my careless childhood stray’d,
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth.

GRAY

On the following morning, Emily left Tholouse at an early hour, and reached La Vallee about sun-set. With the melancholy she experienced on the review of a place which had been the residence of her parents, and the scene of her earliest delight, was mingled, after the first shock had subsided, a tender and undescribable pleasure. For time had so far blunted the acuteness of her grief, that she now courted every scene, that awakened the memory of her friends; in every room, where she had been accustomed to see them, they almost seemed to live again; and she felt that La Vallee was still her happiest home. One of the first apartments she visited, was that, which had been her father's library, and here she seated herself in his armchair, and, while she contemplated, with tempered resignation, the picture of past times, which her memory gave, the tears she shed could scarcely be called those of grief.

Soon after her arrival, she was surprised by a visit from the venerable M. Barreaux, who came impatiently to welcome the daughter of his late respected neighbour, to her long-deserted home. Emily was comforted by the presence of an old friend, and they passed an interesting hour in conversing of former times, and in relating some of the circumstances, that had occurred to each, since they parted.

The evening was so far advanced, when M. Barreaux left Emily, that she could not visit the garden that night; but, on the following morning, she traced its long-regretted scenes with fond impatience; and, as she walked beneath the groves, which her father had planted, and where she had so often sauntered in affectionate conversation with him, his countenance, his smile, even the accents of his voice, returned with exactness to her fancy, and her heart melted to the tender recollections.

This, too, was his favourite season of the year, at which they had often together admired the rich and variegated tints of these woods and the magical effect of autumnal lights upon the mountains; and now, the view of these circumstances made memory eloquent. As she wandered pensively on, she fancied the following address

TO AUTUMN

Sweet Autumn! how thy melancholy grace
Steals on my heart, as through these shades I wind!
Sooth’d by thy breathing sigh, I fondly trace
Each lonely image of the pensive mind!
Lov’d scenes, lov’d friends — long lost! around me rise,
And wake the melting thought, the tender tear!
That tear, that thought, which more than mirth I prize —
Sweet as the gradual tint, that paints thy year!
Thy farewel smile, with fond regret, I view,
Thy beaming lights, soft gliding o’er the woods;
Thy distant landscape, touch’d with yellow hue
While falls the lengthen’d gleam; thy winding floods,
Now veil’d in shade, save where the skiff’s white sails
Swell to the breeze, and catch thy streaming ray.
But now, e’en now! — the partial vision fails,
And the wave smiles, as sweeps the cloud away!
Emblem of life! — Thus checquer’d is its plan,
Thus joy succeeds to grief — thus smiles the varied man!

One of Emily’s earliest enquiries, after her arrival at La Vallee, was concerning Theresa, her father’s old servant, whom it may be remembered that M. Quesnel had turned from the house when it was let, without any provision. Understanding that she lived in a cottage at no great distance, Emily walked thither, and, on approaching, was pleased to see, that her habitation was pleasantly situated on a green slope, sheltered by a tuft of oaks, and had an appearance of comfort and extreme neatness. She found the old woman within, picking vine-stalks, who, on perceiving her young mistress, was nearly overcome with joy.

‘Ah! my dear young lady!’ said she, ‘I thought I should never see you again in this world, when I heard you was gone to that outlandish country. I have been hardly used, since you went; I little thought they would have turned me out of my old master’s family in my old age!’

Emily lamented the circumstance, and then assured her, that she would make her latter days comfortable, and expressed satisfaction, on seeing her in so pleasant an habitation.

Theresa thanked her with tears, adding, ‘Yes, mademoiselle, it is a very comfortable home, thanks to the kind friend, who took me out of my distress, when you was too far off to help me, and placed me here! I little thought! — but no more of that— ‘

‘And who was this kind friend?’ said Emily: ‘whoever it was, I shall consider him as mine also.’

‘Ah, mademoiselle! that friend forbad me to blazon the good deed — I must not say, who it was. But how you are altered since I saw you last! You look so pale now, and so thin, too; but then, there is my old master’s smile! Yes, that will never leave you, any more than the goodness, that used to make him smile. Alas-a-day! the poor lost a friend indeed, when he died!’

Emily was affected by this mention of her father, which Theresa observing, changed the subject. ‘I heard, mademoiselle,’ said she, ‘that Madame Cheron married a foreign gentleman, after all, and took you abroad; how does she do?’

Emily now mentioned her death. ‘Alas!’ said Theresa, ‘if she had not been my master’s sister, I should never have loved her; she was always so cross. But how does that dear young gentleman do, M. Valancourt? he was an handsome youth, and a good one; is he well, mademoiselle?’

Emily was much agitated.

‘A blessing on him!’ continued Theresa. ‘Ah, my dear young lady, you need not look so shy; I know all about it. Do you think I do not know, that he loves you? Why, when you was away, mademoiselle, he used to come to the chateau and walk about it, so disconsolate! He would go into every room in the lower part of the house, and, sometimes, he would sit himself down in a chair, with his arms across, and his eyes on the floor, and there he would sit, and think, and think, for the hour together. He used to be very fond of the south parlour, because I told him it used to be yours; and there he would stay, looking at the pictures, which I said you drew, and playing upon your lute, that hung up by the window, and reading in your books, till sunset, and then he must go back to his brother’s chateau. And then— ‘

‘It is enough, Theresa,’ said Emily.— ‘How long have you lived in this cottage — and how can I serve you? Will you remain here, or return and live with me?’

‘Nay, mademoiselle,’ said Theresa, ‘do not be so shy to your poor old servant. I am sure it is no disgrace to like such a good young gentleman.’

A deep sigh escaped from Emily.

‘Ah! how he did love to talk of you! I loved him for that. Nay, for that matter, he liked to hear me talk, for he did not say much himself. But I soon found out what he came to the chateau about. Then, he would go into the garden, and down to the terrace, and sit under that great tree there, for the day together, with one of your books in his hand; but he did not read much, I fancy; for one day I happened to go that way, and I heard somebody talking. Who can be here? says I: I am sure I let nobody into the garden, but the Chevalier. So I walked softly, to see who it could be; and behold! it was the Chevalier himself, talking to himself about you. And he repeated your name, and sighed so! and said he had lost you for ever, for that you would never return for him. I thought he was out in his reckoning there, but I said nothing, and stole away.’

‘No more of this trifling,’ said Emily, awakening from her reverie: ‘it displeases me.’

‘But, when M. Quesnel let the chateau, I thought it would have broke the Chevalier’s heart.’

‘Theresa,’ said Emily seriously, ‘you must name the Chevalier no more!’

‘Not name him, mademoiselle!’ cried Theresa: ‘what times are come up now? Why, I love the Chevalier next to my old master and you, mademoiselle.’

‘Perhaps your love was not well bestowed, then,’ replied Emily, trying to conceal her tears; ‘but, however that might be, we shall meet no more.’

‘Meet no more! — not well bestowed!’ exclaimed Theresa. ‘What do I hear? No, mademoiselle, my love was well bestowed, for it was the Chevalier Valancourt, who gave me this cottage, and has supported me in my old age, ever since M. Quesnel turned me from my master’s house.’

‘The Chevalier Valancourt!’ said Emily, trembling extremely.

‘Yes, mademoiselle, he himself, though he made me promise not to tell; but how could one help, when one heard him ill spoken of? Ah! dear young

lady, you may well weep, if you have behaved unkindly to him, for a more tender heart than his never young gentleman had. He found me out in my distress, when you was too far off to help me; and M. Quesnel refused to do so, and bade me go to service again — Alas! I was too old for that! — The Chevalier found me, and bought me this cottage, and gave me money to furnish it, and bade me seek out another poor woman to live with me; and he ordered his brother's steward to pay me, every quarter, that which has supported me in comfort. Think then, mademoiselle, whether I have not reason to speak well of the Chevalier. And there are others, who could have afforded it better than he: and I am afraid he has hurt himself by his generosity, for quarter day is gone by long since, and no money for me! But do not weep so, mademoiselle: you are not sorry surely to hear of the poor Chevalier's goodness?'

'Sorry!' said Emily, and wept the more. 'But how long is it since you have seen him?'

'Not this many a day, mademoiselle.'

'When did you hear of him?' enquired Emily, with increased emotion.

'Alas! never since he went away so suddenly into Languedoc; and he was but just come from Paris then, or I should have seen him, I am sure. Quarter day is gone by long since, and, as I said, no money for me; and I begin to fear some harm has happened to him: and if I was not so far from Estuviere and so lame, I should have gone to enquire before this time; and I have nobody to send so far.'

Emily's anxiety, as to the fate of Valancourt, was now scarcely endurable, and, since propriety would not suffer her to send to the chateau of his brother, she requested that Theresa would immediately hire some person to go to his steward from herself, and, when he asked for the quarterage due to her, to make enquiries concerning Valancourt. But she first made Theresa promise never to mention her name in this affair, or ever with that of the Chevalier Valancourt; and her former faithfulness to M. St. Aubert induced Emily to confide in her assurances. Theresa now joyfully undertook to procure a person for this errand, and then Emily, after giving her a sum of money to supply her with present comforts, returned, with spirits heavily oppressed, to her home, lamenting, more than ever, that an heart, possessed of so much benevolence as Valancourt's, should have been contaminated by the vices of the world, but affected by

the delicate affection, which his kindness to her old servant expressed for herself.

CHAPTER XII

Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop, and drowze;
While night’s black agents to their preys do rouze.

MACBETH

Meanwhile Count De Villefort and Lady Blanche had passed a pleasant fortnight at the chateau de St. Foix, with the Baron and Baroness, during which they made frequent excursions among the mountains, and were delighted with the romantic wildness of Pyrenean scenery. It was with regret, that the Count bade adieu to his old friends, although with the hope of being soon united with them in one family; for it was settled that M. St. Foix, who now attended them into Gascony, should receive the hand of the Lady Blanche, upon their arrival at Chateau-le-Blanc. As the road, from the Baron's residence to La Vallee, was over some of the wildest tract of the Pyrenees, and where a carriage-wheel had never passed, the Count hired mules for himself and his family, as well as a couple of stout guides, who were well armed, informed of all the passes of the mountains, and who boasted, too, that they were acquainted with every brake and dingle in the way, could tell the names of all the highest points of this chain of Alps, knew every forest, that spread along their narrow vallies, the shallowest part of every torrent they must cross, and the exact distance of every goat-herd's and hunter's cabin they should have occasion to pass, — which last article of learning required no very capacious memory, for even such simple inhabitants were but thinly scattered over these wilds.

The Count left the chateau de St. Foix, early in the morning, with an intention of passing the night at a little inn upon the mountains, about half way to La Vallee, of which his guides had informed him; and, though this was frequented chiefly by Spanish muleteers, on their route into France, and, of course, would afford only sorry accommodation, the Count had no alternative, for it was the only place like an inn, on the road.

After a day of admiration and fatigue, the travellers found themselves, about sun-set, in a woody valley, overlooked, on every side, by abrupt heights. They had proceeded for many leagues, without seeing a human habitation, and had only heard, now and then, at a distance, the melancholy tinkling of a sheep-bell; but now they caught the notes of merry music, and presently saw, within a little green recess among the rocks, a group of mountaineers, tripping through a dance. The Count, who could not look

upon the happiness, any more than on the misery of others, with indifference, halted to enjoy this scene of simple pleasure. The group before him consisted of French and Spanish peasants, the inhabitants of a neighbouring hamlet, some of whom were performing a sprightly dance, the women with castanets in their hands, to the sounds of a lute and a tamborine, till, from the brisk melody of France, the music softened into a slow movement, to which two female peasants danced a Spanish Pavan.

The Count, comparing this with the scenes of such gaiety as he had witnessed at Paris, where false taste painted the features, and, while it vainly tried to supply the glow of nature, concealed the charms of animation — where affectation so often distorted the air, and vice perverted the manners — sighed to think, that natural graces and innocent pleasures flourished in the wilds of solitude, while they drooped amidst the concourse of polished society. But the lengthening shadows reminded the travellers, that they had no time to lose; and, leaving this joyous group, they pursued their way towards the little inn, which was to shelter them from the night.

The rays of the setting sun now threw a yellow gleam upon the forests of pine and chesnut, that swept down the lower region of the mountains, and gave resplendent tints to the snowy points above. But soon, even this light faded fast, and the scenery assumed a more tremendous appearance, invested with the obscurity of twilight. Where the torrent had been seen, it was now only heard; where the wild cliffs had displayed every variety of form and attitude, a dark mass of mountains now alone appeared; and the vale, which far, far below had opened its dreadful chasm, the eye could no longer fathom. A melancholy gleam still lingered on the summits of the highest Alps, overlooking the deep repose of evening, and seeming to make the stillness of the hour more awful.

Blanche viewed the scene in silence, and listened with enthusiasm to the murmur of the pines, that extended in dark lines along the mountains, and to the faint voice of the izard, among the rocks, that came at intervals on the air. But her enthusiasm sunk into apprehension, when, as the shadows deepened, she looked upon the doubtful precipice, that bordered the road, as well as on the various fantastic forms of danger, that glimmered

through the obscurity beyond it; and she asked her father, how far they were from the inn, and whether he did not consider the road to be dangerous at this late hour. The Count repeated the first question to the guides, who returned a doubtful answer, adding, that, when it was darker, it would be safest to rest, till the moon rose. ‘It is scarcely safe to proceed now,’ said the Count; but the guides, assuring him that there was no danger, went on. Blanche, revived by this assurance, again indulged a pensive pleasure, as she watched the progress of twilight gradually spreading its tints over the woods and mountains, and stealing from the eye every minuter feature of the scene, till the grand outlines of nature alone remained. Then fell the silent dews, and every wild flower, and aromatic plant, that bloomed among the cliffs, breathed forth its sweetness; then, too, when the mountain-bee had crept into its blossomed bed, and the hum of every little insect, that had floated gaily in the sunbeam, was hushed, the sound of many streams, not heard till now, murmured at a distance. — The bats alone, of all the animals inhabiting this region, seemed awake; and, while they flitted across the silent path, which Blanche was pursuing, she remembered the following lines, which Emily had given her:

TO THE BAT

From haunt of man, from day’s obtrusive glare,
Thou shroud’st thee in the ruin’s ivy’d tow’r.
Or in some shadowy glen’s romantic bow’r,
Where wizard forms their mystic charms prepare,
Where Horror lurks, and ever-boding Care!
But, at the sweet and silent ev’ning hour,
When clos’d in sleep is ev’ry languid flow’r,
Thou lov’st to sport upon the twilight air,
Mocking the eye, that would thy course pursue,
In many a wanton-round, elastic, gay,
Thou flit’st athwart the pensive wand’rer’s way,
As his lone footsteps print the mountain-dew.
From Indian isles thou com’st, with Summer’s car,
Twilight thy love — thy guide her beaming star!

To a warm imagination, the dubious forms, that float, half veiled in darkness, afford a higher delight, than the most distinct scenery, that the sun can shew. While the fancy thus wanders over landscapes partly of its own creation, a sweet complacency steals upon the mind, and

Refines it all to subtlest feeling,
Bids the tear of rapture roll.

The distant note of a torrent, the weak trembling of the breeze among the woods, or the far-off sound of a human voice, now lost and heard again, are circumstances, which wonderfully heighten the enthusiastic tone of the mind. The young St. Foix, who saw the presentations of a fervid fancy, and felt whatever enthusiasm could suggest, sometimes interrupted the silence, which the rest of the party seemed by mutual consent to preserve, remarking and pointing out to Blanche the most striking effect of the hour upon the scenery; while Blanche, whose apprehensions were

beguiled by the conversation of her lover, yielded to the taste so congenial to his, and they conversed in a low restrained voice, the effect of the pensive tranquillity, which twilight and the scene inspired, rather than of any fear, that they should be heard. But, while the heart was thus soothed to tenderness, St. Foix gradually mingled, with his admiration of the country, a mention of his affection; and he continued to speak, and Blanche to listen, till the mountains, the woods, and the magical illusions of twilight, were remembered no more.

The shadows of evening soon shifted to the gloom of night, which was somewhat anticipated by the vapours, that, gathering fast round the mountains, rolled in dark wreaths along their sides; and the guides proposed to rest, till the moon should rise, adding, that they thought a storm was coming on. As they looked round for a spot, that might afford some kind of shelter, an object was perceived obscurely through the dusk, on a point of rock, a little way down the mountain, which they imagined to be a hunter’s or a shepherd’s cabin, and the party, with cautious steps, proceeded towards it. Their labour, however, was not rewarded, or their apprehensions soothed; for, on reaching the object of their search, they discovered a monumental cross, which marked the spot to have been polluted by murder.

The darkness would not permit them to read the inscription; but the guides knew this to be a cross, raised to the memory of a Count de Beliard, who had been murdered here by a horde of banditti, that had infested this part of the Pyrenees, a few years before; and the uncommon size of the monument seemed to justify the supposition, that it was erected for a person of some distinction. Blanche shuddered, as she listened to some horrid particulars of the Count’s fate, which one of the guides related in a low, restrained tone, as if the sound of his own voice frightened him; but, while they lingered at the cross, attending to his narrative, a flash of lightning glanced upon the rocks, thunder muttered at a distance, and the travellers, now alarmed, quitted this scene of solitary horror, in search of shelter.

Having regained their former track, the guides, as they passed on, endeavoured to interest the Count by various stories of robbery, and even of murder, which had been perpetrated in the very places they must unavoidably pass, with accounts of their own dauntless courage and

wonderful escapes. The chief guide, or rather he, who was the most completely armed, drawing forth one of the four pistols, that were tucked into his belt, swore, that it had shot three robbers within the year. He then brandished a clasp-knife of enormous length, and was going to recount the wonderful execution it had done, when St. Foix, perceiving, that Blanche was terrified, interrupted him. The Count, meanwhile, secretly laughing at the terrible histories and extravagant boastings of the man, resolved to humour him, and, telling Blanche in a whisper, his design, began to recount some exploits of his own, which infinitely exceeded any related by the guide.

To these surprising circumstances he so artfully gave the colouring of truth, that the courage of the guides was visibly affected by them, who continued silent, long after the Count had ceased to speak. The loquacity of the chief hero thus laid asleep, the vigilance of his eyes and ears seemed more thoroughly awakened, for he listened, with much appearance of anxiety, to the deep thunder, which murmured at intervals, and often paused, as the breeze, that was now rising, rushed among the pines. But, when he made a sudden halt before a tuft of cork trees, that projected over the road, and drew forth a pistol, before he would venture to brave the banditti which might lurk behind it, the Count could no longer refrain from laughter.

Having now, however, arrived at a level spot, somewhat sheltered from the air, by overhanging cliffs and by a wood of larch, that rose over the precipice on the left, and the guides being yet ignorant how far they were from the inn, the travellers determined to rest, till the moon should rise, or the storm disperse. Blanche, recalled to a sense of the present moment, looked on the surrounding gloom, with terror; but giving her hand to St. Foix, she alighted, and the whole party entered a kind of cave, if such it could be called, which was only a shallow cavity, formed by the curve of impending rocks. A light being struck, a fire was kindled, whose blaze afforded some degree of cheerfulness, and no small comfort, for, though the day had been hot, the night air of this mountainous region was chilling; a fire was partly necessary also to keep off the wolves, with which those wilds were infested.

Provisions being spread upon a projection of the rock, the Count and his family partook of a supper, which, in a scene less rude, would certainly

have been thought less excellent. When the repast was finished, St. Foix, impatient for the moon, sauntered along the precipice, to a point, that fronted the east; but all was yet wrapt in gloom, and the silence of night was broken only by the murmuring of woods, that waved far below, or by distant thunder, and, now and then, by the faint voices of the party he had quitted. He viewed, with emotions of awful sublimity, the long volumes of sulphureous clouds, that floated along the upper and middle regions of the air, and the lightnings that flashed from them, sometimes silently, and, at others, followed by sullen peals of thunder, which the mountains feebly prolonged, while the whole horizon, and the abyss, on which he stood, were discovered in the momentary light. Upon the succeeding darkness, the fire, which had been kindled in the cave, threw a partial gleam, illumining some points of the opposite rocks, and the summits of pine-woods, that hung beetling on the cliffs below, while their recesses seemed to frown in deeper shade.

St. Foix stopped to observe the picture, which the party in the cave presented, where the elegant form of Blanche was finely contrasted by the majestic figure of the Count, who was seated by her on a rude stone, and each was rendered more impressive by the grotesque habits and strong features of the guides and other attendants, who were in the back ground of the piece. The effect of the light, too, was interesting; on the surrounding figures it threw a strong, though pale gleam, and glittered on their bright arms; while upon the foliage of a gigantic larch, that impended its shade over the cliff above, appeared a red, dusky tint, deepening almost imperceptibly into the blackness of night.

While St. Foix contemplated the scene, the moon, broad and yellow, rose over the eastern summits, from among embattled clouds, and shewed dimly the grandeur of the heavens, the mass of vapours, that rolled half way down the precipice beneath, and the doubtful mountains.

What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck’d mariner on desert coast,
And view th’enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows length’ning to th’horizon round!

THE MINSTREL

From this romantic reverie he was awakened by the voices of the guides, repeating his name, which was reverbed from cliff to cliff, till an hundred tongues seemed to call him; when he soon quieted the fears of the Count and the Lady Blanche, by returning to the cave. As the storm, however, seemed approaching, they did not quit their place of shelter; and the Count, seated between his daughter and St. Foix, endeavoured to divert the fears of the former, and conversed on subjects, relating to the natural history of the scene, among which they wandered. He spoke of the mineral and fossile substances, found in the depths of these mountains, — the veins of marble and granite, with which they abounded, the strata of shells, discovered near their summits, many thousand fathom above the level of the sea, and at a vast distance from its present shore; — of the tremendous chasms and caverns of the rocks, the grotesque form of the mountains, and the various phaenomena, that seem to stamp upon the world the history of the deluge. From the natural history he descended to the mention of events and circumstances, connected with the civil story of the Pyrenees; named some of the most remarkable fortresses, which France and Spain had erected in the passes of these mountains; and gave a brief account of some celebrated sieges and encounters in early times, when Ambition first frightened Solitude from these her deep recesses, made her mountains, which before had echoed only to the torrent’s roar, tremble with the clang of arms, and, when man’s first footsteps in her sacred haunts had left the print of blood!

As Blanche sat, attentive to the narrative, that rendered the scenes doubly interesting, and resigned to solemn emotion, while she considered, that she was on the very ground, once polluted by these events, her reverie was suddenly interrupted by a sound, that came in the wind. — It was the distant bark of a watch-dog. The travellers listened with eager hope, and, as the wind blew stronger, fancied, that the sound came from no great distance; and, the guides having little doubt, that it proceeded from the inn they were in search of, the Count determined to pursue his way. The moon now afforded a stronger, though still an uncertain light, as she moved

among broken clouds; and the travellers, led by the sound, recommenced their journey along the brow of the precipice, preceded by a single torch, that now contended with the moonlight; for the guides, believing they should reach the inn soon after sun-set, had neglected to provide more. In silent caution they followed the sound, which was heard but at intervals, and which, after some time entirely ceased. The guides endeavoured, however, to point their course to the quarter, whence it had issued, but the deep roaring of a torrent soon seized their attention, and presently they came to a tremendous chasm of the mountain, which seemed to forbid all further progress. Blanche alighted from her mule, as did the Count and St. Foix, while the guides traversed the edge in search of a bridge, which, however rude, might convey them to the opposite side, and they, at length, confessed, what the Count had begun to suspect, that they had been, for some time, doubtful of their way, and were now certain only, that they had lost it.

At a little distance, was discovered a rude and dangerous passage, formed by an enormous pine, which, thrown across the chasm, united the opposite precipices, and which had been felled probably by the hunter, to facilitate his chace of the izard, or the wolf. The whole party, the guides excepted, shuddered at the prospect of crossing this alpine bridge, whose sides afforded no kind of defence, and from which to fall was to die. The guides, however, prepared to lead over the mules, while Blanche stood trembling on the brink, and listening to the roar of the waters, which were seen descending from rocks above, overhung with lofty pines, and thence precipitating themselves into the deep abyss, where their white surges gleamed faintly in the moonlight. The poor animals proceeded over this perilous bridge with instinctive caution, neither frightened by the noise of the cataract, or deceived by the gloom, which the impending foliage threw athwart their way. It was now, that the solitary torch, which had been hitherto of little service, was found to be an inestimable treasure; and Blanche, terrified, shrinking, but endeavouring to recollect all her firmness and presence of mind, preceded by her lover and supported by her father, followed the red gleam of the torch, in safety, to the opposite cliff.

As they went on, the heights contracted, and formed a narrow pass, at the bottom of which, the torrent they had just crossed, was heard to

thunder. But they were again cheered by the bark of a dog, keeping watch, perhaps, over the flocks of the mountains, to protect them from the nightly descent of the wolves. The sound was much nearer than before, and, while they rejoiced in the hope of soon reaching a place of repose, a light was seen to glimmer at a distance. It appeared at a height considerably above the level of their path, and was lost and seen again, as if the waving branches of trees sometimes excluded and then admitted its rays. The guides hallooed with all their strength, but the sound of no human voice was heard in return, and, at length, as a more effectual means of making themselves known, they fired a pistol. But, while they listened in anxious expectation, the noise of the explosion was alone heard, echoing among the rocks, and it gradually sunk into silence, which no friendly hint of man disturbed. The light, however, that had been seen before, now became plainer, and, soon after, voices were heard indistinctly on the wind; but, upon the guides repeating the call, the voices suddenly ceased, and the light disappeared.

The Lady Blanche was now almost sinking beneath the pressure of anxiety, fatigue and apprehension, and the united efforts of the Count and St. Foix could scarcely support her spirits. As they continued to advance, an object was perceived on a point of rock above, which, the strong rays of the moon then falling on it, appeared to be a watchtower. The Count, from its situation and some other circumstances, had little doubt, that it was such, and believing, that the light had proceeded from thence, he endeavoured to reanimate his daughter’s spirits by the near prospect of shelter and repose, which, however rude the accommodation, a ruined watchtower might afford.

‘Numerous watchtowers have been erected among the Pyrenees,’ said the Count, anxious only to call Blanche’s attention from the subject of her fears; ‘and the method, by which they give intelligence of the approach of the enemy, is, you know, by fires, kindled on the summits of these edifices. Signals have thus, sometimes, been communicated from post to post, along a frontier line of several hundred miles in length. Then, as occasion may require, the lurking armies emerge from their fortresses and the forests, and march forth, to defend, perhaps, the entrance of some grand pass, where, planting themselves on the heights, they assail their astonished enemies, who wind along the glen below, with fragments of the

shattered cliff, and pour death and defeat upon them. The ancient forts, and watchtowers, overlooking the grand passes of the Pyrenees, are carefully preserved; but some of those in inferior stations have been suffered to fall into decay, and are now frequently converted into the more peaceful habitation of the hunter, or the shepherd, who, after a day of toil, retires hither, and, with his faithful dogs, forgets, near a cheerful blaze, the labour of the chace, or the anxiety of collecting his wandering flocks, while he is sheltered from the nightly storm.'

'But are they always thus peacefully inhabited?' said the Lady Blanche.

'No,' replied the Count, 'they are sometimes the asylum of French and Spanish smugglers, who cross the mountains with contraband goods from their respective countries, and the latter are particularly numerous, against whom strong parties of the king's troops are sometimes sent. But the desperate resolution of these adventurers, who, knowing, that, if they are taken, they must expiate the breach of the law by the most cruel death, travel in large parties, well armed, often daunts the courage of the soldiers. The smugglers, who seek only safety, never engage, when they can possibly avoid it; the military, also, who know, that in these encounters, danger is certain, and glory almost unattainable, are equally reluctant to fight; an engagement, therefore, very seldom happens, but, when it does, it never concludes till after the most desperate and bloody conflict. You are inattentive, Blanche,' added the Count: 'I have wearied you with a dull subject; but see, yonder, in the moonlight, is the edifice we have been in search of, and we are fortunate to be so near it, before the storm bursts.'

Blanche, looking up, perceived, that they were at the foot of the cliff, on whose summit the building stood, but no light now issued from it; the barking of the dog too had, for some time, ceased, and the guides began to doubt, whether this was really the object of their search. From the distance, at which they surveyed it, shewn imperfectly by a cloudy moon, it appeared to be of more extent than a single watchtower; but the difficulty was how to ascend the height, whose abrupt declivities seemed to afford no kind of pathway.

While the guides carried forward the torch to examine the cliff, the Count, remaining with Blanche and St. Foix at its foot, under the shadow of the woods, endeavoured again to beguile the time by conversation, but again anxiety abstracted the mind of Blanche; and he then consulted, apart

with St. Foix, whether it would be advisable, should a path be found, to venture to an edifice, which might possibly harbour banditti. They considered, that their own party was not small, and that several of them were well armed; and, after enumerating the dangers, to be incurred by passing the night in the open wild, exposed, perhaps, to the effects of a thunder-storm, there remained not a doubt, that they ought to endeavour to obtain admittance to the edifice above, at any hazard respecting the inhabitants it might harbour; but the darkness, and the dead silence, that surrounded it, appeared to contradict the probability of its being inhabited at all.

A shout from the guides aroused their attention, after which, in a few minutes, one of the Count's servants returned with intelligence, that a path was found, and they immediately hastened to join the guides, when they all ascended a little winding way cut in the rock among thickets of dwarf wood, and, after much toil and some danger, reached the summit, where several ruined towers, surrounded by a massy wall, rose to their view, partially illumined by the moonlight. The space around the building was silent, and apparently forsaken, but the Count was cautious; 'Step softly,' said he, in a low voice, 'while we reconnoitre the edifice.'

Having proceeded silently along for some paces, they stopped at a gate, whose portals were terrible even in ruins, and, after a moment's hesitation, passed on to the court of entrance, but paused again at the head of a terrace, which, branching from it, ran along the brow of a precipice. Over this, rose the main body of the edifice, which was now seen to be, not a watchtower, but one of those ancient fortresses, that, from age and neglect, had fallen to decay. Many parts of it, however, appeared to be still entire; it was built of grey stone, in the heavy Saxon-gothic style, with enormous round towers, buttresses of proportionable strength, and the arch of the large gate, which seemed to open into the hall of the fabric, was round, as was that of a window above. The air of solemnity, which must so strongly have characterized the pile even in the days of its early strength, was now considerably heightened by its shattered battlements and half-demolished walls, and by the huge masses of ruin, scattered in its wide area, now silent and grass grown. In this court of entrance stood the gigantic remains of an oak, that seemed to have flourished and decayed with the building, which it still appeared frowningly to protect by the few remaining branches,

leafless and moss-grown, that crowned its trunk, and whose wide extent told how enormous the tree had been in a former age. This fortress was evidently once of great strength, and, from its situation on a point of rock, impending over a deep glen, had been of great power to annoy, as well as to resist; the Count, therefore, as he stood surveying it, was somewhat surprised, that it had been suffered, ancient as it was, to sink into ruins, and its present lonely and deserted air excited in his breast emotions of melancholy awe. While he indulged, for a moment, these emotions, he thought he heard a sound of remote voices steal upon the stillness, from within the building, the front of which he again surveyed with scrutinizing eyes, but yet no light was visible. He now determined to walk round the fort, to that remote part of it, whence he thought the voices had arisen, that he might examine whether any light could be discerned there, before he ventured to knock at the gate; for this purpose, he entered upon the terrace, where the remains of cannon were yet apparent in the thick walls, but he had not proceeded many paces, when his steps were suddenly arrested by the loud barking of a dog within, and which he fancied to be the same, whose voice had been the means of bringing the travellers thither. It now appeared certain, that the place was inhabited, and the Count returned to consult again with St. Foix, whether he should try to obtain admittance, for its wild aspect had somewhat shaken his former resolution; but, after a second consultation, he submitted to the considerations, which before determined him, and which were strengthened by the discovery of the dog, that guarded the fort, as well as by the stillness that pervaded it. He, therefore, ordered one of his servants to knock at the gate, who was advancing to obey him, when a light appeared through the loop-hole of one of the towers, and the Count called loudly, but, receiving no answer, he went up to the gate himself, and struck upon it with an iron-pointed pole, which had assisted him to climb the steep. When the echoes had ceased, that this blow had awakened, the renewed barking, — and there were now more than one dog, — was the only sound, that was heard. The Count stepped back, a few paces, to observe whether the light was in the tower, and, perceiving, that it was gone, he returned to the portal, and had lifted the pole to strike again, when again he fancied he heard the murmur of voices within, and paused to listen. He was confirmed in the supposition, but they were too remote, to be heard otherwise than in a murmur, and the

Count now let the pole fall heavily upon the gate; when almost immediately a profound silence followed. It was apparent, that the people within had heard the sound, and their caution in admitting strangers gave him a favourable opinion of them. ‘They are either hunters or shepherds,’ said he, ‘who, like ourselves, have probably sought shelter from the night within these walls, and are fearful of admitting strangers, lest they should prove robbers. I will endeavour to remove their fears.’ So saying, he called aloud, ‘We are friends, who ask shelter from the night.’ In a few moments, steps were heard within, which approached, and a voice then enquired— ‘Who calls?’ ‘Friends,’ repeated the Count; ‘open the gates, and you shall know more.’ — Strong bolts were now heard to be undrawn, and a man, armed with a hunting spear, appeared. ‘What is it you want at this hour?’ said he. The Count beckoned his attendants, and then answered, that he wished to enquire the way to the nearest cabin. ‘Are you so little acquainted with these mountains,’ said the man, ‘as not to know, that there is none, within several leagues? I cannot shew you the way; you must seek it — there’s a moon.’ Saying this, he was closing the gate, and the Count was turning away, half disappointed and half afraid, when another voice was heard from above, and, on looking up, he saw a light, and a man’s face, at the grate of the portal. ‘Stay, friend, you have lost your way?’ said the voice. ‘You are hunters, I suppose, like ourselves: I will be with you presently.’ The voice ceased, and the light disappeared. Blanche had been alarmed by the appearance of the man, who had opened the gate, and she now entreated her father to quit the place; but the Count had observed the hunter’s spear, which he carried; and the words from the tower encouraged him to await the event. The gate was soon opened, and several men in hunters’ habits, who had heard above what had passed below, appeared, and, having listened some time to the Count, told him he was welcome to rest there for the night. They then pressed him, with much courtesy, to enter, and to partake of such fare as they were about to sit down to. The Count, who had observed them attentively while they spoke, was cautious, and somewhat suspicious; but he was also weary, fearful of the approaching storm, and of encountering alpine heights in the obscurity of night; being likewise somewhat confident in the strength and number of his attendants, he, after some further consideration, determined to accept the invitation. With this resolution he called his servants, who, advancing

round the tower, behind which some of them had silently listened to this conference, followed their Lord, the Lady Blanche, and St. Foix into the fortress. The strangers led them on to a large and rude hall, partially seen by a fire that blazed at its extremity, round which four men, in the hunter's dress, were seated, and on the hearth were several dogs stretched in sleep. In the middle of the hall stood a large table, and over the fire some part of an animal was boiling. As the Count approached, the men arose, and the dogs, half raising themselves, looked fiercely at the strangers, but, on hearing their masters' voices, kept their postures on the hearth.

Blanche looked round this gloomy and spacious hall; then at the men, and to her father, who, smiling cheerfully at her, addressed himself to the hunters. 'This is an hospitable hearth,' said he, 'the blaze of a fire is reviving after having wandered so long in these dreary wilds. Your dogs are tired; what success have you had?' 'Such as we usually have,' replied one of the men, who had been seated in the hall, 'we kill our game with tolerable certainty.' 'These are fellow hunters,' said one of the men who had brought the Count hither, 'that have lost their way, and I have told them there is room enough in the fort for us all.' 'Very true, very true,' replied his companion, 'What luck have you had in the chace, brothers? We have killed two izards, and that, you will say, is pretty well.' 'You mistake, friend,' said the Count, 'we are not hunters, but travellers; but, if you will admit us to hunters' fare, we shall be well contented, and will repay your kindness.' 'Sit down then, brother,' said one of the men: 'Jacques, lay more fuel on the fire, the kid will soon be ready; bring a seat for the lady too. Ma'amselle, will you taste our brandy? it is true Barcelona, and as bright as ever flowed from a keg.' Blanche timidly smiled, and was going to refuse, when her father prevented her, by taking, with a good humoured air, the glass offered to his daughter; and *Mons.* St. Foix, who was seated next her, pressed her hand, and gave her an encouraging look, but her attention was engaged by a man, who sat silently by the fire, observing St. Foix, with a steady and earnest eye.

'You lead a jolly life here,' said the Count. 'The life of a hunter is a pleasant and a healthy one; and the repose is sweet, which succeeds to your labour.'

'Yes,' replied one of his hosts, 'our life is pleasant enough. We live here only during the summer, and autumnal months; in winter, the place is

dreary, and the swoln torrents, that descend from the heights, put a stop to the chace.'

''Tis a life of liberty and enjoyment,' said the Count: 'I should like to pass a month in your way very well.'

'We find employment for our guns too,' said a man who stood behind the Count: 'here are plenty of birds, of delicious flavour, that feed upon the wild thyme and herbs, that grow in the vallies. Now I think of it, there is a brace of birds hung up in the stone gallery; go fetch them, Jacques, we will have them dressed.'

The Count now made enquiry, concerning the method of pursuing the chace among the rocks and precipices of these romantic regions, and was listening to a curious detail, when a horn was sounded at the gate. Blanche looked timidly at her father, who continued to converse on the subject of the chace, but whose countenance was somewhat expressive of anxiety, and who often turned his eyes towards that part of the hall nearest the gate. The horn sounded again, and a loud halloo succeeded. 'These are some of our companions, returned from their day's labour,' said a man, going lazily from his seat towards the gate; and in a few minutes, two men appeared, each with a gun over his shoulder, and pistols in his belt. 'What cheer, my lads? what cheer?' said they, as they approached. 'What luck?' returned their companions: 'have you brought home your supper? You shall have none else.'

'Hah! who the devil have you brought home?' said they in bad Spanish, on perceiving the Count's party, 'are they from France, or Spain? — where did you meet with them?'

'They met with us, and a merry meeting too,' replied his companion aloud in good French. 'This chevalier, and his party, had lost their way, and asked a night's lodging in the fort.' The others made no reply, but threw down a kind of knapsack, and drew forth several brace of birds. The bag sounded heavily as it fell to the ground, and the glitter of some bright metal within glanced on the eye of the Count, who now surveyed, with a more enquiring look, the man, that held the knapsack. He was a tall robust figure, of a hard countenance, and had short black hair, curling in his neck. Instead of the hunter's dress, he wore a faded military uniform; sandals were laced on his broad legs, and a kind of short trowsers hung from his waist. On his head he wore a leathern cap, somewhat resembling in shape

an ancient Roman helmet; but the brows that scowled beneath it, would have characterized those of the barbarians, who conquered Rome, rather than those of a Roman soldier. The Count, at length, turned away his eyes, and remained silent and thoughtful, till, again raising them, he perceived a figure standing in an obscure part of the hall, fixed in attentive gaze on St. Foix, who was conversing with Blanche, and did not observe this; but the Count, soon after, saw the same man looking over the shoulder of the soldier as attentively at himself. He withdrew his eye, when that of the Count met it, who felt mistrust gathering fast upon his mind, but feared to betray it in his countenance, and, forcing his features to assume a smile, addressed Blanche on some indifferent subject. When he again looked round, he perceived, that the soldier and his companion were gone.

The man, who was called Jacques, now returned from the stone gallery. ‘A fire is lighted there,’ said he, ‘and the birds are dressing; the table too is spread there, for that place is warmer than this.’

His companions approved of the removal, and invited their guests to follow to the gallery, of whom Blanche appeared distressed, and remained seated, and St. Foix looked at the Count, who said, he preferred the comfortable blaze of the fire he was then near. The hunters, however, commended the warmth of the other apartment, and pressed his removal with such seeming courtesy, that the Count, half doubting, and half fearful of betraying his doubts, consented to go. The long and ruinous passages, through which they went, somewhat daunted him, but the thunder, which now burst in loud peals above, made it dangerous to quit this place of shelter, and he forbore to provoke his conductors by shewing that he distrusted them. The hunters led the way, with a lamp; the Count and St. Foix, who wished to please their hosts by some instances of familiarity, carried each a seat, and Blanche followed, with faltering steps. As she passed on, part of her dress caught on a nail in the wall, and, while she stopped, somewhat too scrupulously, to disengage it, the Count, who was talking to St. Foix, and neither of whom observed the circumstance, followed their conductor round an abrupt angle of the passage, and Blanche was left behind in darkness. The thunder prevented them from hearing her call but, having disengaged her dress, she quickly followed, as she thought, the way they had taken. A light, that glimmered at a distance, confirmed this belief, and she proceeded towards an open door, whence it

issued, conjecturing the room beyond to be the stone gallery the men had spoken of. Hearing voices as she advanced, she paused within a few paces of the chamber, that she might be certain whether she was right, and from thence, by the light of a lamp, that hung from the ceiling, observed four men, seated round a table, over which they leaned in apparent consultation. In one of them she distinguished the features of him, whom she had observed, gazing at St. Foix, with such deep attention; and who was now speaking in an earnest, though restrained voice, till, one of his companions seeming to oppose him, they spoke together in a loud and harsher tone. Blanche, alarmed by perceiving that neither her father, or St. Foix were there, and terrified at the fierce countenances and manners of these men, was turning hastily from the chamber, to pursue her search of the gallery, when she heard one of the men say:

‘Let all dispute end here. Who talks of danger? Follow my advice, and there will be none — secure THEM, and the rest are an easy prey.’ Blanche, struck with these words, paused a moment, to hear more. ‘There is nothing to be got by the rest,’ said one of his companions, ‘I am never for blood when I can help it — dispatch the two others, and our business is done; the rest may go.’

‘May they so?’ exclaimed the first ruffian, with a tremendous oath— ‘What! to tell how we have disposed of their masters, and to send the king’s troops to drag us to the wheel! You was always a choice adviser — I warrant we have not yet forgot St. Thomas’s eve last year.’

Blanche’s heart now sunk with horror. Her first impulse was to retreat from the door, but, when she would have gone, her trembling frame refused to support her, and, having tottered a few paces, to a more obscure part of the passage, she was compelled to listen to the dreadful councils of those, who, she was no longer suffered to doubt, were banditti. In the next moment, she heard the following words, ‘Why you would not murder the whole GANG?’

‘I warrant our lives are as good as theirs,’ replied his comrade. ‘If we don’t kill them, they will hang us: better they should die than we be hanged.’

‘Better, better,’ cried his comrades.

‘To commit murder, is a hopeful way of escaping the gallows!’ said the first ruffian— ‘many an honest fellow has run his head into the noose that

way, though.’ There was a pause of some moments, during which they appeared to be considering.

‘Confound those fellows,’ exclaimed one of the robbers impatiently, ‘they ought to have been here by this time; they will come back presently with the old story, and no booty: if they were here, our business would be plain and easy. I see we shall not be able to do the business to-night, for our numbers are not equal to the enemy, and in the morning they will be for marching off, and how can we detain them without force?’

‘I have been thinking of a scheme, that will do,’ said one of his comrades: ‘if we can dispatch the two chevaliers silently, it will be easy to master the rest.’

‘That’s a plausible scheme, in good faith,’ said another with a smile of scorn— ‘If I can eat my way through the prison wall, I shall be at liberty! — How can we dispatch them SILENTLY?’

‘By poison,’ replied his companions.

‘Well said! that will do,’ said the second ruffian, ‘that will give a lingering death too, and satisfy my revenge. These barons shall take care how they again tempt our vengeance.’

‘I knew the son, the moment I saw him,’ said the man, whom Blanche had observed gazing on St. Foix, ‘though he does not know me; the father I had almost forgotten.’

‘Well, you may say what you will,’ said the third ruffian, ‘but I don’t believe he is the Baron, and I am as likely to know as any of you, for I was one of them, that attacked him, with our brave lads, that suffered.’

‘And was not I another?’ said the first ruffian, ‘I tell you he is the Baron; but what does it signify whether he is or not? — shall we let all this booty go out of our hands? It is not often we have such luck at this. While we run the chance of the wheel for smuggling a few pounds of tobacco, to cheat the king’s manufactory, and of breaking our necks down the precipices in the chace of our food; and, now and then, rob a brother smuggler, or a straggling pilgrim, of what scarcely repays us the powder we fire at them, shall we let such a prize as this go? Why they have enough about them to keep us for— ‘

‘I am not for that, I am not for that,’ replied the third robber, ‘let us make the most of them: only, if this is the Baron, I should like to have a

flash the more at him, for the sake of our brave comrades, that he brought to the gallows.'

'Aye, aye, flash as much as you will,' rejoined the first man, 'but I tell you the Baron is a taller man.'

'Confound your quibbling,' said the second ruffian, 'shall we let them go or not? If we stay here much longer, they will take the hint, and march off without our leave. Let them be who they will, they are rich, or why all those servants? Did you see the ring, he, you call the Baron, had on his finger? — it was a diamond; but he has not got it on now: he saw me looking at it, I warrant, and took it off.'

'Aye, and then there is the picture; did you see that? She has not taken that off,' observed the first ruffian, 'it hangs at her neck; if it had not sparkled so, I should not have found it out, for it was almost hid by her dress; those are diamonds too, and a rare many of them there must be, to go round such a large picture.'

'But how are we to manage this business?' said the second ruffian: 'let us talk of that, there is no fear of there being booty enough, but how are we to secure it?'

'Aye, aye,' said his comrades, 'let us talk of that, and remember no time is to be lost.'

'I am still for poison,' observed the third, 'but consider their number; why there are nine or ten of them, and armed too; when I saw so many at the gate, I was not for letting them in, you know, nor you either.'

'I thought they might be some of our enemies,' replied the second, 'I did not so much mind numbers.'

'But you must mind them now,' rejoined his comrade, 'or it will be worse for you. We are not more than six, and how can we master ten by open force? I tell you we must give some of them a dose, and the rest may then be managed.'

'I'll tell you a better way,' rejoined the other impatiently, 'draw closer.'

Blanche, who had listened to this conversation, in an agony, which it would be impossible to describe, could no longer distinguish what was said, for the ruffians now spoke in lowered voices; but the hope, that she might save her friends from the plot, if she could find her way quickly to them, suddenly reanimated her spirits, and lent her strength enough to turn her steps in search of the gallery. Terror, however, and darkness conspired

against her, and, having moved a few yards, the feeble light, that issued from the chamber, no longer even contended with the gloom, and, her foot stumbling over a step that crossed the passage, she fell to the ground.

The noise startled the banditti, who became suddenly silent, and then all rushed to the passage, to examine whether any person was there, who might have overheard their councils. Blanche saw them approaching, and perceived their fierce and eager looks: but, before she could raise herself, they discovered and seized her, and, as they dragged her towards the chamber they had quitted, her screams drew from them horrible threatenings.

Having reached the room, they began to consult what they should do with her. ‘Let us first know what she had heard,’ said the chief robber. ‘How long have you been in the passage, lady, and what brought you there?’

‘Let us first secure that picture,’ said one of his comrades, approaching the trembling Blanche. ‘Fair lady, by your leave that picture is mine; come, surrender it, or I shall seize it.’

Blanche, entreating their mercy, immediately gave up the miniature, while another of the ruffians fiercely interrogated her, concerning what she had overheard of their conversation, when, her confusion and terror too plainly telling what her tongue feared to confess, the ruffians looked expressively upon one another, and two of them withdrew to a remote part of the room, as if to consult further.

‘These are diamonds, by St. Peter!’ exclaimed the fellow, who had been examining the miniature, ‘and here is a very pretty picture too, ‘faith; as handsome a young chevalier, as you would wish to see by a summer’s sun. Lady, this is your spouse, I warrant, for it is the spark, that was in your company just now.’

Blanche, sinking with terror, conjured him to have pity on her, and, delivering him her purse, promised to say nothing of what had passed, if he would suffer her to return to her friends.

He smiled ironically, and was going to reply, when his attention was called off by a distant noise; and, while he listened, he grasped the arm of Blanche more firmly, as if he feared she would escape from him, and she again shrieked for help.

The approaching sounds called the ruffians from the other part of the chamber. ‘We are betrayed,’ said they; ‘but let us listen a moment, perhaps it is only our comrades come in from the mountains, and if so, our work is sure; listen!’

A distant discharge of shot confirmed this supposition for a moment, but, in the next, the former sounds drawing nearer, the clashing of swords, mingled with the voices of loud contention and with heavy groans, were distinguished in the avenue leading to the chamber. While the ruffians prepared their arms, they heard themselves called by some of their comrades afar off, and then a shrill horn was sounded without the fortress, a signal, it appeared, they too well understood; for three of them, leaving the Lady Blanche to the care of the fourth, instantly rushed from the chamber.

While Blanche, trembling, and nearly fainting, was supplicating for release, she heard amid the tumult, that approached, the voice of St. Foix, and she had scarcely renewed her shriek, when the door of the room was thrown open, and he appeared, much disfigured with blood, and pursued by several ruffians. Blanche neither saw, or heard any more; her head swam, her sight failed, and she became senseless in the arms of the robber, who had detained her.

When she recovered, she perceived, by the gloomy light, that trembled round her, that she was in the same chamber, but neither the Count, St. Foix, or any other person appeared, and she continued, for some time, entirely still, and nearly in a state of stupefaction. But, the dreadful images of the past returning, she endeavoured to raise herself, that she might seek her friends, when a sullen groan, at a little distance, reminded her of St. Foix, and of the condition, in which she had seen him enter this room; then, starting from the floor, by a sudden effort of horror, she advanced to the place whence the sound had proceeded, where a body was lying stretched upon the pavement, and where, by the glimmering light of a lamp, she discovered the pale and disfigured countenance of St. Foix. Her horrors, at that moment, may be easily imagined. He was speechless; his eyes were half closed, and, on the hand, which she grasped in the agony of despair, cold damps had settled. While she vainly repeated his name, and called for assistance, steps approached, and a person entered the chamber, who, she soon perceived, was not the Count, her father; but, what was her

astonishment, when, supplicating him to give his assistance to St. Foix, she discovered Ludovico! He scarcely paused to recognise her, but immediately bound up the wounds of the Chevalier, and, perceiving, that he had fainted probably from loss of blood, ran for water; but he had been absent only a few moments, when Blanche heard other steps approaching, and, while she was almost frantic with apprehension of the ruffians, the light of a torch flashed upon the walls, and then Count De Villefort appeared, with an affrighted countenance, and breathless with impatience, calling upon his daughter. At the sound of his voice, she rose, and ran to his arms, while he, letting fall the bloody sword he held, pressed her to his bosom in a transport of gratitude and joy, and then hastily enquired for St. Foix, who now gave some signs of life. Ludovico soon after returning with water and brandy, the former was applied to his lips, and the latter to his temples and hands, and Blanche, at length, saw him unclose his eyes, and then heard him enquire for her; but the joy she felt, on this occasion, was interrupted by new alarms, when Ludovico said it would be necessary to remove *Mons.* St. Foix immediately, and added, ‘The banditti, that are out, my Lord, were expected home, an hour ago, and they will certainly find us, if we delay. That shrill horn, they know, is never sounded by their comrades but on most desperate occasions, and it echoes among the mountains for many leagues round. I have known them brought home by its sound even from the Pied de Melicant. Is any body standing watch at the great gate, my Lord?’

‘Nobody,’ replied the Count; ‘the rest of my people are now scattered about, I scarcely know where. Go, Ludovico, collect them together, and look out yourself, and listen if you hear the feet of mules.’

Ludovico then hurried away, and the Count consulted as to the means of removing St. Foix, who could not have borne the motion of a mule, even if his strength would have supported him in the saddle.

While the Count was telling, that the banditti, whom they had found in the fort, were secured in the dungeon, Blanche observed that he was himself wounded, and that his left arm was entirely useless; but he smiled at her anxiety, assuring her the wound was trifling.

The Count’s servants, except two who kept watch at the gate, now appeared, and, soon after, Ludovico. ‘I think I hear mules coming along the glen, my Lord,’ said he, ‘but the roaring of the torrent below will not

let me be certain; however, I have brought what will serve the Chevalier,' he added, shewing a bear's skin, fastened to a couple of long poles, which had been adapted for the purpose of bringing home such of the banditti as happened to be wounded in their encounters. Ludovico spread it on the ground, and, placing the skins of several goats upon it, made a kind of bed, into which the Chevalier, who was however now much revived, was gently lifted; and, the poles being raised upon the shoulders of the guides, whose footing among these steeps could best be depended upon, he was borne along with an easy motion. Some of the Count's servants were also wounded — but not materially, and, their wounds being bound up, they now followed to the great gate. As they passed along the hall, a loud tumult was heard at some distance, and Blanche was terrified. 'It is only those villains in the dungeon, my Lady,' said Ludovico. 'They seem to be bursting it open,' said the Count. 'No, my Lord,' replied Ludovico, 'it has an iron door; we have nothing to fear from them; but let me go first, and look out from the rampart.'

They quickly followed him, and found their mules browsing before the gates, where the party listened anxiously, but heard no sound, except that of the torrent below and of the early breeze, sighing among the branches of the old oak, that grew in the court; and they were now glad to perceive the first tints of dawn over the mountain-tops. When they had mounted their mules, Ludovico, undertaking to be their guide, led them by an easier path, than that by which they had formerly ascended, into the glen. 'We must avoid that valley to the east, my Lord,' said he, 'or we may meet the banditti; they went out that way in the morning.'

The travellers, soon after, quitted this glen, and found themselves in a narrow valley that stretched towards the north-west. The morning light upon the mountains now strengthened fast, and gradually discovered the green hillocks, that skirted the winding feet of the cliffs, tufted with cork tree, and ever-green oak. The thunderclouds being dispersed, had left the sky perfectly serene, and Blanche was revived by the fresh breeze, and by the view of verdure, which the late rain had brightened. Soon after, the sun arose, when the dripping rocks, with the shrubs that fringed their summits, and many a turfy slope below, sparkled in his rays. A wreath of mist was seen, floating along the extremity of the valley, but the gale bore it before the travellers, and the sunbeams gradually drew it up towards the summit

of the mountains. They had proceeded about a league, when, St. Foix having complained of extreme faintness, they stopped to give him refreshment, and, that the men, who bore him, might rest. Ludovico had brought from the fort some flasks of rich Spanish wine, which now proved a reviving cordial not only to St. Foix but to the whole party, though to him it gave only temporary relief, for it fed the fever, that burned in his veins, and he could neither disguise in his countenance the anguish he suffered, or suppress the wish, that he was arrived at the inn, where they had designed to pass the preceding night.

While they thus reposed themselves under the shade of the dark green pines, the Count desired Ludovico to explain shortly, by what means he had disappeared from the north apartment, how he came into the hands of the banditti, and how he had contributed so essentially to serve him and his family, for to him he justly attributed their present deliverance. Ludovico was going to obey him, when suddenly they heard the echo of a pistol-shot, from the way they had passed, and they rose in alarm, hastily to pursue their route.

CHAPTER XIII

Ah why did Fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy!

BEATTIE

Emily, mean while, was still suffering anxiety as to the fate of Valancourt; but Theresa, having, at length, found a person, whom she could entrust on her errand to the steward, informed her, that the messenger would return on the following day; and Emily promised to be at the cottage, Theresa being too lame to attend her.

In the evening, therefore, Emily set out alone for the cottage, with a melancholy foreboding, concerning Valancourt, while, perhaps, the gloom of the hour might contribute to depress her spirits. It was a grey autumnal evening towards the close of the season; heavy mists partially obscured the mountains, and a chilling breeze, that sighed among the beech woods, strewed her path with some of their last yellow leaves. These, circling in the blast and foretelling the death of the year, gave an image of desolation to her mind, and, in her fancy, seemed to announce the death of Valancourt. Of this she had, indeed, more than once so strong a presentiment, that she was on the point of returning home, feeling herself unequal to an encounter with the certainty she anticipated, but, contending with her emotions, she so far commanded them, as to be able to proceed.

While she walked mournfully on, gazing on the long volumes of vapour, that poured upon the sky, and watching the swallows, tossed along the wind, now disappearing among tempestuous clouds, and then emerging, for a moment, in circles upon the calmer air, the afflictions and vicissitudes of her late life seemed pourtrayed in these fleeting images; — thus had she been tossed upon the stormy sea of misfortune for the last year, with but short intervals of peace, if peace that could be called, which was only the delay of evils. And now, when she had escaped from so many dangers, was become independent of the will of those, who had oppressed her, and found herself mistress of a large fortune, now, when she might reasonably have expected happiness, she perceived that she was as distant from it as ever. She would have accused herself of weakness and ingratitude in thus suffering a sense of the various blessings she possessed to be overcome by that of a single misfortune, had this misfortune affected herself alone; but, when she had wept for Valancourt even as living, tears

of compassion had mingled with those of regret, and while she lamented a human being degraded to vice, and consequently to misery, reason and humanity claimed these tears, and fortitude had not yet taught her to separate them from those of love; in the present moments, however, it was not the certainty of his guilt, but the apprehension of his death (of a death also, to which she herself, however innocently, appeared to have been in some degree instrumental) that oppressed her. This fear increased, as the means of certainty concerning it approached; and, when she came within view of Theresa's cottage, she was so much disordered, and her resolution failed her so entirely, that, unable to proceed, she rested on a bank, beside her path; where, as she sat, the wind that groaned sullenly among the lofty branches above, seemed to her melancholy imagination to bear the sounds of distant lamentation, and, in the pauses of the gust, she still fancied she heard the feeble and far-off notes of distress. Attention convinced her, that this was no more than fancy; but the increasing gloom, which seemed the sudden close of day, soon warned her to depart, and, with faltering steps, she again moved toward the cottage. Through the casement appeared the cheerful blaze of a wood fire, and Theresa, who had observed Emily approaching, was already at the door to receive her.

'It is a cold evening, madam,' said she, 'storms are coming on, and I thought you would like a fire. Do take this chair by the hearth.'

Emily, thanking her for this consideration, sat down, and then, looking in her face, on which the wood fire threw a gleam, she was struck with its expression, and, unable to speak, sunk back in her chair with a countenance so full of woe, that Theresa instantly comprehended the occasion of it, but she remained silent. 'Ah!' said Emily, at length, 'it is unnecessary for me to ask the result of your enquiry, your silence, and that look, sufficiently explain it; — he is dead!'

'Alas! my dear young lady,' replied Theresa, while tears filled her eyes, 'this world is made up of trouble! the rich have their share as well as the poor! But we must all endeavour to bear what Heaven pleases.'

'He is dead, then!' — interrupted Emily— 'Valancourt is dead!'

'A-well-a-day! I fear he is,' replied Theresa.

'You fear!' said Emily, 'do you only fear?'

'Alas! yes, madam, I fear he is! neither the steward, or any of the Epourville family, have heard of him since he left Languedoc, and the

Count is in great affliction about him, for he says he was always punctual in writing, but that now he has not received a line from him, since he left Languedoc; he appointed to be at home, three weeks ago, but he has neither come, or written, and they fear some accident has befallen him. Alas! that ever I should live to cry for his death! I am old, and might have died without being missed, but he' — Emily was faint, and asked for some water, and Theresa, alarmed by the voice, in which she spoke, hastened to her assistance, and, while she held the water to Emily's lips, continued, 'My dear young mistress, do not take it so to heart; the Chevalier may be alive and well, for all this; let us hope the best!'

'O no! I cannot hope,' said Emily, 'I am acquainted with circumstances, that will not suffer me to hope. I am somewhat better now, and can hear what you have to say. Tell me, I entreat, the particulars of what you know.'

'Stay, till you are a little better, mademoiselle, you look sadly!'

'O no, Theresa, tell me all, while I have the power to hear it,' said Emily, 'tell me all, I conjure you!'

'Well, madam, I will then; but the steward did not say much, for Richard says he seemed shy of talking about *Mons*. Valancourt, and what he gathered was from Gabriel, one of the servants, who said he had heard it from my lord's gentleman.'

'What did he hear?' said Emily.

'Why, madam, Richard has but a bad memory, and could not remember half of it, and, if I had not asked him a great many questions, I should have heard little indeed. But he says that Gabriel said, that he and all the other servants were in great trouble about M. Valancourt, for that he was such a kind young gentleman, they all loved him, as well as if he had been their own brother — and now, to think what was become of him! For he used to be so courteous to them all, and, if any of them had been in fault, M. Valancourt was the first to persuade my lord to forgive them. And then, if any poor family was in distress, M. Valancourt was the first, too, to relieve them, though some folks, not a great way off, could have afforded that much better than he. And then, said Gabriel, he was so gentle to every body, and, for all he had such a noble look with him, he never would command, and call about him, as some of your quality people do, and we never minded him the less for that. Nay, says Gabriel, for that matter, we minded him the more, and would all have run to obey him at a word,

sooner than if some folks had told us what to do at full length; aye, and were more afraid of displeasing him, too, than of them, that used rough words to us.'

Emily, who no longer considered it to be dangerous to listen to praise, bestowed on Valancourt, did not attempt to interrupt Theresa, but sat, attentive to her words, though almost overwhelmed with grief. 'My Lord,' continued Theresa, 'frets about M. Valancourt sadly, and the more, because, they say, he had been rather harsh against him lately. Gabriel says he had it from my Lord's valet, that M. Valancourt had COMPORTED himself wildly at Paris, and had spent a great deal of money, more a great deal than my Lord liked, for he loves money better than M. Valancourt, who had been led astray sadly. Nay, for that matter, M. Valancourt had been put into prison at Paris, and my Lord, says Gabriel, refused to take him out, and said he deserved to suffer; and, when old Gregoire, the butler, heard of this, he actually bought a walking-stick to take with him to Paris, to visit his young master; but the next thing we hear is, that M. Valancourt is coming home. O, it was a joyful day when he came; but he was sadly altered, and my Lord looked very cool upon him, and he was very sad, indeed. And, soon after, he went away again into Languedoc, and, since that time, we have never seen him.'

Theresa paused, and Emily, sighing deeply, remained with her eyes fixed upon the floor, without speaking. After a long pause, she enquired what further Theresa had heard. 'Yet why should I ask?' she added; 'what you have already told is too much. O Valancourt! thou art gone — forever gone! and I — I have murdered thee!' These words, and the countenance of despair which accompanied them, alarmed Theresa, who began to fear, that the shock of the intelligence Emily had just received, had affected her senses. 'My dear young lady, be composed,' said she, 'and do not say such frightful words. You murder M. Valancourt, — dear heart!' Emily replied only by a heavy sigh.

'Dear lady, it breaks my heart to see you look so,' said Theresa, 'do not sit with your eyes upon the ground, and all so pale and melancholy; it frightens me to see you.' Emily was still silent, and did not appear to hear any thing that was said to her. 'Besides, mademoiselle,' continued Theresa, 'M. Valancourt may be alive and merry yet, for what we know.'

At the mention of his name, Emily raised her eyes, and fixed them, in a wild gaze, upon Theresa, as if she was endeavouring to understand what had been said. ‘Aye, my dear lady,’ said Theresa, mistaking the meaning of this considerate air, ‘M. Valancourt may be alive and merry yet.’

On the repetition of these words, Emily comprehended their import, but, instead of producing the effect intended, they seemed only to heighten her distress. She rose hastily from her chair, paced the little room, with quick steps, and, often sighing deeply, clasped her hands, and shuddered.

Meanwhile, Theresa, with simple, but honest affection, endeavoured to comfort her; put more wood on the fire, stirred it up into a brighter blaze, swept the hearth, set the chair, which Emily had left, in a warmer situation, and then drew forth from a cupboard a flask of wine. ‘It is a stormy night, madam,’ said she, ‘and blows cold — do come nearer the fire, and take a glass of this wine; it will comfort you, as it has done me, often and often, for it is not such wine as one gets every day; it is rich Languedoc, and the last of six flasks that M. Valancourt sent me, the night before he left Gascony for Paris. They have served me, ever since, as cordials, and I never drink it, but I think of him, and what kind words he said to me when he gave them. Theresa, says he, you are not young now, and should have a glass of good wine, now and then. I will send you a few flasks, and, when you taste them, you will sometimes remember me your friend. Yes — those were his very words — me your friend!’ Emily still paced the room, without seeming to hear what Theresa said, who continued speaking. ‘And I have remembered him, often enough, poor young gentleman! — for he gave me this roof for a shelter, and that, which has supported me. Ah! he is in heaven, with my blessed master, if ever saint was!’

Theresa’s voice faltered; she wept, and set down the flask, unable to pour out the wine. Her grief seemed to recall Emily from her own, who went towards her, but then stopped, and, having gazed on her, for a moment, turned suddenly away, as if overwhelmed by the reflection, that it was Valancourt, whom Theresa lamented.

While she yet paced the room, the still, soft note of an oboe, or flute, was heard mingling with the blast, the sweetness of which affected Emily’s spirits; she paused a moment in attention; the tender tones, as they swelled along the wind, till they were lost again in the ruder gust, came with a plaintiveness, that touched her heart, and she melted into tears.

‘Aye,’ said Theresa, drying her eyes, ‘there is Richard, our neighbour’s son, playing on the oboe; it is sad enough, to hear such sweet music now.’ Emily continued to weep, without replying. ‘He often plays of an evening,’ added Theresa, ‘and, sometimes, the young folks dance to the sound of his oboe. But, dear young lady! do not cry so; and pray take a glass of this wine,’ continued she, pouring some into a glass, and handing it to Emily, who reluctantly took it.

‘Taste it for M. Valancourt’s sake,’ said Theresa, as Emily lifted the glass to her lips, ‘for he gave it me, you know, madam.’ Emily’s hand trembled, and she spilt the wine as she withdrew it from her lips. ‘For whose sake! — who gave the wine?’ said she in a faltering voice. ‘M. Valancourt, dear lady. I knew you would be pleased with it. It is the last flask I have left.’

Emily set the wine upon the table, and burst into tears, while Theresa, disappointed and alarmed, tried to comfort her; but she only waved her hand, entreated she might be left alone, and wept the more.

A knock at the cottage door prevented Theresa from immediately obeying her mistress, and she was going to open it, when Emily, checking her, requested she would not admit any person; but, afterwards, recollecting, that she had ordered her servant to attend her home, she said it was only Philippe, and endeavoured to restrain her tears, while Theresa opened the door.

A voice, that spoke without, drew Emily’s attention. She listened, turned her eyes to the door, when a person now appeared, and immediately a bright gleam, that flashed from the fire, discovered — Valancourt!

Emily, on perceiving him, started from her chair, trembled, and, sinking into it again, became insensible to all around her.

A scream from Theresa now told, that she knew Valancourt, whom her imperfect sight, and the duskiness of the place had prevented her from immediately recollecting; but his attention was immediately called from her to the person, whom he saw, falling from a chair near the fire; and, hastening to her assistance, — he perceived, that he was supporting Emily! The various emotions, that seized him upon thus unexpectedly meeting with her, from whom he had believed he had parted for ever, and on beholding her pale and lifeless in his arms — may, perhaps, be imagined, though they could neither be then expressed, or now described, any more

than Emily's sensations, when, at length, she unclosed her eyes, and, looking up, again saw Valancourt. The intense anxiety, with which he regarded her, was instantly changed to an expression of mingled joy and tenderness, as his eye met hers, and he perceived, that she was reviving. But he could only exclaim, 'Emily!' as he silently watched her recovery, while she averted her eye, and feebly attempted to withdraw her hand; but, in these the first moments, which succeeded to the pangs his supposed death had occasioned her, she forgot every fault, which had formerly claimed indignation, and beholding Valancourt such as he had appeared, when he won her early affection, she experienced emotions of only tenderness and joy. This, alas! was but the sunshine of a few short moments; recollections rose, like clouds, upon her mind, and, darkening the illusive image, that possessed it, she again beheld Valancourt, degraded — Valancourt unworthy of the esteem and tenderness she had once bestowed upon him; her spirits faltered, and, withdrawing her hand, she turned from him to conceal her grief, while he, yet more embarrassed and agitated, remained silent.

A sense of what she owed to herself restrained her tears, and taught her soon to overcome, in some degree, the emotions of mingled joy and sorrow, that contended at her heart, as she rose, and, having thanked him for the assistance he had given her, bade Theresa good evening. As she was leaving the cottage, Valancourt, who seemed suddenly awakened as from a dream, entreated, in a voice, that pleaded powerfully for compassion, a few moments attention. Emily's heart, perhaps, pleaded as powerfully, but she had resolution enough to resist both, together with the clamorous entreaties of Theresa, that she would not venture home alone in the dark, and had already opened the cottage door, when the pelting storm compelled her to obey their requests.

Silent and embarrassed, she returned to the fire, while Valancourt, with increasing agitation, paced the room, as if he wished, yet feared, to speak, and Theresa expressed without restraint her joy and wonder upon seeing him.

'Dear heart! sir,' said she, 'I never was so surprised and overjoyed in my life. We were in great tribulation before you came, for we thought you was dead, and were talking, and lamenting about you, just when you knocked at the door. My young mistress there was crying, fit to break her heart— '

Emily looked with much displeasure at Theresa, but, before she could speak, Valancourt, unable to repress the emotion, which Theresa's imprudent discovery occasioned, exclaimed, 'O my Emily! am I then still dear to you! Did you, indeed, honour me with a thought — a tear? O heavens! you weep — you weep now!'

'Theresa, sir,' said Emily, with a reserved air, and trying to conquer her tears, 'has reason to remember you with gratitude, and she was concerned, because she had not lately heard of you. Allow me to thank you for the kindness you have shewn her, and to say, that, since I am now upon the spot, she must not be further indebted to you.''

'Emily,' said Valancourt, no longer master of his emotions, 'is it thus you meet him, whom once you meant to honour with your hand — thus you meet him, who has loved you — suffered for you? — Yet what do I say? Pardon me, pardon me, mademoiselle St. Aubert, I know not what I utter. I have no longer any claim upon your remembrance — I have forfeited every pretension to your esteem, your love. Yes! let me not forget, that I once possessed your affections, though to know that I have lost them, is my severest affliction. Affliction — do I call it! — that is a term of mildness.'

'Dear heart!' said Theresa, preventing Emily from replying, 'talk of once having her affections! Why, my dear young lady loves you now, better than she does any body in the whole world, though she pretends to deny it.'

'This is insupportable!' said Emily; 'Theresa, you know not what you say. Sir, if you respect my tranquillity, you will spare me from the continuance of this distress.'

'I do respect your tranquillity too much, voluntarily to interrupt it,' replied Valancourt, in whose bosom pride now contended with tenderness; 'and will not be a voluntary intruder. I would have entreated a few moments attention — yet I know not for what purpose. You have ceased to esteem me, and to recount to you my sufferings will degrade me more, without exciting even your pity. Yet I have been, O Emily! I am indeed very wretched!' added Valancourt, in a voice, that softened from solemnity into grief.

'What! is my dear young master going out in all this rain!' said Theresa. 'No, he shall not stir a step. Dear! dear! to see how gentlefolks can afford

to throw away their happiness! Now, if you were poor people, there would be none of this. To talk of unworthiness, and not caring about one another, when I know there are not such a kind-hearted lady and gentleman in the whole province, nor any that love one another half so well, if the truth was spoken!'

Emily, in extreme vexation, now rose from her chair, 'I must be gone,' said she, 'the storm is over.'

'Stay, Emily, stay, mademoiselle St. Aubert!' said Valancourt, summoning all his resolution, 'I will no longer distress you by my presence. Forgive me, that I did not sooner obey you, and, if you can, sometimes, pity one, who, in losing you — has lost all hope of peace! May you be happy, Emily, however wretched I remain, happy as my fondest wish would have you!'

His voice faltered with the last words, and his countenance changed, while, with a look of ineffable tenderness and grief, he gazed upon her for an instant, and then quitted the cottage.

'Dear heart! dear heart!' cried Theresa, following him to the door, 'why, Monsieur Valancourt! how it rains! what a night is this to turn him out in! Why it will give him his death; and it was but now you was crying, mademoiselle, because he was dead. Well! young ladies do change their mind in a minute, as one may say!'

Emily made no reply, for she heard not what was said, while, lost in sorrow and thought, she remained in her chair by the fire, with her eyes fixed, and the image of Valancourt still before them.

'M. Valancourt is sadly altered! madam,' said Theresa; 'he looks so thin to what he used to do, and so melancholy, and then he wears his arm in a sling.'

Emily raised her eyes at these words, for she had not observed this last circumstance, and she now did not doubt, that Valancourt had received the shot of her gardener at Tholouse; with this conviction her pity for him returning, she blamed herself for having occasioned him to leave the cottage, during the storm.

Soon after her servants arrived with the carriage, and Emily, having censured Theresa for her thoughtless conversation to Valancourt, and strictly charging her never to repeat any hints of the same kind to him, withdrew to her home, thoughtful and disconsolate.

Meanwhile, Valancourt had returned to a little inn of the village, whither he had arrived only a few moments before his visit to Theresa's cottage, on the way from Tholouse to the chateau of the Count de Duvarney, where he had not been since he bade adieu to Emily at Chateau-le-Blanc, in the neighbourhood of which he had lingered for a considerable time, unable to summon resolution enough to quit a place, that contained the object most dear to his heart. There were times, indeed, when grief and despair urged him to appear again before Emily, and, regardless of his ruined circumstances, to renew his suit. Pride, however, and the tenderness of his affection, which could not long endure the thought of involving her in his misfortunes, at length, so far triumphed over passion, that he relinquished this desperate design, and quitted Chateau-le-Blanc. But still his fancy wandered among the scenes, which had witnessed his early love, and, on his way to Gascony, he stopped at Tholouse, where he remained when Emily arrived, concealing, yet indulging his melancholy in the gardens, where he had formerly passed with her so many happy hours; often recurring, with vain regret, to the evening before her departure for Italy, when she had so unexpectedly met him on the terrace, and endeavouring to recall to his memory every word and look, which had then charmed him, the arguments he had employed to dissuade her from the journey, and the tenderness of their last farewel. In such melancholy recollections he had been indulging, when Emily unexpectedly arrived to him on this very terrace, the evening after her arrival at Tholouse. His emotions, on thus seeing her, can scarcely be imagined; but he so far overcame the first promptings of love, that he forbore to discover himself, and abruptly quitted the gardens. Still, however, the vision he had seen haunted his mind; he became more wretched than before, and the only solace of his sorrow was to return in the silence of the night; to follow the paths which he believed her steps had pressed, during the day; and, to watch round the habitation where she reposed. It was in one of these mournful wanderings, that he had received by the fire of the gardener, who mistook him for a robber, a wound in his arm, which had detained him at Tholouse till very lately, under the hands of a surgeon. There, regardless of himself and careless of his friends, whose late unkindness had urged him to believe, that they were indifferent as to his fate, he remained, without informing them of his situation; and now, being sufficiently recovered to bear

travelling, he had taken La Vallee in his way to Estuviere, the Count's residence, partly for the purpose of hearing of Emily, and of being again near her, and partly for that of enquiring into the situation of poor old Theresa, who, he had reason to suppose, had been deprived of her stipend, small as it was, and which enquiry had brought him to her cottage, when Emily happened to be there.

This unexpected interview, which had at once shewn him the tenderness of her love and the strength of her resolution, renewed all the acuteness of the despair, that had attended their former separation, and which no effort of reason could teach him, in these moments, to subdue. Her image, her look, the tones of her voice, all dwelt on his fancy, as powerfully as they had late appeared to his senses, and banished from his heart every emotion, except those of love and despair.

Before the evening concluded, he returned to Theresa's cottage, that he might hear her talk of Emily, and be in the place, where she had so lately been. The joy, felt and expressed by that faithful servant, was quickly changed to sorrow, when she observed, at one moment, his wild and phrensied look, and, at another, the dark melancholy, that overhung him.

After he had listened, and for a considerable time, to all she had to relate, concerning Emily, he gave Theresa nearly all the money he had about him, though she repeatedly refused it, declaring, that her mistress had amply supplied her wants; and then, drawing a ring of value from his finger, he delivered it her with a solemn charge to present it to Emily, of whom he entreated, as a last favour, that she would preserve it for his sake, and sometimes, when she looked upon it, remember the unhappy giver.

Theresa wept, as she received the ring, but it was more from sympathy, than from any presentiment of evil; and before she could reply, Valancourt abruptly left the cottage. She followed him to the door, calling upon his name and entreating him to return; but she received no answer, and saw him no more.

CHAPTER XIV

Call up him, that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.

MILTON

On the following morning, as Emily sat in the parlour adjoining the library, reflecting on the scene of the preceding night, Annette rushed wildly into the room, and, without speaking, sunk breathless into a chair. It was some time before she could answer the anxious enquiries of Emily, as to the occasion of her emotion, but, at length, she exclaimed, ‘I have seen his ghost, madam, I have seen his ghost!’

‘Who do you mean?’ said Emily, with extreme impatience.

‘It came in from the hall, madam,’ continued Annette, ‘as I was crossing to the parlour.’

‘Who are you speaking of?’ repeated Emily, ‘Who came in from the hall?

‘It was dressed just as I have seen him, often and often,’ added Annette. ‘Ah! who could have thought— ‘

Emily’s patience was now exhausted, and she was reprimanding her for such idle fancies, when a servant entered the room, and informed her, that a stranger without begged leave to speak with her.

It immediately occurred to Emily, that this stranger was Valancourt, and she told the servant to inform him, that she was engaged, and could not see any person.

The servant, having delivered his message, returned with one from the stranger, urging the first request, and saying, that he had something of consequence to communicate; while Annette, who had hitherto sat silent and amazed, now started up, and crying, ‘It is Ludovico! — it is Ludovico!’ ran out of the room. Emily bade the servant follow her, and, if it really was Ludovico, to shew him into the parlour.

In a few minutes, Ludovico appeared, accompanied by Annette, who, as joy rendered her forgetful of all rules of decorum towards her mistress, would not suffer any person to be heard, for some time, but herself. Emily expressed surprise and satisfaction, on seeing Ludovico in safety, and the first emotions increased, when he delivered letters from Count De Villefort and the Lady Blanche, informing her of their late adventure, and of their present situation at an inn among the Pyrenees, where they had

been detained by the illness of *Mons.* St. Foix, and the indisposition of Blanche, who added, that the Baron St. Foix was just arrived to attend his son to his chateau, where he would remain till the perfect recovery of his wounds, and then return to Languedoc, but that her father and herself purposed to be at La Vallee, on the following day. She added, that Emily's presence would be expected at the approaching nuptials, and begged she would be prepared to proceed, in a few days to Chateau-le-Blanc. For an account of Ludovico's adventure, she referred her to himself; and Emily, though much interested, concerning the means, by which he had disappeared from the north apartments, had the forbearance to suspend the gratification of her curiosity, till he had taken some refreshment, and had conversed with Annette, whose joy, on seeing him in safety, could not have been more extravagant, had he arisen from the grave.

Meanwhile, Emily perused again the letters of her friends, whose expressions of esteem and kindness were very necessary consolations to her heart, awakened as it was by the late interview to emotions of keener sorrow and regret.

The invitation to Chateau-le-Blanc was pressed with so much kindness by the Count and his daughter, who strengthened it by a message from the Countess, and the occasion of it was so important to her friend, that Emily could not refuse to accept it, nor, though she wished to remain in the quiet shades of her native home, could she avoid perceiving the impropriety of remaining there alone, since Valancourt was again in the neighbourhood. Sometimes, too, she thought, that change of scenery and the society of her friends might contribute, more than retirement, to restore her to tranquillity.

When Ludovico again appeared, she desired him to give a detail of his adventure in the north apartments, and to tell by what means he became a companion of the banditti, with whom the Count had found him.

He immediately obeyed, while Annette, who had not yet had leisure to ask him many questions, on the subject, prepared to listen, with a countenance of extreme curiosity, venturing to remind her lady of her incredulity, concerning spirits, in the castle of Udolpho, and of her own sagacity in believing in them; while Emily, blushing at the consciousness of her late credulity, observed, that, if Ludovico's adventure could justify Annette's superstition, he had probably not been here to relate it.

Ludovico smiled at Annette, and bowed to Emily, and then began as follows:

‘You may remember, madam, that, on the night, when I sat up in the north chamber, my lord, the Count, and *Mons.* Henri accompanied me thither, and that, while they remained there, nothing happened to excite any alarm. When they were gone I made a fire in the bedroom, and, not being inclined to sleep, I sat down on the hearth with a book I had brought with me to divert my mind. I confess I did sometimes look round the chamber, with something like apprehension— ‘

‘O very like it, I dare say,’ interrupted Annette, ‘and I dare say too, if the truth was known, you shook from head to foot.’

‘Not quite so bad as that,’ replied Ludovico, smiling, ‘but several times, as the wind whistled round the castle, and shook the old casements, I did fancy I heard odd noises, and, once or twice, I got up and looked about me; but nothing was to be seen, except the grim figures in the tapestry, which seemed to frown upon me, as I looked at them. I had sat thus for above an hour,’ continued Ludovico, ‘when again I thought I heard a noise, and glanced my eyes round the room, to discover what it came from, but, not perceiving any thing, I began to read again, and, when I had finished the story I was upon, I felt drowsy, and dropped asleep. But presently I was awakened by the noise I had heard before, and it seemed to come from that part of the chamber, where the bed stood; and then, whether it was the story I had been reading that affected my spirits, or the strange reports, that had been spread of these apartments, I don’t know, but, when I looked towards the bed again, I fancied I saw a man’s face within the dusky curtains.’

At the mention of this, Emily trembled, and looked anxiously, remembering the spectacle she had herself witnessed there with Dorothee.

‘I confess, madam, my heart did fail me, at that instant,’ continued Ludovico, ‘but a return of the noise drew my attention from the bed, and I then distinctly heard a sound, like that of a key, turning in a lock, but what surprised me more was, that I saw no door where the sound seemed to come from. In the next moment, however, the arras near the bed was slowly lifted, and a person appeared behind it, entering from a small door in the wall. He stood for a moment as if half retreating, with his head bending under the arras which concealed the upper part of his face except

his eyes scowling beneath the tapestry as he held it; and then, while he raised it higher, I saw the face of another man behind, looking over his shoulder. I know not how it was, but, though my sword was upon the table before me, I had not the power just then to seize it, but sat quite still, watching them, with my eyes half shut as if I was asleep. I suppose they thought me so, and were debating what they should do, for I heard them whisper, and they stood in the same posture for the value of a minute, and then, I thought I perceived other faces in the duskiness beyond the door, and heard louder whispers.'

'This door surprises me,' said Emily, 'because I understood, that the Count had caused the arras to be lifted, and the walls examined, suspecting, that they might have concealed a passage through which you had departed.'

'It does not appear so extraordinary to me, madam,' replied Ludovico, 'that this door should escape notice, because it was formed in a narrow compartment, which appeared to be part of the outward wall, and, if the Count had not passed over it, he might have thought it was useless to search for a door where it seemed as if no passage could communicate with one; but the truth was, that the passage was formed within the wall itself. — But, to return to the men, whom I saw obscurely beyond the door, and who did not suffer me to remain long in suspense, concerning their design. They all rushed into the room, and surrounded me, though not before I had snatched up my sword to defend myself. But what could one man do against four? They soon disarmed me, and, having fastened my arms, and gagged my mouth, forced me through the private door, leaving my sword upon the table, to assist, as they said, those who should come in the morning to look for me, in fighting against the ghosts. They then led me through many narrow passages, cut, as I fancied, in the walls, for I had never seen them before, and down several flights of steps, till we came to the vaults underneath the castle; and then opening a stone door, which I should have taken for the wall itself, we went through a long passage, and down other steps cut in the solid rock, when another door delivered us into a cave. After turning and twining about, for some time, we reached the mouth of it, and I found myself on the sea-beach at the foot of the cliffs, with the chateau above. A boat was in waiting, into which the ruffians got, forcing me along with them, and we soon reached a small vessel, that was

at anchor, where other men appeared, when setting me aboard, two of the fellows who had seized me, followed, and the other two rowed back to the shore, while we set sail. I soon found out what all this meant, and what was the business of these men at the chateau. We landed in Rousillon, and, after lingering several days about the shore, some of their comrades came down from the mountains, and carried me with them to the fort, where I remained till my Lord so unexpectedly arrived, for they had taken good care to prevent my running away, having blindfolded me, during the journey, and, if they had not done this, I think I never could have found my road to any town, through the wild country we traversed. After I reached the fort I was watched like a prisoner, and never suffered to go out, without two or three companions, and I became so weary of life, that I often wished to get rid of it.'

'Well, but they let you talk,' said Annette, 'they did not gagg you after they got you away from the chateau, so I don't see what reason there was to be so very weary of living; to say nothing about the chance you had of seeing me again.'

Ludovico smiled, and Emily also, who enquired what was the motive of these men for carrying him off.

'I soon found out, madam,' resumed Ludovico, 'that they were pirates, who had, during many years, secreted their spoil in the vaults of the castle, which, being so near the sea, suited their purpose well. To prevent detection they had tried to have it believed, that the chateau was haunted, and, having discovered the private way to the north apartments, which had been shut up ever since the death of the lady marchioness, they easily succeeded. The housekeeper and her husband, who were the only persons, that had inhabited the castle, for some years, were so terrified by the strange noises they heard in the nights, that they would live there no longer; a report soon went abroad, that it was haunted, and the whole country believed this the more readily, I suppose, because it had been said, that the lady marchioness had died in a strange way, and because my lord never would return to the place afterwards.'

'But why,' said Emily, 'were not these pirates contented with the cave — why did they think it necessary to deposit their spoil in the castle?'

‘The cave, madam,’ replied Ludovico, ‘was open to any body, and their treasures would not long have remained undiscovered there, but in the vaults they were secure so long as the report prevailed of their being haunted. Thus then, it appears, that they brought at midnight, the spoil they took on the seas, and kept it till they had opportunities of disposing of it to advantage. The pirates were connected with Spanish smugglers and banditti, who live among the wilds of the Pyrenees, and carry on various kinds of traffic, such as nobody would think of; and with this desperate horde of banditti I remained, till my lord arrived. I shall never forget what I felt, when I first discovered him — I almost gave him up for lost! but I knew, that, if I shewed myself, the banditti would discover who he was, and probably murder us all, to prevent their secret in the chateau being detected. I, therefore, kept out of my lord’s sight, but had a strict watch upon the ruffians, and determined, if they offered him or his family violence, to discover myself, and fight for our lives. Soon after, I overheard some of them laying a most diabolical plan for the murder and plunder of the whole party, when I contrived to speak to some of my lord’s attendants, telling them what was going forward, and we consulted what was best to be done; meanwhile my lord, alarmed at the absence of the Lady Blanche, demanded her, and the ruffians having given some unsatisfactory answer, my lord and *Mons.* St. Foix became furious, so then we thought it a good time to discover the plot, and rushing into the chamber, I called out, “Treachery! my lord count, defend yourself!” His lordship and the chevalier drew their swords directly, and a hard battle we had, but we conquered at last, as, madam, you are already informed of by my Lord Count.’

‘This is an extraordinary adventure,’ said Emily, ‘and much praise is due, Ludovico, to your prudence and intrepidity. There are some circumstances, however, concerning the north apartments, which still perplex me; but, perhaps, you may be able to explain them. Did you ever hear the banditti relate any thing extraordinary of these rooms?’

‘No, madam,’ replied Ludovico, ‘I never heard them speak about the rooms, except to laugh at the credulity of the old housekeeper, who once was very near catching one of the pirates; it was since the Count arrived at the chateau, he said, and he laughed heartily as he related the trick he had played off.’

A blush overspread Emily’s cheek, and she impatiently desired Ludovico to explain himself.

‘Why, my lady,’ said he, ‘as this fellow was, one night in the bedroom, he heard somebody approaching through the next apartment, and not having time to lift up the arras, and unfasten the door, he hid himself in the bed just by. There he lay for some time in as great a fright, I suppose— ‘

‘As you was in,’ interrupted Annette, ‘when you sat up so boldly to watch by yourself.’

‘Aye,’ said Ludovico, ‘in as great a fright as he ever made any body else suffer; and presently the housekeeper and some other person came up to the bed, when he, thinking they were going to examine it, bethought him, that his only chance of escaping detection, was by terrifying them; so he lifted up the counterpane, but that did not do, till he raised his face above it, and then they both set off, he said, as if they had seen the devil, and he got out of the rooms undiscovered.’

Emily could not forbear smiling at this explanation of the deception, which had given her so much superstitious terror, and was surprised, that she could have suffered herself to be thus alarmed, till she considered, that, when the mind has once begun to yield to the weakness of superstition, trifles impress it with the force of conviction. Still, however, she remembered with awe the mysterious music, which had been heard, at midnight, near Chateau-le-Blanc, and she asked Ludovico if he could give any explanation of it; but he could not.

‘I only know, madam,’ he added, ‘that it did not belong to the pirates, for I have heard them laugh about it, and say, they believed the devil was in league with them there.’

‘Yes, I will answer for it he was,’ said Annette, her countenance brightening, ‘I was sure all along, that he or his spirits had something to do with the north apartments, and now you see, madam, I am right at last.’

‘It cannot be denied, that his spirits were very busy in that part of the chateau,’ replied Emily, smiling. ‘But I am surprised, Ludovico, that these pirates should persevere in their schemes, after the arrival of the Count; what could they expect but certain detection?’

‘I have reason to believe, madam,’ replied Ludovico, ‘that it was their intention to persevere no longer than was necessary for the removal of the stores, which were deposited in the vaults; and it appeared, that they had

been employed in doing so from within a short period after the Count's arrival; but, as they had only a few hours in the night for this business, and were carrying on other schemes at the same time, the vaults were not above half emptied, when they took me away. They gloried exceedingly in this opportunity of confirming the superstitious reports, that had been spread of the north chambers, were careful to leave every thing there as they had found it, the better to promote the deception, and frequently, in their jocose moods, would laugh at the consternation, which they believed the inhabitants of the castle had suffered upon my disappearing, and it was to prevent the possibility of my betraying their secret, that they had removed me to such a distance. From that period they considered the chateau as nearly their own; but I found from the discourse of their comrades, that, though they were cautious, at first, in shewing their power there, they had once very nearly betrayed themselves. Going, one night, as was their custom, to the north chambers to repeat the noises, that had occasioned such alarm among the servants, they heard, as they were about to unfasten the secret door, voices in the bedroom. My lord has since told me, that himself and M. Henri were then in the apartment, and they heard very extraordinary sounds of lamentation, which it seems were made by these fellows, with their usual design of spreading terror; and my lord has owned, he then felt somewhat more, than surprise; but, as it was necessary to the peace of his family, that no notice should be taken, he was silent on the subject, and enjoined silence to his son.'

Emily, recollecting the change, that had appeared in the spirits of the Count, after the night, when he had watched in the north room, now perceived the cause of it; and, having made some further enquiries upon this strange affair, she dismissed Ludovico, and went to give orders for the accommodation of her friends, on the following day.

In the evening, Theresa, lame as she was, came to deliver the ring, with which Valancourt had entrusted her, and, when she presented it, Emily was much affected, for she remembered to have seen him wear it often in happier days. She was, however, much displeased, that Theresa had received it, and positively refused to accept it herself, though to have done so would have afforded her a melancholy pleasure. Theresa entreated, expostulated, and then described the distress of Valancourt, when he had given the ring, and repeated the message, with which he had

commissioned her to deliver it; and Emily could not conceal the extreme sorrow this recital occasioned her, but wept, and remained lost in thought.

‘Alas! my dear young lady!’ said Theresa, ‘why should all this be? I have known you from your infancy, and it may well be supposed I love you, as if you was my own, and wish as much to see you happy. M. Valancourt, to be sure, I have not known so long, but then I have reason to love him, as though he was my own son. I know how well you love one another, or why all this weeping and wailing?’ Emily waved her hand for Theresa to be silent, who, disregarding the signal, continued, ‘And how much you are alike in your tempers and ways, and, that, if you were married, you would be the happiest couple in the whole province — then what is there to prevent your marrying? Dear dear! to see how some people fling away their happiness, and then cry and lament about it, just as if it was not their own doing, and as if there was more pleasure in wailing and weeping, than in being at peace. Learning, to be sure, is a fine thing, but, if it teaches folks no better than that, why I had rather be without it; if it would teach them to be happier, I would say something to it, then it would be learning and wisdom too.’

Age and long services had given Theresa a privilege to talk, but Emily now endeavoured to check her loquacity, and, though she felt the justness of some of her remarks, did not choose to explain the circumstances, that had determined her conduct towards Valancourt. She, therefore, only told Theresa, that it would much displease her to hear the subject renewed; that she had reasons for her conduct, which she did not think it proper to mention, and that the ring must be returned, with an assurance, that she could not accept it with propriety; and, at the same time, she forbade Theresa to repeat any future message from Valancourt, as she valued her esteem and kindness. Theresa was afflicted, and made another attempt, though feeble, to interest her for Valancourt, but the unusual displeasure, expressed in Emily’s countenance, soon obliged her to desist, and she departed in wonder and lamentation.

To relieve her mind, in some degree, from the painful recollections, that intruded upon it, Emily busied herself in preparations for the journey into Languedoc, and, while Annette, who assisted her, spoke with joy and affection of the safe return of Ludovico, she was considering how she might best promote their happiness, and determined, if it appeared, that

his affection was as unchanged as that of the simple and honest Annette, to give her a marriage portion, and settle them on some part of her estate. These considerations led her to the remembrance of her father's paternal domain, which his affairs had formerly compelled him to dispose of to M. Quesnel, and which she frequently wished to regain, because St. Aubert had lamented, that the chief lands of his ancestors had passed into another family, and because they had been his birthplace and the haunt of his early years. To the estate at Tholouse she had no peculiar attachment, and it was her wish to dispose of this, that she might purchase her paternal domains, if M. Quesnel could be prevailed on to part with them, which, as he talked much of living in Italy, did not appear very improbable.

CHAPTER XV

Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bees’ collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music’s melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still, small voice of gratitude.

GRAY

On the following day, the arrival of her friend revived the drooping Emily, and La Vallee became once more the scene of social kindness and of elegant hospitality. Illness and the terror she had suffered had stolen from Blanche much of her sprightliness, but all her affectionate simplicity remained, and, though she appeared less blooming, she was not less engaging than before. The unfortunate adventure on the Pyrenees had made the Count very anxious to reach home, and, after little more than a week's stay at La Vallee, Emily prepared to set out with her friends for Languedoc, assigning the care of her house, during her absence, to Theresa. On the evening, preceding her departure, this old servant brought again the ring of Valancourt, and, with tears, entreated her mistress to receive it, for that she had neither seen, or heard of M. Valancourt, since the night when he delivered it to her. As she said this, her countenance expressed more alarm, than she dared to utter; but Emily, checking her own propensity to fear, considered, that he had probably returned to the residence of his brother, and, again refusing to accept the ring, bade Theresa preserve it, till she saw him, which, with extreme reluctance, she promised to do.

On the following day, Count De Villefort, with Emily and the Lady Blanche, left La Vallee, and, on the ensuing evening, arrived at the Chateau-le-Blanc, where the Countess, Henri, and M. Du Pont, whom Emily was surprised to find there, received them with much joy and congratulation. She was concerned to observe, that the Count still encouraged the hopes of his friend, whose countenance declared, that his affection had suffered no abatement from absence; and was much distressed, when, on the second evening after her arrival, the Count, having withdrawn her from the Lady Blanche, with whom she was walking, renewed the subject of M. Du Pont's hopes. The mildness, with which she listened to his intercessions at first, deceiving him, as to her sentiments, he began to believe, that, her affection for Valancourt being overcome, she was, at length, disposed to think favourably of M. Du Pont; and, when she afterwards convinced him of his mistake, he ventured, in

the earnestness of his wish to promote what he considered to be the happiness of two persons, whom he so much esteemed, gently to remonstrate with her, on thus suffering an ill-placed affection to poison the happiness of her most valuable years.

Observing her silence and the deep dejection of her countenance, he concluded with saying, ‘I will not say more now, but I will still believe, my dear Mademoiselle St. Aubert, that you will not always reject a person, so truly estimable as my friend Du Pont.’

He spared her the pain of replying, by leaving her; and she strolled on, somewhat displeased with the Count for having persevered to plead for a suit, which she had repeatedly rejected, and lost amidst the melancholy recollections, which this topic had revived, till she had insensibly reached the borders of the woods, that screened the monastery of St. Clair, when, perceiving how far she had wandered, she determined to extend her walk a little farther, and to enquire about the abbess and some of her friends among the nuns.

Though the evening was now drawing to a close, she accepted the invitation of the friar, who opened the gate, and, anxious to meet some of her old acquaintances, proceeded towards the convent parlour. As she crossed the lawn, that sloped from the front of the monastery towards the sea, she was struck with the picture of repose, exhibited by some monks, sitting in the cloisters, which extended under the brow of the woods, that crowned this eminence; where, as they meditated, at this twilight hour, holy subjects, they sometimes suffered their attention to be relieved by the scene before them, nor thought it profane to look at nature, now that it had exchanged the brilliant colours of day for the sober hue of evening. Before the cloisters, however, spread an ancient chesnut, whose ample branches were designed to screen the full magnificence of a scene, that might tempt the wish to worldly pleasures; but still, beneath the dark and spreading foliage, gleamed a wide extent of ocean, and many a passing sail; while, to the right and left, thick woods were seen stretching along the winding shores. So much as this had been admitted, perhaps, to give to the secluded votary an image of the dangers and vicissitudes of life, and to console him, now that he had renounced its pleasures, by the certainty of having escaped its evils. As Emily walked pensively along, considering how much suffering she might have escaped, had she become a votaress of the order,

and remained in this retirement from the time of her father’s death, the vesper-bell struck up, and the monks retired slowly toward the chapel, while she, pursuing her way, entered the great hall, where an unusual silence seemed to reign. The parlour too, which opened from it, she found vacant, but, as the evening bell was sounding, she believed the nuns had withdrawn into the chapel, and sat down to rest, for a moment, before she returned to the chateau, where, however, the increasing gloom made her now anxious to be.

Not many minutes had elapsed, before a nun, entering in haste, enquired for the abbess, and was retiring, without recollecting Emily, when she made herself known, and then learned, that a mass was going to be performed for the soul of sister Agnes, who had been declining, for some time, and who was now believed to be dying.

Of her sufferings the sister gave a melancholy account, and of the horrors, into which she had frequently started, but which had now yielded to a dejection so gloomy, that neither the prayers, in which she was joined by the sisterhood, or the assurances of her confessor, had power to recall her from it, or to cheer her mind even with a momentary gleam of comfort.

To this relation Emily listened with extreme concern, and, recollecting the frenzied manners and the expressions of horror, which she had herself witnessed of Agnes, together with the history, that sister Frances had communicated, her compassion was heightened to a very painful degree. As the evening was already far advanced, Emily did not now desire to see her, or to join in the mass, and, after leaving many kind remembrances with the nun, for her old friends, she quitted the monastery, and returned over the cliffs towards the chateau, meditating upon what she had just heard, till, at length she forced her mind upon less interesting subjects.

The wind was high, and as she drew near the chateau, she often paused to listen to its awful sound, as it swept over the billows, that beat below, or groaned along the surrounding woods; and, while she rested on a cliff at a short distance from the chateau, and looked upon the wide waters, seen dimly beneath the last shade of twilight, she thought of the following address:

TO THE WINDS

Viewless, through heaven’s vast vault your course ye steer,
Unknown from whence ye come, or whither go!
Mysterious pow’rs! I hear ye murmur low,
Till swells your loud gust on my startled ear,
And, awful! seems to say — some God is near!
I love to list your midnight voices float
In the dread storm, that o’er the ocean rolls,
And, while their charm the angry wave controuls,
Mix with its sullen roar, and sink remote.
Then, rising in the pause, a sweeter note,
The dirge of spirits, who your deeds bewail,
A sweeter note oft swells while sleeps the gale!
But soon, ye sightless pow’rs! your rest is o’er,
Solemn and slow, ye rise upon the air,
Speak in the shrouds, and bid the sea-boy fear,
And the faint-warbled dirge — is heard no more!
Oh! then I deprecate your awful reign!
The loud lament yet bear not on your breath!
Bear not the crash of bark far on the main,
Bear not the cry of men, who cry in vain,
The crew’s dread chorus sinking into death!
Oh! give not these, ye pow’rs! I ask alone,
As rapt I climb these dark romantic steeps,
The elemental war, the billow’s moan;
I ask the still, sweet tear, that listening Fancy weeps!

CHAPTER XVI

Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine, than the physician.

MACBETH

On the following evening, the view of the convent towers, rising among the shadowy woods, reminded Emily of the nun, whose condition had so much affected her; and, anxious to know how she was, as well as to see some of her former friends, she and the Lady Blanche extended their walk to the monastery. At the gate stood a carriage, which, from the heat of the horses, appeared to have just arrived; but a more than common stillness pervaded the court and the cloisters, through which Emily and Blanche passed in their way to the great hall, where a nun, who was crossing to the staircase, replied to the enquiries of the former, that sister Agnes was still living, and sensible, but that it was thought she could not survive the night. In the parlour, they found several of the boarders, who rejoiced to see Emily, and told her many little circumstances that had happened in the convent since her departure, and which were interesting to her only because they related to persons, whom she had regarded with affection. While they thus conversed the abbess entered the room, and expressed much satisfaction at seeing Emily, but her manner was unusually solemn, and her countenance dejected. ‘Our house,’ said she, after the first salutations were over, ‘is truly a house of mourning — a daughter is now paying the debt of nature. — You have heard, perhaps, that our daughter Agnes is dying?’

Emily expressed her sincere concern.

‘Her death presents to us a great and awful lesson,’ continued the abbess; ‘let us read it, and profit by it; let it teach us to prepare ourselves for the change, that awaits us all! You are young, and have it yet in your power to secure “the peace that passeth all understanding” — the peace of conscience. Preserve it in your youth, that it may comfort you in age; for vain, alas! and imperfect are the good deeds of our latter years, if those of our early life have been evil!’

Emily would have said, that good deeds, she hoped, were never vain; but she considered that it was the abbess who spoke, and she remained silent.

‘The latter days of Agnes,’ resumed the abbess, ‘have been exemplary; would they might atone for the errors of her former ones! Her sufferings

now, alas! are great; let us believe, that they will make her peace hereafter! I have left her with her confessor, and a gentleman, whom she has long been anxious to see, and who is just arrived from Paris. They, I hope, will be able to administer the repose, which her mind has hitherto wanted.'

Emily fervently joined in the wish.

'During her illness, she has sometimes named you,' resumed the abbess; 'perhaps, it would comfort her to see you; when her present visitors have left her, we will go to her chamber, if the scene will not be too melancholy for your spirits. But, indeed, to such scenes, however painful, we ought to accustom ourselves, for they are salutary to the soul, and prepare us for what we are ourselves to suffer.'

Emily became grave and thoughtful; for this conversation brought to her recollection the dying moments of her beloved father, and she wished once more to weep over the spot, where his remains were buried. During the silence, which followed the abbess' speech, many minute circumstances attending his last hours occurred to her — his emotion on perceiving himself to be in the neighbourhood of Chateau-le-Blanc — his request to be interred in a particular spot in the church of this monastery — and the solemn charge he had delivered to her to destroy certain papers, without examining them. — She recollected also the mysterious and horrible words in those manuscripts, upon which her eye had involuntarily glanced; and, though they now, and, indeed, whenever she remembered them, revived an excess of painful curiosity, concerning their full import, and the motives for her father's command, it was ever her chief consolation, that she had strictly obeyed him in this particular.

Little more was said by the abbess, who appeared too much affected by the subject she had lately left, to be willing to converse, and her companions had been for some time silent from the same cause, when this general reverie was interrupted by the entrance of a stranger, Monsieur Bonnac, who had just quitted the chamber of sister Agnes. He appeared much disturbed, but Emily fancied, that his countenance had more the expression of horror, than of grief. Having drawn the abbess to a distant part of the room, he conversed with her for some time, during which she seemed to listen with earnest attention, and he to speak with caution, and a more than common degree of interest. When he had concluded, he bowed silently to the rest of the company, and quitted the room. The abbess, soon

after, proposed going to the chamber of sister Agnes, to which Emily consented, though not without some reluctance, and Lady Blanche remained with the boarders below.

At the door of the chamber they met the confessor, whom, as he lifted up his head on their approach, Emily observed to be the same that had attended her dying father; but he passed on, without noticing her, and they entered the apartment, where, on a mattress, was laid sister Agnes, with one nun watching in the chair beside her. Her countenance was so much changed, that Emily would scarcely have recollected her, had she not been prepared to do so: it was ghastly, and overspread with gloomy horror; her dim and hollow eyes were fixed on a crucifix, which she held upon her bosom; and she was so much engaged in thought, as not to perceive the abbess and Emily, till they stood at the bedside. Then, turning her heavy eyes, she fixed them, in wild horror, upon Emily, and, screaming, exclaimed, 'Ah! that vision comes upon me in my dying hours!'

Emily started back in terror, and looked for explanation to the abbess, who made her a signal not to be alarmed, and calmly said to Agnes, 'Daughter, I have brought Mademoiselle St. Aubert to visit you: I thought you would be glad to see her.'

Agnes made no reply; but, still gazing wildly upon Emily, exclaimed, 'It is her very self! Oh! there is all that fascination in her look, which proved my destruction! What would you have — what is it you came to demand — Retribution? — It will soon be yours — it is yours already. How many years have passed, since last I saw you! My crime is but as yesterday. — Yet I am grown old beneath it; while you are still young and blooming — blooming as when you forced me to commit that most abhorred deed! O! could I once forget it! — yet what would that avail? — the deed is done!'

Emily, extremely shocked, would now have left the room; but the abbess, taking her hand, tried to support her spirits, and begged she would stay a few moments, when Agnes would probably be calm, whom now she tried to sooth. But the latter seemed to disregard her, while she still fixed her eyes on Emily, and added, 'What are years of prayers and repentance? they cannot wash out the foulness of murder! — Yes, murder! Where is he — where is he? — Look there — look there! — see where he stalks along the room! Why do you come to torment me now?' continued Agnes, while her straining eyes were bent on air, 'why was not I punished before? — O!

do not frown so sternly! Hah! there again! ‘til she herself! Why do you look so piteously upon me — and smile, too? smile on me! What groan was that?’

Agnes sunk down, apparently lifeless, and Emily, unable to support herself, leaned against the bed, while the abbess and the attendant nun were applying the usual remedies to Agnes. ‘Peace,’ said the abbess, when Emily was going to speak, ‘the delirium is going off, she will soon revive. When was she thus before, daughter?’

‘Not of many weeks, madam,’ replied the nun, ‘but her spirits have been much agitated by the arrival of the gentleman she wished so much to see.’

‘Yes,’ observed the abbess, ‘that has undoubtedly occasioned this paroxysm of frenzy. When she is better, we will leave her to repose.’

Emily very readily consented, but, though she could now give little assistance, she was unwilling to quit the chamber, while any might be necessary.

When Agnes recovered her senses, she again fixed her eyes on Emily, but their wild expression was gone, and a gloomy melancholy had succeeded. It was some moments before she recovered sufficient spirits to speak; she then said feebly— ‘The likeness is wonderful! — surely it must be something more than fancy. Tell me, I conjure you,’ she added, addressing Emily, ‘though your name is St. Aubert, are you not the daughter of the Marchioness?’

‘What Marchioness?’ said Emily, in extreme surprise; for she had imagined, from the calmness of Agnes’s manner, that her intellects were restored. The abbess gave her a significant glance, but she repeated the question.

‘What Marchioness?’ exclaimed Agnes, ‘I know but of one — the Marchioness de Villeroi.’

Emily, remembering the emotion of her late father, upon the unexpected mention of this lady, and his request to be laid near to the tomb of the Villerois, now felt greatly interested, and she entreated Agnes to explain the reason of her question. The abbess would now have withdrawn Emily from the room, who being, however, detained by a strong interest, repeated her entreaties.

‘Bring me that casket, sister,’ said Agnes; ‘I will shew her to you; yet you need only look in that mirror, and you will behold her; you surely are

her daughter: such striking resemblance is never found but among near relations.'

The nun brought the casket, and Agnes, having directed her how to unlock it, she took thence a miniature, in which Emily perceived the exact resemblance of the picture, which she had found among her late father's papers. Agnes held out her hand to receive it; gazed upon it earnestly for some moments in silence; and then, with a countenance of deep despair, threw up her eyes to Heaven, and prayed inwardly. When she had finished, she returned the miniature to Emily. 'Keep it,' said she, 'I bequeath it to you, for I must believe it is your right. I have frequently observed the resemblance between you; but never, till this day, did it strike upon my conscience so powerfully! Stay, sister, do not remove the casket — there is another picture I would shew.'

Emily trembled with expectation, and the abbess again would have withdrawn her. 'Agnes is still disordered,' said she, 'you observe how she wanders. In these moods she says any thing, and does not scruple, as you have witnessed, to accuse herself of the most horrible crimes.'

Emily, however, thought she perceived something more than madness in the inconsistencies of Agnes, whose mention of the Marchioness, and production of her picture, had interested her so much, that she determined to obtain further information, if possible, respecting the subject of it.

The nun returned with the casket, and, Agnes pointing out to her a secret drawer, she took from it another miniature. 'Here,' said Agnes, as she offered it to Emily, 'learn a lesson for your vanity, at least; look well at this picture, and see if you can discover any resemblance between what I was, and what I am.'

Emily impatiently received the miniature, which her eyes had scarcely glanced upon, before her trembling hands had nearly suffered it to fall — it was the resemblance of the portrait of Signora Laurentini, which she had formerly seen in the castle of Udolpho — the lady, who had disappeared in so mysterious a manner, and whom Montoni had been suspected of having caused to be murdered.

In silent astonishment, Emily continued to gaze alternately upon the picture and the dying nun, endeavouring to trace a resemblance between them, which no longer existed.

‘Why do you look so sternly on me?’ said Agnes, mistaking the nature of Emily’s emotion.

‘I have seen this face before,’ said Emily, at length; ‘was it really your resemblance?’

‘You may well ask that question,’ replied the nun,— ‘but it was once esteemed a striking likeness of me. Look at me well, and see what guilt has made me. I then was innocent; the evil passions of my nature slept. Sister!’ added she solemnly, and stretching forth her cold, damp hand to Emily, who shuddered at its touch— ‘Sister! beware of the first indulgence of the passions; beware of the first! Their course, if not checked then, is rapid — their force is uncontroulable — they lead us we know not whither — they lead us perhaps to the commission of crimes, for which whole years of prayer and penitence cannot atone! — Such may be the force of even a single passion, that it overcomes every other, and sears up every other approach to the heart. Possessing us like a fiend, it leads us on to the acts of a fiend, making us insensible to pity and to conscience. And, when its purpose is accomplished, like a fiend, it leaves us to the torture of those feelings, which its power had suspended — not annihilated, — to the tortures of compassion, remorse, and conscience. Then, we awaken as from a dream, and perceive a new world around us — we gaze in astonishment, and horror — but the deed is committed; not all the powers of heaven and earth united can undo it — and the spectres of conscience will not fly! What are riches — grandeur — health itself, to the luxury of a pure conscience, the health of the soul; — and what the sufferings of poverty, disappointment, despair — to the anguish of an afflicted one! O! how long is it since I knew that luxury! I believed, that I had suffered the most agonizing pangs of human nature, in love, jealousy, and despair — but these pangs were ease, compared with the stings of conscience, which I have since endured. I tasted too what was called the sweet of revenge — but it was transient, it expired even with the object, that provoked it. Remember, sister, that the passions are the seeds of vices as well as of virtues, from which either may spring, accordingly as they are nurtured. Unhappy they who have never been taught the art to govern them!’

‘Alas! unhappy!’ said the abbess, ‘and ill-informed of our holy religion!’ Emily listened to Agnes, in silent awe, while she still examined the miniature, and became confirmed in her opinion of its strong

resemblance to the portrait at Udolpho. ‘This face is familiar to me,’ said she, wishing to lead the nun to an explanation, yet fearing to discover too abruptly her knowledge of Udolpho.

‘You are mistaken,’ replied Agnes, ‘you certainly never saw that picture before.’

‘No,’ replied Emily, ‘but I have seen one extremely like it.’ ‘Impossible,’ said Agnes, who may now be called the Lady Laurentini.

‘It was in the castle of Udolpho,’ continued Emily, looking stedfastly at her.

‘Of Udolpho!’ exclaimed Laurentini, ‘of Udolpho in Italy!’ ‘The same,’ replied Emily.

‘You know me then,’ said Laurentini, ‘and you are the daughter of the Marchioness.’ Emily was somewhat surprised at this abrupt assertion. ‘I am the daughter of the late *Mons.* St. Aubert,’ said she; ‘and the lady you name is an utter stranger to me.’

‘At least you believe so,’ rejoined Laurentini.

Emily asked what reasons there could be to believe otherwise.

‘The family likeness, that you bear her,’ said the nun. ‘The Marchioness, it is known, was attached to a gentleman of Gascony, at the time when she accepted the hand of the Marquis, by the command of her father. Ill-fated, unhappy woman!’

Emily, remembering the extreme emotion which St. Aubert had betrayed on the mention of the Marchioness, would now have suffered something more than surprise, had her confidence in his integrity been less; as it was, she could not, for a moment, believe what the words of Laurentini insinuated; yet she still felt strongly interested, concerning them, and begged, that she would explain them further.

‘Do not urge me on that subject,’ said the nun, ‘it is to me a terrible one! Would that I could blot it from my memory!’ She sighed deeply, and, after the pause of a moment, asked Emily, by what means she had discovered her name?

‘By your portrait in the castle of Udolpho, to which this miniature bears a striking resemblance,’ replied Emily.

‘You have been at Udolpho then!’ said the nun, with great emotion. ‘Alas! what scenes does the mention of it revive in my fancy — scenes of happiness — of suffering — and of horror!’

At this moment, the terrible spectacle, which Emily had witnessed in a chamber of that castle, occurred to her, and she shuddered, while she looked upon the nun — and recollected her late words — that ‘years of prayer and penitence could not wash out the foulness of murder.’ She was now compelled to attribute these to another cause, than that of delirium. With a degree of horror, that almost deprived her of sense, she now believed she looked upon a murderer; all the recollected behaviour of Laurentini seemed to confirm the supposition, yet Emily was still lost in a labyrinth of perplexities, and, not knowing how to ask the questions, which might lead to truth, she could only hint them in broken sentences.

‘Your sudden departure from Udolpho’ — said she.

Laurentini groaned.

‘The reports that followed it,’ continued Emily— ‘The west chamber — the mournful veil — the object it conceals! — when murders are committed— ‘

The nun shrieked. ‘What! there again!’ said she, endeavouring to raise herself, while her starting eyes seemed to follow some object round the room— ‘Come from the grave! What! Blood — blood too! — There was no blood — thou canst not say it! — Nay, do not smile, — do not smile so piteously!’

Laurentini fell into convulsions, as she uttered the last words; and Emily, unable any longer to endure the horror of the scene, hurried from the room, and sent some nuns to the assistance of the abbess.

The Lady Blanche, and the boarders, who were in the parlour, now assembled round Emily, and, alarmed by her manner and affrighted countenance, asked a hundred questions, which she avoided answering further, than by saying, that she believed sister Agnes was dying. They received this as a sufficient explanation of her terror, and had then leisure to offer restoratives, which, at length, somewhat revived Emily, whose mind was, however, so much shocked with the terrible surmises, and perplexed with doubts by some words from the nun, that she was unable to converse, and would have left the convent immediately, had she not wished to know whether Laurentini would survive the late attack. After waiting some time, she was informed, that, the convulsions having ceased, Laurentini seemed to be reviving, and Emily and Blanche were departing, when the abbess appeared, who, drawing the former aside, said she had

something of consequence to say to her, but, as it was late, she would not detain her then, and requested to see her on the following day.

Emily promised to visit her, and, having taken leave, returned with the Lady Blanche towards the chateau, on the way to which the deep gloom of the woods made Blanche lament, that the evening was so far advanced; for the surrounding stillness and obscurity rendered her sensible of fear, though there was a servant to protect her; while Emily was too much engaged by the horrors of the scene she had just witnessed, to be affected by the solemnity of the shades, otherwise than as they served to promote her gloomy reverie, from which, however, she was at length recalled by the Lady Blanche, who pointed out, at some distance, in the dusky path they were winding, two persons slowly advancing. It was impossible to avoid them without striking into a still more secluded part of the wood, whither the strangers might easily follow; but all apprehension vanished, when Emily distinguished the voice of *Mons.* Du Pont, and perceived, that his companion was the gentleman, whom she had seen at the monastery, and who was now conversing with so much earnestness as not immediately to perceive their approach. When Du Pont joined the ladies, the stranger took leave, and they proceeded to the chateau, where the Count, when he heard of *Mons.* Bonnac, claimed him for an acquaintance, and, on learning the melancholy occasion of his visit to Languedoc, and that he was lodged at a small inn in the village, begged the favour of *Mons.* Du Pont to invite him to the chateau.

The latter was happy to do so, and the scruples of reserve, which made M. Bonnac hesitate to accept the invitation, being at length overcome, they went to the chateau, where the kindness of the Count and the sprightliness of his son were exerted to dissipate the gloom, that overhung the spirits of the stranger. M. Bonnac was an officer in the French service, and appeared to be about fifty; his figure was tall and commanding, his manners had received the last polish, and there was something in his countenance uncommonly interesting; for over features, which, in youth, must have been remarkably handsome, was spread a melancholy, that seemed the effect of long misfortune, rather than of constitution, or temper.

The conversation he held, during supper, was evidently an effort of politeness, and there were intervals in which, unable to struggle against the feelings, that depressed him, he relapsed into silence and abstraction,

from which, however, the Count, sometimes, withdrew him in a manner so delicate and benevolent, that Emily, while she observed him, almost fancied she beheld her late father.

The party separated, at an early hour, and then, in the solitude of her apartment, the scenes, which Emily had lately witnessed, returned to her fancy, with dreadful energy. That in the dying nun she should have discovered Signora Laurentini, who, instead of having been murdered by Montoni, was, as it now seemed, herself guilty of some dreadful crime, excited both horror and surprise in a high degree; nor did the hints, which she had dropped, respecting the marriage of the Marchioness de Villeroi, and the enquiries she had made concerning Emily's birth, occasion her a less degree of interest, though it was of a different nature.

The history, which sister Frances had formerly related, and had said to be that of Agnes, it now appeared, was erroneous; but for what purpose it had been fabricated, unless the more effectually to conceal the true story, Emily could not even guess. Above all, her interest was excited as to the relation, which the story of the late Marchioness de Villeroi bore to that of her father; for, that some kind of relation existed between them, the grief of St. Aubert, upon hearing her named, his request to be buried near her, and her picture, which had been found among his papers, certainly proved. Sometimes it occurred to Emily, that he might have been the lover, to whom it was said the Marchioness was attached, when she was compelled to marry the Marquis de Villeroi; but that he had afterwards cherished a passion for her, she could not suffer herself to believe, for a moment. The papers, which he had so solemnly enjoined her to destroy, she now fancied had related to this connection, and she wished more earnestly than before to know the reasons, that made him consider the injunction necessary, which, had her faith in his principles been less, would have led to believe, that there was a mystery in her birth dishonourable to her parents, which those manuscripts might have revealed.

Reflections, similar to these, engaged her mind, during the greater part of the night, and when, at length, she fell into a slumber, it was only to behold a vision of the dying nun, and to awaken in horrors, like those she had witnessed.

On the following morning, she was too much indisposed to attend her appointment with the abbess, and, before the day concluded, she heard,

that sister Agnes was no more. *Mons.* Bonnac received this intelligence, with concern; but Emily observed, that he did not appear so much affected now, as on the preceding evening, immediately after quitting the apartment of the nun, whose death was probably less terrible to him, than the confession he had been then called upon to witness. However this might be, he was perhaps consoled, in some degree, by a knowledge of the legacy bequeathed him, since his family was large, and the extravagance of some part of it had lately been the means of involving him in great distress, and even in the horrors of a prison; and it was the grief he had suffered from the wild career of a favourite son, with the pecuniary anxieties and misfortunes consequent upon it, that had given to his countenance the air of dejection, which had so much interested Emily.

To his friend *Mons.* Du Pont he recited some particulars of his late sufferings, when it appeared, that he had been confined for several months in one of the prisons of Paris, with little hope of release, and without the comfort of seeing his wife, who had been absent in the country, endeavouring, though in vain, to procure assistance from his friends. When, at length, she had obtained an order for admittance, she was so much shocked at the change, which long confinement and sorrow had made in his appearance, that she was seized with fits, which, by their long continuance, threatened her life.

‘Our situation affected those, who happened to witness it,’ continued *Mons.* Bonnac, ‘and one generous friend, who was in confinement at the same time, afterwards employed the first moments of his liberty in efforts to obtain mine. He succeeded; the heavy debt, that oppressed me, was discharged; and, when I would have expressed my sense of the obligation I had received, my benefactor was fled from my search. I have reason to believe he was the victim of his own generosity, and that he returned to the state of confinement, from which he had released me; but every enquiry after him was unsuccessful. Amiable and unfortunate Valancourt!’

‘Valancourt!’ exclaimed *Mons.* Du Pont. ‘Of what family?’

‘The Valancourts, Counts Duvarney,’ replied *Mons.* Bonnac.

The emotion of *Mons.* Du Pont, when he discovered the generous benefactor of his friend to be the rival of his love, can only be imagined; but, having overcome his first surprise, he dissipated the apprehensions of *Mons.* Bonnac by acquainting him, that Valancourt was at liberty, and had

lately been in Languedoc; after which his affection for Emily prompted him to make some enquiries, respecting the conduct of his rival, during his stay at Paris, of which M. Bonnac appeared to be well informed. The answers he received were such as convinced him, that Valancourt had been much misrepresented, and, painful as was the sacrifice, he formed the just design of relinquishing his pursuit of Emily to a lover, who, it now appeared, was not unworthy of the regard, with which she honoured him.

The conversation of *Mons.* Bonnac discovered, that Valancourt, some time after his arrival at Paris, had been drawn into the snares, which determined vice had spread for him, and that his hours had been chiefly divided between the parties of the captivating Marchioness and those gaming assemblies, to which the envy, or the avarice, of his brother officers had spared no art to seduce him. In these parties he had lost large sums, in efforts to recover small ones, and to such losses the Count De Villefort and *Mons.* Henri had been frequent witnesses. His resources were, at length, exhausted; and the Count, his brother, exasperated by his conduct, refused to continue the supplies necessary to his present mode of life, when Valancourt, in consequence of accumulated debts, was thrown into confinement, where his brother suffered him to remain, in the hope, that punishment might effect a reform of conduct, which had not yet been confirmed by long habit.

In the solitude of his prison, Valancourt had leisure for reflection, and cause for repentance; here, too, the image of Emily, which, amidst the dissipation of the city had been obscured, but never obliterated from his heart, revived with all the charms of innocence and beauty, to reproach him for having sacrificed his happiness and debased his talents by pursuits, which his nobler faculties would formerly have taught him to consider were as tasteless as they were degrading. But, though his passions had been seduced, his heart was not depraved, nor had habit riveted the chains, that hung heavily on his conscience; and, as he retained that energy of will, which was necessary to burst them, he, at length, emancipated himself from the bondage of vice, but not till after much effort and severe suffering.

Being released by his brother from the prison, where he had witnessed the affecting meeting between *Mons.* Bonnac and his wife, with whom he had been for some time acquainted, the first use of his liberty formed a

striking instance of his humanity and his rashness; for with nearly all the money, just received from his brother, he went to a gaming-house, and gave it as a last stake for the chance of restoring his friend to freedom, and to his afflicted family. The event was fortunate, and, while he had awaited the issue of this momentous stake, he made a solemn vow never again to yield to the destructive and fascinating vice of gaming.

Having restored the venerable *Mons.* Bonnac to his rejoicing family, he hurried from Paris to Estuviere; and, in the delight of having made the wretched happy, forgot, for a while, his own misfortunes. Soon, however, he remembered, that he had thrown away the fortune, without which he could never hope to marry Emily; and life, unless passed with her, now scarcely appeared supportable; for her goodness, refinement, and simplicity of heart, rendered her beauty more enchanting, if possible, to his fancy, than it had ever yet appeared. Experience had taught him to understand the full value of the qualities, which he had before admired, but which the contrasted characters he had seen in the world made him now adore; and these reflections, increasing the pangs of remorse and regret, occasioned the deep dejection, that had accompanied him even into the presence of Emily, of whom he considered himself no longer worthy. To the ignominy of having received pecuniary obligations from the Marchioness Chamfort, or any other lady of intrigue, as the Count De Villefort had been informed, or of having been engaged in the depredating schemes of gamesters, Valancourt had never submitted; and these were some of such scandals as often mingle with truth, against the unfortunate. Count De Villefort had received them from authority which he had no reason to doubt, and which the imprudent conduct he had himself witnessed in Valancourt, had certainly induced him the more readily to believe. Being such as Emily could not name to the Chevalier, he had no opportunity of refuting them; and, when he confessed himself to be unworthy of her esteem, he little suspected, that he was confirming to her the most dreadful calumnies. Thus the mistake had been mutual, and had remained so, when *Mons.* Bonnac explained the conduct of his generous, but imprudent young friend to Du Pont, who, with severe justice, determined not only to undeceive the Count on this subject, but to resign all hope of Emily. Such a sacrifice as his love rendered this, was deserving of a noble reward, and *Mons.* Bonnac, if it had been possible for him to

forget the benevolent Valancourt, would have wished that Emily might accept the just Du Pont.

When the Count was informed of the error he had committed, he was extremely shocked at the consequence of his credulity, and the account which *Mons.* Bonnac gave of his friend's situation, while at Paris, convinced him, that Valancourt had been entrapped by the schemes of a set of dissipated young men, with whom his profession had partly obliged him to associate, rather than by an inclination to vice; and, charmed by the humanity, and noble, though rash generosity, which his conduct towards *Mons.* Bonnac exhibited, he forgave him the transient errors, that had stained his youth, and restored him to the high degree of esteem, with which he had regarded him, during their early acquaintance. But, as the least reparation he could now make Valancourt was to afford him an opportunity of explaining to Emily his former conduct, he immediately wrote, to request his forgiveness of the unintentional injury he had done him, and to invite him to Chateau-le-Blanc. Motives of delicacy withheld the Count from informing Emily of this letter, and of kindness from acquainting her with the discovery respecting Valancourt, till his arrival should save her from the possibility of anxiety, as to its event; and this precaution spared her even severer inquietude, than the Count had foreseen, since he was ignorant of the symptoms of despair, which Valancourt's late conduct had betrayed.

CHAPTER XVII

But in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: thus even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison’d chalice
To our own lips.

MACBETH

Some circumstances of an extraordinary nature now withdrew Emily from her own sorrows, and excited emotions, which partook of both surprise and horror.

A few days followed that, on which Signora Laurentini died, her will was opened at the monastery, in the presence of the superiors and *Mons.* Bonnac, when it was found, that one third of her personal property was bequeathed to the nearest surviving relative of the late Marchioness de Villeroi, and that Emily was the person.

With the secret of Emily's family the abbess had long been acquainted, and it was in observance of the earnest request of St. Aubert, who was known to the friar, that attended him on his deathbed, that his daughter had remained in ignorance of her relationship to the Marchioness. But some hints, which had fallen from Signora Laurentini, during her last interview with Emily, and a confession of a very extraordinary nature, given in her dying hours, had made the abbess think it necessary to converse with her young friend, on the topic she had not before ventured to introduce; and it was for this purpose, that she had requested to see her on the morning that followed her interview with the nun. Emily's indisposition had then prevented the intended conversation; but now, after the will had been examined, she received a summons, which she immediately obeyed, and became informed of circumstances, that powerfully affected her. As the narrative of the abbess was, however, deficient in many particulars, of which the reader may wish to be informed, and the history of the nun is materially connected with the fate of the Marchioness de Villeroi, we shall omit the conversation, that passed in the parlour of the convent, and mingle with our relation a brief history of

LAURENTINI DI UDOLPHO,

Who was the only child of her parents, and heiress of the ancient house of Udolpho, in the territory of Venice. It was the first misfortune of her life, and that which led to all her succeeding misery, that the friends, who ought to have restrained her strong passions, and mildly instructed her in the art of governing them, nurtured them by early indulgence. But they

cherished their own failings in her; for their conduct was not the result of rational kindness, and, when they either indulged, or opposed the passions of their child, they gratified their own. Thus they indulged her with weakness, and reprehended her with violence; her spirit was exasperated by their vehemence, instead of being corrected by their wisdom; and their oppositions became contest for victory, in which the due tenderness of the parents, and the affectionate duties of the child, were equally forgotten; but, as returning fondness disarmed the parents' resentment soonest, Laurentini was suffered to believe that she had conquered, and her passions became stronger by every effort, that had been employed to subdue them.

The death of her father and mother in the same year left her to her own discretion, under the dangerous circumstances attendant on youth and beauty. She was fond of company, delighted with admiration, yet disdainful of the opinion of the world, when it happened to contradict her inclinations; had a gay and brilliant wit, and was mistress of all the arts of fascination. Her conduct was such as might have been expected, from the weakness of her principles and the strength of her passions.

Among her numerous admirers was the late Marquis de Villeroi, who, on his tour through Italy, saw Laurentini at Venice, where she usually resided, and became her passionate adorer. Equally captivated by the figure and accomplishments of the Marquis, who was at that period one of the most distinguished noblemen of the French court, she had the art so effectually to conceal from him the dangerous traits of her character and the blemishes of her late conduct, that he solicited her hand in marriage.

Before the nuptials were concluded, she retired to the castle of Udolpho, whither the Marquis followed, and, where her conduct, relaxing from the propriety, which she had lately assumed, discovered to him the precipice, on which he stood. A minuter enquiry than he had before thought it necessary to make, convinced him, that he had been deceived in her character, and she, whom he had designed for his wife, afterwards became his mistress.

Having passed some weeks at Udolpho, he was called abruptly to France, whither he returned with extreme reluctance, for his heart was still fascinated by the arts of Laurentini, with whom, however, he had on various pretences delayed his marriage; but, to reconcile her to this

separation, he now gave repeated promises of returning to conclude the nuptials, as soon as the affair, which thus suddenly called him to France, should permit.

Soothed, in some degree, by these assurances, she suffered him to depart; and, soon after, her relative, Montoni, arriving at Udolpho, renewed the addresses, which she had before refused, and which she now again rejected. Meanwhile, her thoughts were constantly with the Marquis de Villeroi, for whom she suffered all the delirium of Italian love, cherished by the solitude, to which she confined herself; for she had now lost all taste for the pleasures of society and the gaiety of amusement. Her only indulgences were to sigh and weep over a miniature of the Marquis; to visit the scenes, that had witnessed their happiness, to pour forth her heart to him in writing, and to count the weeks, the days, which must intervene before the period that he had mentioned as probable for his return. But this period passed without bringing him; and week after week followed in heavy and almost intolerable expectation. During this interval, Laurentini's fancy, occupied incessantly by one idea, became disordered; and, her whole heart being devoted to one object, life became hateful to her, when she believed that object lost.

Several months passed, during which she heard nothing from the Marquis de Villeroi, and her days were marked, at intervals, with the phrensy of passion and the sullenness of despair. She secluded herself from all visitors, and, sometimes, remained in her apartment, for weeks together, refusing to speak to every person, except her favourite female attendant, writing scraps of letters, reading, again and again, those she had received from the Marquis, weeping over his picture, and speaking to it, for many hours, upbraiding, reproaching and caressing it alternately.

At length, a report reached her, that the Marquis had married in France, and, after suffering all the extremes of love, jealousy and indignation, she formed the desperate resolution of going secretly to that country, and, if the report proved true, of attempting a deep revenge. To her favourite woman only she confided the plan of her journey, and she engaged her to partake of it. Having collected her jewels, which, descending to her from many branches of her family, were of immense value, and all her cash, to a very large amount, they were packed in a trunk, which was privately conveyed to a neighbouring town, whither Laurentini, with this only

servant, followed, and thence proceeded secretly to Leghorn, where they embarked for France.

When, on her arrival in Languedoc, she found, that the Marquis de Villeroi had been married, for some months, her despair almost deprived her of reason, and she alternately projected and abandoned the horrible design of murdering the Marquis, his wife and herself. At length she contrived to throw herself in his way, with an intention of reproaching him, for his conduct, and of stabbing herself in his presence; but, when she again saw him, who so long had been the constant object of her thoughts and affections, resentment yielded to love; her resolution failed; she trembled with the conflict of emotions, that assailed her heart, and fainted away.

The Marquis was not proof against her beauty and sensibility; all the energy, with which he had first loved, returned, for his passion had been resisted by prudence, rather than overcome by indifference; and, since the honour of his family would not permit him to marry her, he had endeavoured to subdue his love, and had so far succeeded, as to select the then Marchioness for his wife, whom he loved at first with a tempered and rational affection. But the mild virtues of that amiable lady did not recompense him for her indifference, which appeared, notwithstanding her efforts to conceal it; and he had, for some time, suspected that her affections were engaged by another person, when Laurentini arrived in Languedoc. This artful Italian soon perceived, that she had regained her influence over him, and, soothed by the discovery, she determined to live, and to employ all her enchantments to win his consent to the diabolical deed, which she believed was necessary to the security of her happiness. She conducted her scheme with deep dissimulation and patient perseverance, and, having completely estranged the affections of the Marquis from his wife, whose gentle goodness and unimpassioned manners had ceased to please, when contrasted with the captivations of the Italian, she proceeded to awaken in his mind the jealousy of pride, for it was no longer that of love, and even pointed out to him the person, to whom she affirmed the Marchioness had sacrificed her honour; but Laurentini had first extorted from him a solemn promise to forbear avenging himself upon his rival. This was an important part of her plan, for she knew, that, if his desire of vengeance was restrained towards one

party, it would burn more fiercely towards the other, and he might then, perhaps, be prevailed on to assist in the horrible act, which would release him from the only barrier, that withheld him from making her his wife.

The innocent Marchioness, meanwhile, observed, with extreme grief, the alteration in her husband's manners. He became reserved and thoughtful in her presence; his conduct was austere, and sometimes even rude; and he left her, for many hours together, to weep for his unkindness, and to form plans for the recovery of his affection. His conduct afflicted her the more, because, in obedience to the command of her father, she had accepted his hand, though her affections were engaged to another, whose amiable disposition, she had reason to believe, would have ensured her happiness. This circumstance Laurentini had discovered, soon after her arrival in France, and had made ample use of it in assisting her designs upon the Marquis, to whom she adduced such seeming proof of his wife's infidelity, that, in the frantic rage of wounded honour, he consented to destroy his wife. A slow poison was administered, and she fell a victim to the jealousy and subtlety of Laurentini and to the guilty weakness of her husband.

But the moment of Laurentini's triumph, the moment, to which she had looked forward for the completion of all her wishes, proved only the commencement of a suffering, that never left her to her dying hour.

The passion of revenge, which had in part stimulated her to the commission of this atrocious deed, died, even at the moment when it was gratified, and left her to the horrors of unavailing pity and remorse, which would probably have empoisoned all the years she had promised herself with the Marquis de Villeroi, had her expectations of an alliance with him been realized. But he, too, had found the moment of his revenge to be that of remorse, as to himself, and detestation, as to the partner of his crime; the feeling, which he had mistaken for conviction, was no more; and he stood astonished, and aghast, that no proof remained of his wife's infidelity, now that she had suffered the punishment of guilt. Even when he was informed, that she was dying, he had felt suddenly and unaccountably reassured of her innocence, nor was the solemn assurance she made him in her last hour, capable of affording him a stronger conviction of her blameless conduct.

In the first horrors of remorse and despair, he felt inclined to deliver up himself and the woman, who had plunged him into this abyss of guilt, into the hands of justice; but, when the paroxysm of his suffering was over, his intention changed. Laurentini, however, he saw only once afterwards, and that was, to curse her as the instigator of his crime, and to say, that he spared her life only on condition, that she passed the rest of her days in prayer and penance. Overwhelmed with disappointment, on receiving contempt and abhorrence from the man, for whose sake she had not scrupled to stain her conscience with human blood, and, touched with horror of the unavailing crime she had committed, she renounced the world, and retired to the monastery of St. Claire, a dreadful victim to unresisted passion.

The Marquis, immediately after the death of his wife, quitted Chateau-le-Blanc, to which he never returned, and endeavoured to lose the sense of his crime amidst the tumult of war, or the dissipations of a capital; but his efforts were vain; a deep dejection hung over him ever after, for which his most intimate friend could not account, and he, at length, died, with a degree of horror nearly equal to that, which Laurentini had suffered. The physician, who had observed the singular appearance of the unfortunate Marchioness, after death, had been bribed to silence; and, as the surmises of a few of the servants had proceeded no further than a whisper, the affair had never been investigated. Whether this whisper ever reached the father of the Marchioness, and, if it did, whether the difficulty of obtaining proof deterred him from prosecuting the Marquis de Villeroi, is uncertain; but her death was deeply lamented by some part of her family, and particularly by her brother, M. St. Aubert; for that was the degree of relationship, which had existed between Emily’s father and the Marchioness; and there is no doubt, that he suspected the manner of her death. Many letters passed between the Marquis and him, soon after the decease of his beloved sister, the subject of which was not known, but there is reason to believe, that they related to the cause of her death; and these were the papers, together with some letters of the Marchioness, who had confided to her brother the occasion of her unhappiness, which St. Aubert had so solemnly enjoined his daughter to destroy: and anxiety for her peace had probably made him forbid her to enquire into the melancholy story, to which they alluded. Such, indeed, had been his affliction, on the premature death of this his

favourite sister, whose unhappy marriage had from the first excited his tenderest pity, that he never could hear her named, or mention her himself after her death, except to Madame St. Aubert. From Emily, whose sensibility he feared to awaken, he had so carefully concealed her history and name, that she was ignorant, till now, that she ever had such a relative as the Marchioness de Villeroi; and from this motive he had enjoined silence to his only surviving sister, Madame Cheron, who had scrupulously observed his request.

It was over some of the last pathetic letters of the Marchioness, that St. Aubert was weeping, when he was observed by Emily, on the eve of her departure from La Vallee, and it was her picture, which he had so tenderly caressed. Her disastrous death may account for the emotion he had betrayed, on hearing her named by La Voisin, and for his request to be interred near the monument of the Villerois, where her remains were deposited, but not those of her husband, who was buried, where he died, in the north of France.

The confessor, who attended St. Aubert in his last moments, recollected him to be the brother of the late Marchioness, when St. Aubert, from tenderness to Emily, had conjured him to conceal the circumstance, and to request that the abbess, to whose care he particularly recommended her, would do the same; a request, which had been exactly observed.

Laurentini, on her arrival in France, had carefully concealed her name and family, and, the better to disguise her real history, had, on entering the convent, caused the story to be circulated, which had imposed on sister Frances, and it is probable, that the abbess, who did not preside in the convent, at the time of her noviciation, was also entirely ignorant of the truth. The deep remorse, that seized on the mind of Laurentini, together with the sufferings of disappointed passion, for she still loved the Marquis, again unsettled her intellects, and, after the first paroxysms of despair were passed, a heavy and silent melancholy had settled upon her spirits, which suffered few interruptions from fits of phrensy, till the time of her death. During many years, it had been her only amusement to walk in the woods near the monastery, in the solitary hours of night, and to play upon a favourite instrument, to which she sometimes joined the delightful melody of her voice, in the most solemn and melancholy airs of her native country, modulated by all the energetic feeling, that dwelt in her heart. The

physician, who had attended her, recommended it to the superior to indulge her in this whim, as the only means of soothing her distempered fancy; and she was suffered to walk in the lonely hours of night, attended by the servant, who had accompanied her from Italy; but, as the indulgence transgressed against the rules of the convent, it was kept as secret as possible; and thus the mysterious music of Laurentini had combined with other circumstances, to produce a report, that not only the chateau, but its neighbourhood, was haunted.

Soon after her entrance into this holy community, and before she had shewn any symptoms of insanity there, she made a will, in which, after bequeathing a considerable legacy to the convent, she divided the remainder of her personal property, which her jewels made very valuable, between the wife of *Mons.* Bonnac, who was an Italian lady and her relation, and the nearest surviving relative of the late Marchioness de Villeroi. As Emily St. Aubert was not only the nearest, but the sole relative, this legacy descended to her, and thus explained to her the whole mystery of her father's conduct.

The resemblance between Emily and her unfortunate aunt had frequently been observed by Laurentini, and had occasioned the singular behaviour, which had formerly alarmed her; but it was in the nun's dying hour, when her conscience gave her perpetually the idea of the Marchioness, that she became more sensible, than ever, of this likeness, and, in her phrensy, deemed it no resemblance of the person she had injured, but the original herself. The bold assertion, that had followed, on the recovery of her senses, that Emily was the daughter of the Marchioness de Villeroi, arose from a suspicion that she was so; for, knowing that her rival, when she married the Marquis, was attached to another lover, she had scarcely scrupled to believe, that her honour had been sacrificed, like her own, to an unresisted passion.

Of a crime, however, to which Emily had suspected, from her phrensied confession of murder, that she had been instrumental in the castle of Udolpho, Laurentini was innocent; and she had herself been deceived, concerning the spectacle, that formerly occasioned her so much terror, and had since compelled her, for a while, to attribute the horrors of the nun to a consciousness of a murder, committed in that castle.

It may be remembered, that, in a chamber of Udolpho, hung a black veil, whose singular situation had excited Emily's curiosity, and which afterwards disclosed an object, that had overwhelmed her with horror; for, on lifting it, there appeared, instead of the picture she had expected, within a recess of the wall, a human figure of ghastly paleness, stretched at its length, and dressed in the habiliments of the grave. What added to the horror of the spectacle, was, that the face appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms, which were visible on the features and hands. On such an object, it will be readily believed, that no person could endure to look twice. Emily, it may be recollected, had, after the first glance, let the veil drop, and her terror had prevented her from ever after provoking a renewal of such suffering, as she had then experienced. Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax. The history of it is somewhat extraordinary, though not without example in the records of that fierce severity, which monkish superstition has sometimes inflicted on mankind. A member of the house of Udolpho, having committed some offence against the prerogative of the church, had been condemned to the penance of contemplating, during certain hours of the day, a waxen image, made to resemble a human body in the state, to which it is reduced after death. This penance, serving as a memento of the condition at which he must himself arrive, had been designed to reprove the pride of the Marquis of Udolpho, which had formerly so much exasperated that of the Romish church; and he had not only superstitiously observed this penance himself, which, he had believed, was to obtain a pardon for all his sins, but had made it a condition in his will, that his descendants should preserve the image, on pain of forfeiting to the church a certain part of his domain, that they also might profit by the humiliating moral it conveyed. The figure, therefore, had been suffered to retain its station in the wall of the chamber, but his descendants excused themselves from observing the penance, to which he had been enjoined.

This image was so horribly natural, that it is not surprising Emily should have mistaken it for the object it resembled, nor, since she had heard such an extraordinary account, concerning the disappearing of the late lady of the castle, and had such experience of the character of

Montoni, that she should have believed this to be the murdered body of the lady Laurentini, and that he had been the contriver of her death.

The situation, in which she had discovered it, occasioned her, at first, much surprise and perplexity; but the vigilance, with which the doors of the chamber, where it was deposited, were afterwards secured, had compelled her to believe, that Montoni, not daring to confide the secret of her death to any person, had suffered her remains to decay in this obscure chamber. The ceremony of the veil, however, and the circumstance of the doors having been left open, even for a moment, had occasioned her much wonder and some doubts; but these were not sufficient to overcome her suspicion of Montoni; and it was the dread of his terrible vengeance, that had sealed her lips in silence, concerning what she had seen in the west chamber.

Emily, in discovering the Marchioness de Villeroi to have been the sister of *Mons.* St. Aubert, was variously affected; but, amidst the sorrow, which she suffered for her untimely death, she was released from an anxious and painful conjecture, occasioned by the rash assertion of Signora Laurentini, concerning her birth and the honour of her parents. Her faith in St. Aubert's principles would scarcely allow her to suspect that he had acted dishonourably; and she felt such reluctance to believe herself the daughter of any other, than her, whom she had always considered and loved as a mother, that she would hardly admit such a circumstance to be possible; yet the likeness, which it had frequently been affirmed she bore to the late Marchioness, the former behaviour of Dorothee the old housekeeper, the assertion of Laurentini, and the mysterious attachment, which St. Aubert had discovered, awakened doubts, as to his connection with the Marchioness, which her reason could neither vanquish, or confirm. From these, however, she was now relieved, and all the circumstances of her father's conduct were fully explained: but her heart was oppressed by the melancholy catastrophe of her amiable relative, and by the awful lesson, which the history of the nun exhibited, the indulgence of whose passions had been the means of leading her gradually to the commission of a crime, from the prophecy of which in her early years she would have recoiled in horror, and exclaimed — that it could not be! — a crime, which whole years of repentance and of the severest penance had not been able to obliterate from her conscience.

CHAPTER XVIII

Then, fresh tears
Stood on her cheek, as doth the honey-dew
Upon a gather’d lily almost wither’d

SHAKESPEARE

After the late discoveries, Emily was distinguished at the chateau by the Count and his family, as a relative of the house of Villeroi, and received, if possible, more friendly attention, than had yet been shewn her.

Count De Villefort's surprise at the delay of an answer to his letter, which had been directed to Valancourt, at Estuviere, was mingled with satisfaction for the prudence, which had saved Emily from a share of the anxiety he now suffered, though, when he saw her still drooping under the effect of his former error, all his resolution was necessary to restrain him from relating the truth, that would afford her a momentary relief. The approaching nuptials of the Lady Blanche now divided his attention with this subject of his anxiety, for the inhabitants of the chateau were already busied in preparations for that event, and the arrival of *Mons.* St. Foix was daily expected. In the gaiety, which surrounded her, Emily vainly tried to participate, her spirits being depressed by the late discoveries, and by the anxiety concerning the fate of Valancourt, that had been occasioned by the description of his manner, when he had delivered the ring. She seemed to perceive in it the gloomy wildness of despair; and, when she considered to what that despair might have urged him, her heart sunk with terror and grief. The state of suspense, as to his safety, to which she believed herself condemned, till she should return to La Vallee, appeared insupportable, and, in such moments, she could not even struggle to assume the composure, that had left her mind, but would often abruptly quit the company she was with, and endeavour to sooth her spirits in the deep solitudes of the woods, that overbrowed the shore. Here, the faint roar of foaming waves, that beat below, and the sullen murmur of the wind among the branches around, were circumstances in unison with the temper of her mind; and she would sit on a cliff, or on the broken steps of her favourite watchtower, observing the changing colours of the evening clouds, and the gloom of twilight draw over the sea, till the white tops of billows, riding towards the shore, could scarcely be discerned amidst the darkened waters. The lines, engraved by Valancourt on this tower, she frequently repeated with melancholy enthusiasm, and then would endeavour to check the

recollections and the grief they occasioned, and to turn her thoughts to indifferent subjects.

One evening, having wandered with her lute to this her favourite spot, she entered the ruined tower, and ascended a winding staircase, that led to a small chamber, which was less decayed than the rest of the building, and whence she had often gazed, with admiration, on the wide prospect of sea and land, that extended below. The sun was now setting on that tract of the Pyrenees, which divided Languedoc from Rousillon, and, placing herself opposite to a small grated window, which, like the wood-tops beneath, and the waves lower still, gleamed with the red glow of the west, she touched the chords of her lute in solemn symphony, and then accompanied it with her voice, in one of the simple and affecting airs, to which, in happier days, Valancourt had often listened in rapture, and which she now adapted to the following lines.

TO MELANCHOLY

Spirit of love and sorrow — hail!
Thy solemn voice from far I hear,
Mingling with ev'ning's dying gale:
Hail, with this sadly-pleasing tear!

O! at this still, this lonely hour,
Thine own sweet hour of closing day,
Awake thy lute, whose charmful pow'r
Shall call up Fancy to obey:

To paint the wild romantic dream,
That meets the poet's musing eye,
As, on the bank of shadowy stream,
He breathes to her the fervid sigh.

O lonely spirit! let thy song
Lead me through all thy sacred haunt;
The minister's moonlight aisles along,
Where spectres raise the midnight chaunt.

I hear their dirges faintly swell!
Then, sink at once in silence drear,
While, from the pillar'd cloister's cell,
Dimly their gliding forms appear!

Lead where the pine-woods wave on high,
Whose pathless sod is darkly seen,
As the cold moon, with trembling eye,
Darts her long beams the leaves between.

Lead to the mountain’s dusky head,
Where, far below, in shade profound,
Wide forests, plains and hamlets spread,
And sad the chimes of vesper sound,

Or guide me, where the dashing oar
Just breaks the stillness of the vale,
As slow it tracks the winding shore,
To meet the ocean’s distant sail:

To pebbly banks, that Neptune laves,
With measur’d surges, loud and deep,
Where the dark cliff bends o’er the waves,
And wild the winds of autumn sweep.

There pause at midnight’s spectred hour,
And list the long-resounding gale;
And catch the fleeting moonlight’s pow’r,
O’er foaming seas and distant sail.

The soft tranquillity of the scene below, where the evening breeze scarcely curled the water, or swelled the passing sail, that caught the last gleam of the sun, and where, now and then, a dipping oar was all that disturbed the trembling radiance, conspired with the tender melody of her lute to lull her mind into a state of gentle sadness, and she sung the mournful songs of past times, till the remembrances they awakened were too powerful for her heart, her tears fell upon the lute, over which she drooped, and her voice trembled, and was unable to proceed.

Though the sun had now sunk behind the mountains, and even his reflected light was fading from their highest points, Emily did not leave the watchtower, but continued to indulge her melancholy reverie, till a footstep, at a little distance, startled her, and, on looking through the grate, she observed a person walking below, whom, however, soon perceiving to be *Mons.* Bonnac, she returned to the quiet thoughtfulness his step had

interrupted. After some time, she again struck her lute, and sung her favourite air; but again a step disturbed her, and, as she paused to listen, she heard it ascending the staircase of the tower. The gloom of the hour, perhaps, made her sensible to some degree of fear, which she might not otherwise have felt; for, only a few minutes before, she had seen *Mons.* Bonnac pass. The steps were quick and bounding, and, in the next moment, the door of the chamber opened, and a person entered, whose features were veiled in the obscurity of twilight; but his voice could not be concealed, for it was the voice of Valancourt! At the sound, never heard by Emily, without emotion, she started, in terror, astonishment and doubtful pleasure, and had scarcely beheld him at her feet, when she sunk into a seat, overcome by the various emotions, that contended at her heart, and almost insensible to that voice, whose earnest and trembling calls seemed as if endeavouring to save her. Valancourt, as he hung over Emily, deplored his own rash impatience, in having thus surprised her: for when he had arrived at the chateau, too anxious to await the return of the Count, who, he understood, was in the grounds, he went himself to seek him, when, as he passed the tower, he was struck by the sound of Emily's voice, and immediately ascended.

It was a considerable time before she revived, but, when her recollection returned, she repulsed his attentions, with an air of reserve, and enquired, with as much displeasure as it was possible she could feel in these first moments of his appearance, the occasion of his visit.

'Ah Emily!' said Valancourt, 'that air, those words — alas! I have, then, little to hope — when you ceased to esteem me, you ceased also to love me!'

'Most true, sir,' replied Emily, endeavouring to command her trembling voice; 'and if you had valued my esteem, you would not have given me this new occasion for uneasiness.'

Valancourt's countenance changed suddenly from the anxieties of doubt to an expression of surprise and dismay: he was silent a moment, and then said, 'I had been taught to hope for a very different reception! Is it, then, true, Emily, that I have lost your regard forever? am I to believe, that, though your esteem for me may return — your affection never can? Can the Count have meditated the cruelty, which now tortures me with a second death?'

The voice, in which he spoke this, alarmed Emily as much as his words surprised her, and, with trembling impatience, she begged that he would explain them.

‘Can any explanation be necessary?’ said Valancourt, ‘do you not know how cruelly my conduct has been misrepresented? that the actions of which you once believed me guilty (and, O Emily! how could you so degrade me in your opinion, even for a moment!) those actions — I hold in as much contempt and abhorrence as yourself? Are you, indeed, ignorant, that Count de Villefort has detected the slanders, that have robbed me of all I hold dear on earth, and has invited me hither to justify to you my former conduct? It is surely impossible you can be uninformed of these circumstances, and I am again torturing myself with a false hope!’

The silence of Emily confirmed this supposition; for the deep twilight would not allow Valancourt to distinguish the astonishment and doubting joy, that fixed her features. For a moment, she continued unable to speak; then a profound sigh seemed to give some relief to her spirits, and she said,

‘Valancourt! I was, till this moment, ignorant of all the circumstances you have mentioned; the emotion I now suffer may assure you of the truth of this, and, that, though I had ceased to esteem, I had not taught myself entirely to forget you.’

‘This moment,’ said Valancourt, in a low voice, and leaning for support against the window— ‘this moment brings with it a conviction that overpowers me! — I am dear to you then — still dear to you, my Emily!’

‘Is it necessary that I should tell you so?’ she replied, ‘is it necessary, that I should say — these are the first moments of joy I have known, since your departure, and that they repay me for all those of pain I have suffered in the interval?’

Valancourt sighed deeply, and was unable to reply; but, as he pressed her hand to his lips, the tears, that fell over it, spoke a language, which could not be mistaken, and to which words were inadequate.

Emily, somewhat tranquillized, proposed returning to the chateau, and then, for the first time, recollected that the Count had invited Valancourt thither to explain his conduct, and that no explanation had yet been given. But, while she acknowledged this, her heart would not allow her to dwell, for a moment, on the possibility of his unworthiness; his look, his voice,

his manner, all spoke the noble sincerity, which had formerly distinguished him; and she again permitted herself to indulge the emotions of a joy, more surprising and powerful, than she had ever before experienced.

Neither Emily, or Valancourt, were conscious how they reached the chateau, whither they might have been transferred by the spell of a fairy, for any thing they could remember; and it was not, till they had reached the great hall, that either of them recollected there were other persons in the world besides themselves. The Count then came forth with surprise, and with the joyfulness of pure benevolence, to welcome Valancourt, and to entreat his forgiveness of the injustice he had done him; soon after which, *Mons.* Bonnac joined this happy group, in which he and Valancourt were mutually rejoiced to meet.

When the first congratulations were over, and the general joy became somewhat more tranquil, the Count withdrew with Valancourt to the library, where a long conversation passed between them, in which the latter so clearly justified himself of the criminal parts of the conduct, imputed to him, and so candidly confessed and so feelingly lamented the follies, which he had committed, that the Count was confirmed in his belief of all he had hoped; and, while he perceived so many noble virtues in Valancourt, and that experience had taught him to detest the follies, which before he had only not admired, he did not scruple to believe, that he would pass through life with the dignity of a wise and good man, or to entrust to his care the future happiness of Emily St. Aubert, for whom he felt the solicitude of a parent. Of this he soon informed her, in a short conversation, when Valancourt had left him. While Emily listened to a relation of the services, that Valancourt had rendered *Mons.* Bonnac, her eyes overflowed with tears of pleasure, and the further conversation of Count De Villefort perfectly dissipated every doubt, as to the past and future conduct of him, to whom she now restored, without fear, the esteem and affection, with which she had formerly received him.

When they returned to the supper-room, the Countess and Lady Blanche met Valancourt with sincere congratulations; and Blanche, indeed, was so much rejoiced to see Emily returned to happiness, as to forget, for a while, that *Mons.* St. Foix was not yet arrived at the chateau, though he had been expected for some hours; but her generous sympathy was, soon after,

rewarded by his appearance. He was now perfectly recovered from the wounds, received, during his perilous adventure among the Pyrenees, the mention of which served to heighten to the parties, who had been involved in it, the sense of their present happiness. New congratulations passed between them, and round the supper-table appeared a group of faces, smiling with felicity, but with a felicity, which had in each a different character. The smile of Blanche was frank and gay, that of Emily tender and pensive; Valancourt's was rapturous, tender and gay alternately; *Mons.* St. Foix's was joyous, and that of the Count, as he looked on the surrounding party, expressed the tempered complacency of benevolence; while the features of the Countess, Henri, and *Mons.* Bonnac, discovered fainter traces of animation. Poor *Mons.* Du Pont did not, by his presence, throw a shade of regret over the company; for, when he had discovered, that Valancourt was not unworthy of the esteem of Emily, he determined seriously to endeavour at the conquest of his own hopeless affection, and had immediately withdrawn from Chateau-le-Blanc — a conduct, which Emily now understood, and rewarded with her admiration and pity.

The Count and his guests continued together till a late hour, yielding to the delights of social gaiety, and to the sweets of friendship. When Annette heard of the arrival of Valancourt, Ludovico had some difficulty to prevent her going into the supper-room, to express her joy, for she declared, that she had never been so rejoiced at any ACCIDENT as this, since she had found Ludovico himself.

CHAPTER XIX

Now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth’s end,
Where the bow’d welkin low doth bend,
And, from thence, can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.

MILTON

The marriages of the Lady Blanche and Emily St. Aubert were celebrated, on the same day, and with the ancient baronial magnificence, at Chateau-le-Blanc. The feasts were held in the great hall of the castle, which, on this occasion, was hung with superb new tapestry, representing the exploits of Charlemagne and his twelve peers; here, were seen the Saracens, with their horrible visors, advancing to battle; and there, were displayed the wild solemnities of incantation, and the necromantic feats, exhibited by the magician JARL before the Emperor. The sumptuous banners of the family of Villeroi, which had long slept in dust, were once more unfurled, to wave over the gothic points of painted casements; and music echoed, in many a lingering close, through every winding gallery and colonnade of that vast edifice.

As Annette looked down from the corridor upon the hall, whose arches and windows were illuminated with brilliant festoons of lamps, and gazed on the splendid dresses of the dancers, the costly liveries of the attendants, the canopies of purple velvet and gold, and listened to the gay strains that floated along the vaulted roof, she almost fancied herself in an enchanted palace, and declared, that she had not met with any place, which charmed her so much, since she read the fairy tales; nay, that the fairies themselves, at their nightly revels in this old hall, could display nothing finer; while old Dorothee, as she surveyed the scene, sighed, and said, the castle looked as it was wont to do in the time of her youth.

After gracing the festivities of Chateau-le-Blanc, for some days, Valancourt and Emily took leave of their kind friends, and returned to La Vallee, where the faithful Theresa received them with unfeigned joy, and the pleasant shades welcomed them with a thousand tender and affecting remembrances; and, while they wandered together over the scenes, so long inhabited by the late *Mons.* and Madame St. Aubert, and Emily pointed out, with pensive affection, their favourite haunts, her present happiness was heightened, by considering, that it would have been worthy of their approbation, could they have witnessed it.

Valancourt led her to the plane-tree on the terrace, where he had first ventured to declare his love, and where now the remembrance of the anxiety he had then suffered, and the retrospect of all the dangers and misfortunes they had each encountered, since last they sat together beneath its broad branches, exalted the sense of their present felicity, which, on this spot, sacred to the memory of St. Aubert, they solemnly vowed to deserve, as far as possible, by endeavouring to imitate his benevolence, — by remembering, that superior attainments of every sort bring with them duties of superior exertion, — and by affording to their fellow-beings, together with that portion of ordinary comforts, which prosperity always owes to misfortune, the example of lives passed in happy thankfulness to GOD, and, therefore, in careful tenderness to his creatures.

Soon after their return to La Vallee, the brother of Valancourt came to congratulate him on his marriage, and to pay his respects to Emily, with whom he was so much pleased, as well as with the prospect of rational happiness, which these nuptials offered to Valancourt, that he immediately resigned to him a part of the rich domain, the whole of which, as he had no family, would of course descend to his brother, on his decease.

The estates, at Tholouse, were disposed of, and Emily purchased of *Mons.* Quesnel the ancient domain of her late father, where, having given Annette a marriage portion, she settled her as the housekeeper, and Ludovico as the steward; but, since both Valancourt and herself preferred the pleasant and long-loved shades of La Vallee to the magnificence of Epourville, they continued to reside there, passing, however, a few months in the year at the birthplace of St. Aubert, in tender respect to his memory.

The legacy, which had been bequeathed to Emily by Signora Laurentini, she begged Valancourt would allow her to resign to *Mons.* Bonnac; and Valancourt, when she made the request, felt all the value of the compliment it conveyed. The castle of Udolpho, also, descended to the wife of *Mons.* Bonnac, who was the nearest surviving relation of the house of that name, and thus affluence restored his long-oppressed spirits to peace, and his family to comfort.

O! how joyful it is to tell of happiness, such as that of Valancourt and Emily; to relate, that, after suffering under the oppression of the vicious and the disdain of the weak, they were, at length, restored to each other —

to the beloved landscapes of their native country, — to the securest felicity of this life, that of aspiring to moral and labouring for intellectual improvement — to the pleasures of enlightened society, and to the exercise of the benevolence, which had always animated their hearts; while the bowers of La Vallee became, once more, the retreat of goodness, wisdom and domestic blessedness!

O! useful may it be to have shewn, that, though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!

And, if the weak hand, that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to sustain it — the effort, however humble, has not been vain, nor is the writer unrewarded.

THE END

THE ITALI AN

OR THE CONFESSIONAL OF THE BLACK PENITENTS.

A Romance.

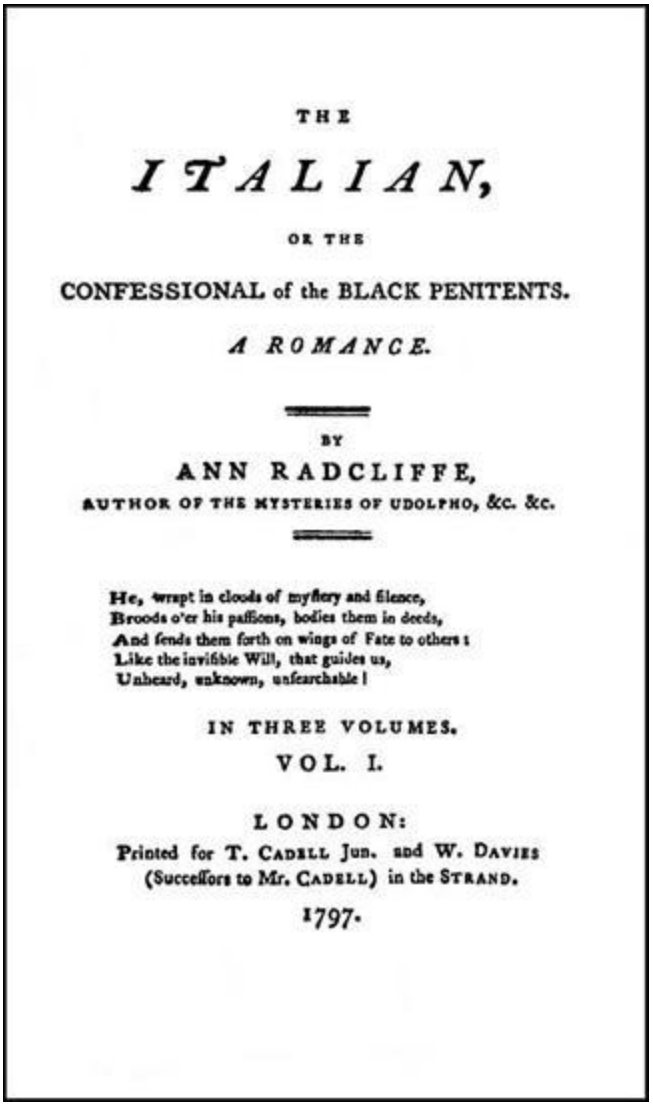
The Italian was published in 1797 and is considered the novel where Radcliffe's talents for describing nature and focusing on the sublime reached its peak of sophistication. The importance of the idea of the sublime and the ability of nature to awaken it are crucial to the author's philosophy. The success of Radcliffe's previous works enabled her to receive a payment of eight hundred pounds for her original manuscript, a very sizable sum for a novel at that time.

In the novel, Radcliffe's poetic imagery effectively creates the landscape which heightens the narrative elements of the work and she employs pathetic fallacy to enhance the connection between the characters and the natural world. The novel is set in 18th century Catholic Italy and begins with a mysterious encounter between an Englishman and a friar in a church where the former wishes to know why an assassin is being protected in a religious building. The friar does not respond, but later sends the Englishman a letter containing a different Gothic tale from the mid 18th century, set mostly in Naples.

A young man, Vincentio di Vivaldi, falls in love with the heroine of the novel Ellena di Rosalba, but is thwarted in his desire by his cold mother, who orders the monk and Radcliffe's most complex villain, Father Schedoni, to kidnap Ellena to prevent the marriage. She is imprisoned in a convent, where she encounters the cruel Lady Abbess and the kind Sister Oilvia, before being thrust into a series of rescues and captures, with the ever looming threat of murder increasing. Religion and particularly the Catholic Church is a central feature in the novel and Radcliffe highlights the threat and terror that the Inquisition caused to the population at large; depicting the fear and the persecutions that permeated society in accomplished detail. Father Schedoni is a more nuanced antagonist than is traditionally found in Gothic literature; he is a hybrid character of

emotional conflict, bearing great passions and anger, though plagued with guilt and capable of genuine humanity.

The first edition



THE

ITALIAN,

OR THE

CONFESSIONAL of the BLACK PENITENTS.

A ROMANCE.

BY

ANN RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO, &c. &c.

He, wrapt in clouds of myſtery and ſilence,
Broods o'er his paſſions, bodies them in deeds,
And ſends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the inviſible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unſearchable!

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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Chapter 33

Gothic convention - Fear of the Indeterminate

Introductio n

About the year 1764, some English travellers in Italy, during one of their excursions in the environs of Naples, happened to stop before the portico of the Santa Maria del Pianto, a church belonging to a very ancient convent of the order of the Black Penitents. The magnificence of this portico, though impaired by time, excited so much admiration, that the travellers were curious to survey the structure to which it belonged, and with this intention they ascended the marble steps that led to it.

Within the shade of the portico, a person with folded arms, and eyes directed towards the ground, was pacing behind the pillars the whole extent of the pavement, and was apparently so engaged by his own thoughts, as not to observe that strangers were approaching. He turned, however, suddenly, as if startled by the sound of steps, and then, without further pausing, glided to a door that opened into the church, and disappeared.

There was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors. He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features, and had an eye, which, as it looked up from the cloke that muffled the lower part of his countenance, seemed expressive of uncommon ferocity.

The travellers, on entering the church, looked round for the stranger, who had passed thither before them, but he was no where to be seen, and, through all the shade of the long aisles, only one other person appeared. This was a friar of the adjoining convent, who sometimes pointed out to strangers the objects in the church, which were most worthy of attention, and who now, with this design, approached the party that had just entered.

The interior of this edifice had nothing of the shewy ornament and general splendor, which distinguish the churches of Italy, and particularly those of Naples; but it exhibited a simplicity and grandeur of design, considerably more interesting to persons of taste, and a solemnity of light and shade much more suitable to promote the sublime elevation of devotion.

When the party had viewed the different shrines and whatever had been judged worthy of observation, and were returning through an obscure aisle towards the portico, they perceived the person who had appeared upon the steps, passing towards a confessional on the left, and, as he entered it, one of the party pointed him out to the friar, and enquired who he was; the friar turning to look after him, did not immediately reply, but, on the question being repeated, he inclined his head, as in a kind of obeisance, and calmly replied, ‘He is an assassin.’

‘An assassin!’ exclaimed one of the Englishmen; ‘an assassin and at liberty!’

An Italian gentleman, who was of the party, smiled at the astonishment of his friend.

‘He has sought sanctuary here,’ replied the friar; ‘within these walls he may not be hurt.’

‘Do your altars, then, protect the murderer?’ said the Englishman.

‘He could find shelter no where else,’ answered the friar meekly.

‘This is astonishing!’ said the Englishman; ‘of what avail are your laws, if the most atrocious criminal may thus find shelter from them? But how does he contrive to exist here! He is, at least, in danger of being starved?’

‘Pardon me,’ replied the friar; ‘there are always people willing to assist those, who cannot assist themselves; and as the criminal may not leave the church in search of food, they bring it to him here.’

‘Is this possible!’ said the Englishman, turning to his Italian friend.

‘Why, the poor wretch must not starve,’ replied the friend; ‘which he inevitably would do, if food were not brought to him! But have you never, since your arrival in Italy, happened to see a person in the situation of this man? It is by no means an uncommon one.’

‘Never!’ answered the Englishman, ‘and I can scarcely credit what I see now!’

‘Why, my friend,’ observed the Italian, ‘if we were to shew no mercy to such unfortunate persons, assassinations are so frequent, that our cities would be half depopulated.’

In notice of this profound remark, the Englishman could only gravely bow.

‘But observe yonder confessional,’ added the Italian, ‘that beyond the pillars on the left of the aisle, below a painted window. Have you

discovered it? The colours of the glass throw, instead of light, a shade over that part of the church, which, perhaps, prevents your distinguishing what I mean!'

The Englishman looked whither his friend pointed, and observed a confessional of oak, or some very dark wood, adjoining the wall, and remarked also, that it was the same, which the assassin had just entered. It consisted of three compartments, covered with a black canopy. In the central division was the chair of the confessor, elevated by several steps above the pavement of the church; and on either hand was a small closet, or box, with steps leading up to a grated partition, at which the penitent might kneel, and, concealed from observation, pour into the ear of the confessor, the consciousness of crimes that lay heavy on his heart.

'You observe it?' said the Italian.

'I do,' replied the Englishman; 'it is the same, which the assassin has passed into; and I think it one of the most gloomy spots I ever beheld; the view of it is enough to strike a criminal with despair!'

'We, in Italy, are not so apt to despair,' replied the Italian smilingly.

'Well, but what of this confessional?' enquired the Englishman. 'The assassin entered it!'

'He has no relation, with what I am about to mention,' said the Italian; 'but I wish you to mark the place, because some very extraordinary circumstances belong to it.'

'What are they?' said the Englishman.

'It is now several years since the confession, which is connected with them, was made at that very confessional,' added the Italian; 'the view of it, and the sight of this assassin, with your surprize at the liberty which is allowed him, led me to a recollection of the story. When you return to the hotel, I will communicate it to you, if you have no pleasanter way of engaging your time.

'I have a curiosity to hear it,' replied the Englishman, 'cannot you relate it now?'

'It is much too long to be related now; that would occupy a week; I have it in writing, and will send you the volume. A young student of Padua, who happened to be at Naples soon after this horrible confession became public — '

‘Pardon me,’ interrupted the Englishman, ‘that is surely very extraordinary? I thought confessions were always held sacred by the priest, to whom they were made.’

‘Your observation is reasonable,’ rejoined the Italian; ‘the faith of the priest is never broken, except by an especial command from an higher power; and the circumstances must even then be very extraordinary to justify such a departure from the law. But, when you read the narrative, your surprise on this head will cease. I was going to tell you, that it was written by a student of Padua, who, happening to be here soon after the affair became public, was so much struck with the facts, that, partly as an exercise, and partly in return for some trifling services I had rendered him, he committed them to paper for me. You will perceive from the work, that this student was very young, as to the arts of composition, but the facts are what you require, and from these he has not deviated. But come, let us leave the church.’

‘After I have taken another view of this solemn edifice,’ replied the Englishman, ‘and particularly of the confessional you have pointed to my notice!’

While the Englishman glanced his eye over the high roofs, and along the solemn perspectives of the Santa del Pianto, he perceived the figure of the assassin stealing from the confessional across the choir, and, shocked on again beholding him, he turned his eyes, and hastily quitted the church.

The friends then separated, and the Englishman, soon after returning to his hotel, received the volume. He read as follows:

Chapter 1

“What is this secret sin; this untold tale,
That art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse?”
Mysterious Mother.

It was in the church of San Lorenzo at Naples, in the year 1758, that Vincentio di Vivaldi first saw Ellena Rosalba. The sweetness and fine expression of her voice attracted his attention to her figure, which had a distinguished air of delicacy and grace; but her face was concealed in her veil. So much indeed was he fascinated by the voice, that a most painful curiosity was excited as to her countenance, which he fancied must express all the sensibility of character that the modulation of her tones indicated. He listened to their exquisite expression with a rapt attention, and hardly withdrew his eyes from her person till the matin service had concluded; when he observed her leave the church with an aged lady, who leaned upon her arm, and who appeared to be her mother.

Vivaldi immediately followed their steps, determined to obtain, if possible, a view of Ellena’s face, and to discover the home to which she should retire. They walked quickly, looking neither to the right or left, and as they turned into the Strada di Toledo he had nearly lost them; but quickening his pace, and relinquishing the cautious distance he had hitherto kept, he overtook them as they entered on the Terrazzo Nuovo, which runs along the bay of Naples, and leads towards the Gran Corso. He overtook them; but the fair unknown still held her veil close, and he knew not how to introduce himself to her notice, or to obtain a view of the features, which excited his curiosity. He was embarrassed by a respectful timidity, that mingled with his admiration, and which kept him silent, notwithstanding his wish to speak.

In descending the last steps of the Terrazzo, however, the foot of the elder lady faltered, and, while Vivaldi hastened to assist her, the breeze from the water caught the veil, which Ellena had no longer a hand sufficiently disengaged to confine, and, wafting it partially aside, disclosed to him a countenance more touchingly beautiful than he had

dared to image. Her features were of the Grecian outline, and, though they expressed the tranquillity of an elegant mind, her dark blue eyes sparkled with intelligence. She was assisting her companion so anxiously, that she did not immediately observe the admiration she had inspired; but the moment her eyes met those of Vivaldi, she became conscious of their effect, and she hastily drew her veil.

The old lady was not materially hurt by her fall, but, as she walked difficultly, Vivaldi seized the opportunity thus offered, and insisted that she should accept his arm. She refused this with many acknowledgments; but he pressed the offer so repeatedly and respectfully, that, at length, she accepted it, and they walked towards her residence together.

On the way thither, he attempted to converse with Ellena, but her replies were concise, and he arrived at the end of the walk while he was yet considering what he could say, that might interest and withdraw her from this severe reserve. From the style of their residence, he imagined that they were persons of honourable, but moderate independence. The house was small, but exhibited an air of comfort, and even of taste. It stood on an eminence, surrounded by a garden and vineyards, which commanded the city and bay of Naples, an evermoving picture, and was canopied by a thick grove of pines and majestic date-trees; and, though the little portico and collonade in front were of common marble, the style of architecture was elegant. While they afforded a shelter from the sun, they admitted the cooling breezes that rose from the bay below, and a prospect of the whole scope of its enchanting shores.

Vivaldi stopped at the little gate, which led into the garden, where the elder lady repeated her acknowledgments for his care, but did not invite him to enter; and he, trembling with anxiety and sinking with disappointment, remained for a moment gazing upon Ellena, unable to take leave, yet irresolute what to say that might prolong the interview, till the old lady again bade him good-day. He then summoned courage enough to request he might be allowed to enquire after her health, and, having obtained her permission, his eyes bade adieu to Ellena, who, as they were parting, ventured to thank him for the care he had taken of her aunt. The sound of her voice, and this acknowledgment of obligation, made him less willing to go than before, but at length he tore himself away. The beauty of her countenance haunting his imagination, and the touching accents of her

voice still vibrating on his heart, he descended to the shore below her residence, pleasing himself with the consciousness of being near her, though he could no longer behold her; and sometimes hoping that he might again see her, however distantly, in a balcony of the house, where the silk awning seemed to invite the breeze from the sea. He lingered hour after hour, stretched beneath the umbrageous pines that waved over the shore, or traversing, regardless of the heat, the base of the cliffs that crowned it; recalling to his fancy the enchantment of her smile, and seeming still to listen to the sweetness of her accents.

In the evening he returned to his father's palace at Naples, thoughtful yet pleased, anxious yet happy; dwelling with delightful hope on the remembrance of the thanks he had received from Ellena, yet not daring to form any plan as to his future conduct. He returned time enough to attend his mother in her evening ride on the Corso, where, in every gay carriage that passed, he hoped to see the object of his constant thought; but she did not appear. His mother, the Marchesa di Vivaldi, observed his anxiety and unusual silence, and asked him some questions, which she meant should lead to an explanation of the change in his manners; but his replies only excited a stronger curiosity, and, though she forbore to press her enquiries, it was probable that she might employ a more artful means of renewing them.

Vincentio di Vivaldi was the only son of the Marchese di Vivaldi, a nobleman of one of the most ancient families of the kingdom of Naples, a favourite possessing an uncommon share of influence at Court, and a man still higher in power than in rank. His pride of birth was equal to either, but it was mingled with the justifiable pride of a principled mind; it governed his conduct in morals as well as in the jealousy of ceremonial distinctions, and elevated his practice as well as his claims. His pride was at once his vice and his virtue, his safeguard and his weakness.

The mother of Vivaldi, descended from a family as ancient as that of his father, was equally jealous of her importance; but her pride was that of birth and distinction, without extending to morals. She was of violent passions, haughty, vindictive, yet crafty and deceitful; patient in stratagem, and indefatigable in pursuit of vengeance, on the unhappy objects who provoked her resentment. She loved her son, rather as being

the last of two illustrious houses, who was to re-unite and support the honour of both, than with the fondness of a mother.

Vincentio inherited much of the character of his father, and very little of that of his mother. His pride was as noble and generous as that of the Marchese; but he had somewhat of the fiery passions of the Marchesa, without any of her craft, her duplicity, or vindictive thirst of revenge. Frank in his temper, ingenuous in his sentiments, quickly offended, but easily appeased; irritated by any appearance of disrespect, but melted by a concession, a high sense of honor rendered him no more jealous of offence, than a delicate humanity made him ready for reconciliation, and anxious to spare the feelings of others.

On the day following that, on which he had seen Ellena, he returned to the villa Altieri, to use the permission granted him of enquiring after the health of Signora Bianchi. The expectation of seeing Ellena agitated him with impatient joy and trembling hope, which still encreased as he approached her residence, till, having reached the garden-gate, he was obliged to rest for a few moments to recover breath and composure.

Having announced himself to an old female servant, who came to the gate, he was soon after admitted to a small vestibule, where he found Signora Bianchi winding balls of silk, and alone; though from the position of a chair which stood near a frame for embroidery, he judged that Ellena had but just quitted the apartment. Signora Bianchi received him with a reserved politeness, and seemed very cautious in her replies to his enquiries after her niece, who, he hoped, every moment, would appear. He lengthened his visit till there was no longer an excuse for doing so; till he had exhausted every topic of conversation, and till the silence of Signora Bianchi seemed to hint, that his departure was expected. With a heart saddened by disappointment, and having obtained only a reluctant permission to enquire after the health of that lady on some future day, he then took leave.

On his way through the garden he often paused to look back upon the house, hoping to obtain a glimpse of Ellena at a lattice; and threw a glance around him, almost expecting to see her seated beneath the shade of the luxuriant plantains; but his search was every where vain, and he quitted the place with the slow and heavy step of despondency.

The day was employed in endeavours to obtain intelligence concerning the family of Ellena, but of this he procured little that was satisfactory. He was told, that she was an orphan, living under the care of her aunt, Signora Bianchi; that her family, which had never been illustrious, was decayed in fortune, and that her only dependence was upon this aunt. But he was ignorant of what was very true, though very secret, that she assisted to support this aged relative, whose sole property was the small estate on which they lived, and that she passed whole days in embroidering silks, which were disposed of to the nuns of a neighbouring convent, who sold them to the Neapolitan ladies, that visited their grate, at a very high advantage. He little thought, that a beautiful robe, which he had often seen his mother wear, was worked by Ellena; nor that some copies from the antique, which ornamented a cabinet of the Vivaldi palace, were drawn by her hand. If he had known these circumstances, they would only have served to encrease the passion, which, since they were proofs of a disparity of fortune, that would certainly render his family repugnant to a connection with hers, it would have been prudent to discourage.

Ellena could have endured poverty, but not contempt; and it was to protect herself from this effect of the narrow prejudices of the world around her, that she had so cautiously concealed from it a knowledge of the industry, which did honor to her character. She was not ashamed of poverty, or of the industry which overcame it, but her spirit shrunk from the senseless smile and humiliating condescension, which prosperity sometimes gives to indigence. Her mind was not yet strong enough, or her views sufficiently enlarged, to teach her a contempt of the sneer of vicious folly, and to glory in the dignity of virtuous independence. Ellena was the sole support of her aunt’s declining years; was patient to her infirmities, and consoling to her sufferings; and repaid the fondness of a mother with the affection of a daughter. Her mother she had never known, having lost her while she was an infant, and from that period Signora Bianchi had performed the duties of one for her.

Thus innocent and happy in the silent performance of her duties and in the veil of retirement, lived Ellena Rosalba, when she first saw Vincentio di Vivaldi. He was not of a figure to pass unobserved when seen, and Ellena had been struck by the spirit and dignity of his air, and by his countenance, so frank, noble, and full of that kind of expression, which

announces the energies of the soul. But she was cautious of admitting a sentiment more tender than admiration, and endeavoured to dismiss his image from her mind, and by engaging in her usual occupations, to recover the state of tranquillity, which his appearance had somewhat interrupted.

Vivaldi, mean while, restless from disappointment, and impatient from anxiety, having passed the greater part of the day in enquiries, which repaid him only with doubt and apprehension, determined to return to the villa Altieri, when evening should conceal his steps, consoled by the certainty of being near the object of his thoughts, and hoping, that chance might favour him once more with a view, however transient, of Ellena.

The Marchesa Vivaldi held an assembly this evening, and a suspicion concerning the impatience he betrayed, induced her to detain him about her person to a late hour, engaging him to select the music for her orchestra, and to superintend the performance of a new piece, the work of a composer whom she had brought into fashion. Her assemblies were among the most brilliant and crowded in Naples, and the nobility, who were to be at the palace this evening, were divided into two parties as to the merits of the musical genius, whom she patronized, and those of another candidate for fame. The performance of the evening, it was expected, would finally decide the victory. This, therefore, was a night of great importance and anxiety to the Marchesa, for she was as jealous of the reputation of her favourite composer as of her own, and the welfare of her son did but slightly divide her cares.

The moment he could depart unobserved, he quitted the assembly, and, muffling himself in his cloak, hastened to the villa Altieri, which lay at a short distance to the west of the city. He reached it unobserved, and, breathless with impatience, traversed the boundary of the garden; where, free from ceremonial restraint, and near the object of his affection, he experienced for the few first moments a joy as exquisite as her presence could have inspired. But this delight faded with its novelty, and in a short time he felt as forlorn as if he was separated for ever from Ellena, in whose presence he but lately almost believed himself.

The night was far advanced, and, no light appearing from the house, he concluded the inhabitants had retired to rest, and all hope of seeing her vanished from his mind. Still, however, it was sweet to be near her, and he anxiously sought to gain admittance to the gardens, that he might approach

the window where it was possible she reposed. The boundary, formed of trees and thick shrubs, was not difficult to be passed, and he found himself once more in the portico of the villa.

It was nearly midnight, and the stillness that reigned was rather soothed than interrupted by the gentle dashing of the waters of the bay below, and by the hollow murmurs of Vesuvius, which threw up, at intervals its sudden flame on the horizon, and then left it to darkness. The solemnity of the scene accorded with the temper of his mind, and he listened in deep attention for the returning sounds, which broke upon the ear like distant thunder muttering imperfectly from the clouds. The pauses of silence, that succeeded each groan of the mountain, when expectation listened for the rising sound, affected the imagination of Vivaldi at this time with particular awe, and, rapt in thought, he continued to gaze upon the sublime and shadowy outline of the shores, and on the sea, just discerned beneath the twilight of a cloudless sky. Along its grey surface many vessels were pursuing their silent course, guided over the deep waters only by the polar star, which burned with steady lustre. The air was calm, and rose from the bay with most balmy and refreshing coolness; it scarcely stirred the heads of the broad pines that overspread the villa; and bore no sounds but of the waves and the groans of the far-off mountain, — till a chaunting of deep voices swelled from a distance. The solemn character of the strain engaged his attention; he perceived that it was a requiem, and he endeavoured to discover from what quarter it came. It advanced, though distantly, and then passed away on the air. The circumstance struck him; he knew it was usual in some parts of Italy to chaunt this strain over the bed of the dying; but here the mourners seemed to walk the earth, or the air. He was not doubtful as to the strain itself; — once before he had heard it, and attended with circumstances which made it impossible that he should ever forget it. As he now listened to the choral voices softening in distance, a few pathetic notes brought full upon his remembrance the divine melody he had heard Ellena utter in the church of San Lorenzo. Overcome by the recollection, he started away, and, wandering over the garden, reached another side of the villa, where he soon heard the voice of Ellena herself, performing the midnight hymn to the Virgin, and accompanied by a lute, which she touched with most affecting and delicate expression. He stood for a moment entranced, and scarcely daring to breathe, lest he should lose

any note of that meek and holy strain, which seemed to flow from a devotion almost saintly. Then, looking round to discover the object of his admiration, a light issuing from among the bowery foliage of a clematis led him to a lattice, and shewed him Ellena. The lattice had been thrown open to admit the cool air, and he had a full view of her and the apartment. She was rising from a small altar where she had concluded the service; the glow of devotion was still upon her countenance as she raised her eyes, and with a rapt earnestness fixed them on the heavens. She still held the lute, but no longer awakened it, and seemed lost to every surrounding object. Her fine hair was negligently bound up in a silk net, and some tresses that had escaped it, played on her neck, and round her beautiful countenance, which now was not even partially concealed by a veil. The light drapery of her dress, her whole figure, air, and attitude, were such as might have been copied for a Grecian nymph.

Vivaldi was perplexed and agitated between the wish of seizing an opportunity, which might never again occur, of pleading his love, and the fear of offending, by intruding upon her retirement at so sacred an hour; but, while he thus hesitated, he heard her sigh, and then with a sweetness peculiar to her accent, pronounce his name. During the trembling anxiety, with which he listened to what might follow this mention of his name, he disturbed the clematis that surrounded the lattice, and she turned her eyes towards the window; but Vivaldi was entirely concealed by the foliage. She, however, rose to close the lattice; as she approached which, Vivaldi, unable any longer to command himself, appeared before her. She stood fixed for an instant, while her countenance changed to an ashy paleness; and then, with trembling haste closing the lattice, quitted the apartment. Vivaldi felt as if all his hopes had vanished with her.

After lingering in the garden for some time without perceiving a light in any other part of the building, or hearing a sound proceed from it, he took his melancholy way to Naples. He now began to ask himself some questions, which he ought to have urged before, and to enquire wherefore he sought the dangerous pleasure of seeing Ellena, since her family was of such a condition as rendered the consent of his parent to a marriage with her unattainable.

He was lost in revery on this subject, sometimes half resolved to seek her no more, and then shrinking from a conduct, which seemed to strike

him with the force of despair, when, as he emerged from the dark arch of a ruin, that extended over the road, his steps were crossed by a person in the habit of a monk, whose face was shrouded by his cowl still more than by the twilight. The stranger, addressing him by his name, said, “Signor! your steps are watched; beware how you revisit Altieri!” Having uttered this, he disappeared, before Vivaldi could return the sword he had half drawn into the scabbard, or demand an explanation of the words he had heard. He called loudly and repeatedly, conjuring the unknown person to appear, and lingered near the spot for a considerable time; but the vision came no more.

Vivaldi arrived at home with a mind occupied by this incident, and tormented by the jealousy to which it gave rise; for, after indulging various conjectures, he concluded with believing the notice, of which he had been warned, to be that of a rival, and that the danger which menaced him, was from the poniard of jealousy. This belief discovered to him at once the extent of his passion, and of the imprudence, which had thus readily admitted it; yet so far was this new prudence from overcoming his error, that, stung with a torture more exquisite than he had ever known, he resolved, at every event, to declare his love, and sue for the hand of Ellena. Unhappy young man, he knew not the fatal error, into which passion was precipitating him!

On his arrival at the Vivaldi palace, he learned, that the Marchesa had observed his absence, had repeatedly enquired for him, and had given orders that the time of his return should be mentioned to her. She had, however, retired to rest; but the Marchese, who had attended the King on an excursion to one of the royal villas on the bay, returned home soon after Vincentio; and, before he had withdrawn to his apartment, he met his son with looks of unusual displeasure, but avoided saying any thing, which either explained or alluded to the subject of it; and, after a short conversation, they separated.

Vivaldi shut himself in his apartment to deliberate, if that may deserve the name of deliberation, in which a conflict of passions, rather than an exertion of judgment, prevailed. For several hours he traversed his suit of rooms, alternately tortured by the remembrance of Ellena, fired with jealousy, and alarmed for the consequence of the imprudent step, which he was about to take. He knew the temper of his father, and some traits of the

character of his mother, sufficiently to fear that their displeasure would be irreconcilable concerning the marriage he meditated; yet, when he considered that he was their only son, he was inclined to admit a hope of forgiveness, notwithstanding the weight which the circumstance must add to their disappointment. These reflexions were frequently interrupted by fears lest Ellena had already disposed of her affections to this imaginary rival. He was, however, somewhat consoled by remembering the sigh she had uttered, and the tenderness, with which she had immediately pronounced his name. Yet, even if she were not averse to his suit, how could he solicit her hand, and hope it would be given him, when he should declare that this must be in secret? He scarcely dared to believe that she would condescend to enter a family who disdained to receive her; and again despondency overcame him.

The morning found him as distracted as the night had left him; his determination, however, was fixed; and this was, to sacrifice what he now considered as a delusive pride of birth, to a choice which he believed would ensure the happiness of his life. But, before he ventured to declare himself to Ellena, it appeared necessary to ascertain whether he held an interest in her heart, or whether she had devoted it to the rival of his love, and who this rival really was. It was so much easier to wish for such information than to obtain it, that, after forming a thousand projects, either the delicacy of his respect for Ellena, or his fear of offending her, or an apprehension of discovery from his family before he had secured an interest in her affections, constantly opposed his views of an enquiry.

In this difficulty he opened his heart to a friend, who had long possessed his confidence, and whose advice he solicited with somewhat more anxiety and sincerity than is usual on such occasions. It was not a sanction of his own opinion that he required, but the impartial judgment of another mind. Bonarmo, however little he might be qualified for the office of an adviser, did not scruple to give his advice. As a means of judging whether Ellena was disposed to favour Vivaldi’s addresses, he proposed that, according to the custom of the country, a serenade should be given; he maintained, that, if she was not disinclined towards him, some sign of approbation would appear; and if otherwise, that she would remain silent and invisible. Vivaldi objected to this coarse and inadequate mode of expressing a love so sacred as his, and he had too lofty an opinion of Ellena’s mind and

delicacy, to believe, that the trifling homage of a serenade would either flatter her self-love, or interest her in his favour; nor, if it did, could he venture to believe, that she would display any sign of approbation.

His friend laughed at his scruples and at his opinion of what he called such romantic delicacy, that his ignorance of the world was his only excuse for having cherished them. But Vivaldi interrupted this raillery, and would neither suffer him for a moment to speak thus of Ellena, or to call such delicacy romantic. Bonarmo, however, still urged the serenade as at least a possible means of discovering her disposition towards him before he made a formal avowal of his suit; and Vivaldi, perplexed and distracted with apprehension and impatience to terminate his present state of suspense, was at length so far overcome by his own difficulties, rather than by his friend's persuasion, that he consented to make the adventure of a serenade on the approaching night. This was adopted rather as a refuge from despondency, than with any hope of success; for he still believed that Ellena would not give any hint, that might terminate his uncertainty.

Beneath their cloaks they carried musical instruments, and, muffling up their faces, so that they could not be known, they proceeded in thoughtful silence on the way to the villa Altieri. Already they had passed the arch, in which Vivaldi was stopped by the stranger on the preceding night, when he heard a sudden sound near him, and, raising his head from the cloak, he perceived the same figure! Before he had time for exclamation, the stranger crossed him again. "Go not to the villa Altieri," said he in a solemn voice, "lest you meet the fate you ought to dread."

"What fate?" demanded Vivaldi, stepping back; "Speak, I conjure you!"

But the monk was gone, and the darkness of the hour baffled observation as to the way of his departure.

"Dio mi guardi!" exclaimed Bonarmo, "this is almost beyond belief! but let us return to Naples; this second warning ought to be obeyed."

"it is almost beyond endurance," exclaimed Vivaldi; "which way did he pass?"

"He glided by me," replied Bonarmo, "and he was gone before I could cross him!"

"I will tempt the worst at once," said Vivaldi; "if I have a rival, it is best to meet him. Let us go on."

Bonarmo remonstrated, and represented the serious danger that threatened from so rash a proceeding. “It is evident that you have a rival,” said he; “and your courage cannot avail you against hired bravos.” Vivaldi’s heart swelled at the mention of a rival. “If you think it dangerous to proceed, I will go alone,” said he.

Hurt by this reproof, Bonarmo accompanied his friend in silence, and they reached without interruption the boundary of the villa. Vivaldi led to the place by which he had entered on the preceding night, and they passed unmolested into the garden.

“Where are these terrible bravos of whom you warned me?” said Vivaldi, with taunting exultation.

“Speak cautiously,” replied his friend; “we may, even now, be within their reach.”

“They also may be within ours,” observed Vivaldi.

At length, these adventurous friends came to the orangery, which was near the house, when, tired by the ascent, they rested to recover breath, and to prepare their instruments for the serenade. The night was still, and they now heard, for the first time, murmurs as of a distant multitude; and then the sudden splendor of fireworks broke upon the sky. These arose from a villa on the western margin of the bay, and were given in honour of the birth of one of the royal princes. They soared to an immense height, and, as their lustre broke silently upon the night, it lightened on the thousand up-turned faces of the gazing crowd, illumined the waters of the bay, with every little boat that skimmed its surface, and shewed distinctly the whole sweep of its rising shores, the stately city of Naples on the strand below, and, spreading far among the hills, its terraced roofs crowded with spectators, and the Corso tumultuous with carriages and blazing with torches.

While Bonarmo surveyed this magnificent scene, Vivaldi turned his eyes to the residence of Ellena, part of which looked out from among the trees, with a hope that the spectacle would draw her to a balcony; but she did not appear, nor was there any light, that might indicate her approach.

While they still refted on the turf of the orangery, they heard a sudden rustling of the leaves, as if the branches were disturbed by some person who endeavoured to make his way between them, when Vivaldi demanded who passed. No answer was returned, and a long silence followed.

“We are observed,” said Bonarmo, at length, “and are even now, perhaps, almost beneath the poinard of the assassin: let us be gone.”

“O that my heart were as secure from the darts of love, the assassin of my peace,” exclaimed Vivaldi, “as yours is from those of bravos! My friend, you have little to interest you, since your thoughts have so much leisure for apprehension.”

“My fear is that of prudence, not of weakness,” retorted Bonarmo, with acrimony; “you will find, perhaps, that I have none, when you most wish me to possess it.”

“I understand you,” replied Vivaldi; “let us finish this business, and you shall receive reparation, since you believe yourself injured: I am as anxious to repair an offence, as jealous of receiving one.”

“Yes,” replied Bonarmo, “you would repair the injury you have done your friend with his blood.”

“Oh! never, never!” said Vivaldi, falling on his neck. “Forgive my hasty violence; allow for the distraction of my mind.”

Bonarmo returned the embrace. “It is enough,” said he; “no more, no more! I hold again my friend to my heart.”

While this conversation passed, they had quitted the orangery, and reached the walls of the villa, where they took their station under a balcony that overhung the lattice, through which Vivaldi had seen Ellena on the preceding night. They tuned their instruments, and opened the serenade with a duet.

Vivaldi’s voice was a fine tenor, and the same susceptibility, which made him passionately fond of music, taught him to modulate its cadence with exquisite delicacy, and to give his emphasis with the most simple and pathetic expression. His soul seemed to breathe in the sounds, — so tender, so imploring, yet so energetic. On this night, enthusiasm inspired him with the highest eloquence, perhaps, which music is capable of attaining; what might be its effect on Ellena he had no means of judging, for she did not appear either at the balcony or the lattice, nor gave any hint of applause. No sounds stole on the stillness of the night, except those of the serenade, nor did any light from within the villa break upon the obscurity without; once, indeed, in a pause of the instruments, Bonarmo fancied he distinguished voices near him, as of persons who feared to be heard, and he listened attentively, but without ascertaining the truth.

Sometimes they seemed to sound heavily in his ear, and then a deathlike silence prevailed. Vivaldi affirmed the sound to be nothing more than the confused murmur of the distant multitude on the shore, but Bonarmo was not thus easily convinced.

The musicians, unsuccessful in their first endeavour to attract attention, removed to the opposite side of the building, and placed themselves in front of the portico, but with as little success; and, after having exercised their powers of harmony and of patience for above an hour, they resigned all further effort to win upon the obdurate Ellena. Vivaldi, notwithstanding the feebleness of his first hope of seeing her, now suffered an agony of disappointment; and Bonarmo, alarmed for the consequence of his despair, was as anxious to persuade him that he had no rival, as he had lately been pertinacious in affirming that he had one.

At length, they left the gardens, Vivaldi protesting that he would not rest till he had discovered the stranger, who so wantonly destroyed his peace, and had compelled him to explain his ambiguous warnings; and Bonarmo remonstrating on the imprudence and difficulty of the search, and representing that such conduct would probably be the means of spreading a report of his attachment, where most he dreaded it should be known.

Vivaldi refused to yield to remonstrance or considerations of any kind. “We shall see,” said he, “whether this demon in the garb of a monk, will haunt me again at the accustomed place; if he does, he shall not escape my grasp; and if he does not, I will watch as vigilantly for his return, as he seems to have done for mine. I will lurk in the shade of the ruin, and wait for him, though it be till death!”

Bonarmo was particularly struck by the vehemence with which he pronounced the last words, but he no longer opposed his purpose, and only bade him consider whether he was well armed, “For,” he added, “you may have need of arms there, though you had no use for them at the villa Altieri. Remember that the stranger told you that your steps were watched.”

“I have my sword,” replied Vivaldi, “and the dagger which I usually wear; but I ought to enquire what are your weapons of defence.”

“Hush!” said Bonarmo, as they turned the foot of a rock that overhung the road, “we are approaching the spot; yonder is the arch!” It appeared duskily in the perspective, suspended between two cliffs, where the road

wound from sight, on one of which were the ruins of the Roman fort it belonged to, and on the other, shadowing pines, and thickets of oak that tufted the rock to its base.

They proceeded in silence, treading lightly, and often throwing a suspicious glance around, expecting every instant that the monk would steal out upon them from some recess of the cliffs. But they passed on unmolested to the archway. “We are here before him, however,” said Vivaldi as they entered the darkness. “Speak low, my friend,” said Bonarmo, “others besides ourselves may be shrouded in this obscurity. I like not the place.”

“Who but ourselves would chuse so dismal a retreat?” whispered Vivaldi, “unless indeed, it were banditti; the savageness of the spot would, in truth, suit their humour, and it suits well also with my own.”

“It would suit their purpose too, as well as their humour,” observed Bonarmo. “Let us remove from this deep shade, into the more open road, where we can as closely observe who passes.”

Vivaldi objected that in the road they might themselves be observed, “and if we are seen by my unknown tormentor, our design is defeated, for he comes upon us suddenly, or not at all, lest we should be prepared to detain him.”

Vivaldi, as he said this, took his station within the thickest gloom of the arch, which was of considerable depth, and near a flight of steps that was cut in the rock, and ascended to the fortress. His friend stepped close to his side. After a pause of silence, during which Bonarmo was meditating, and Vivaldi was impatiently watching, “Do you really believe,” said the former, “that any effort to detain him would be effectual? He glided past me with a strange facility, it was surely more than human!”

“What is it you mean? enquired Vivaldi.

“Why, I mean that I could be superstitious. This place, perhaps, infests my mind with congenial gloom, for I find that, at this moment, there is scarcely a superstition too dark for my credulity.”

Vivaldi smiled. “And you must allow,” added Bonarmo, “that he has appeared under circumstances somewhat extraordinary. How should he know your name, by which, you say, he addressed you at the first meeting? How should he know from whence you came, or whether you designed to return? By what magic could he become acquainted with your plans?”

“Nor am I certain that he is acquainted with them,” observed Vivaldi; “but if he is, there was no necessity for superhuman means to obtain such knowledge.”

“The result of this evening surely ought to convince you that he is acquainted with your designs,” said Bonarmo. “Do you believe it possible that Ellena could have been insensible to your attentions, if her heart had not been pre-engaged, and that she would not have shewn herself at a lattice?”

“You do not know Ellena,” replied Vivaldi, “and therefore I once more pardon you the question. Yet had she been disposed to accept my addresses, surely some sign of approbation,” — he checked himself.

“The stranger warned you not to go to the villa Altieri,” resumed Bonarmo, “he seemed to anticipate the reception, which awaited you, and to know a danger, which hitherto you have happily escaped.”

“Yes, he anticipated too well that reception,” said Vivaldi, losing his prudence in passionate exclamation; “and he is himself, perhaps, the rival, whom he has taught me to suspect. He has assumed a disguise only the more effectually to impose upon my credulity, and to deter me from addressing Ellena. And shall I tamely lie in wait for his approach? Shall I lurk like a guilty assassin for this rival?”

“For heaven’s sake!” said Bonarmo, “moderate these transports; consider where you are. This surmise of yours is in the highest degree improbable.” He gave his reasons for thinking so, and these convinced Vivaldi, who was prevailed upon to be once more patient.

They had remained watchful and still for a considerable time, when Bonarmo saw a person approach the end of the archway nearest to Altieri. He heard no step, but he perceived a shadowy figure station itself at the entrance of the arch, where the twilight of this brilliant climate was, for a few paces, admitted. Vivaldi’s eyes were fixed on the road leading towards Naples, and he, therefore, did not perceive the object of Bonarmo’s attention, who, fearful of his friend’s precipitancy, forbore to point out immediately what he observed, judging it more prudent to watch the motions of this unknown person, that he might ascertain whether it really were the monk. The size of the figure, and the dark drapery in which it seemed wrapt, induced him, at length, to believe that this was the expected stranger; and he seized Vivaldi’s arm to direct his attention to him, when

the form gliding forward disappeared in the gloom, but not before Vivaldi had understood the occasion of his friend's gesture and significant silence. They heard no footstep pass them, and, being convinced that this person, whatever he was, had not left the archway, they kept their station in watchful stillness. Presently they heard a rustling, as of garments, near them, and Vivaldi, unable longer to command his patience, started from his concealment, and with arms extended to prevent any one from escaping, demanded who was there.

The sound ceased, and no reply was made. Bonarmo drew his sword, protesting he would stab the air till he found the person who lurked there; but that if the latter would discover himself, he should receive no injury. This assurance Vivaldi confirmed by his promise. Still no answer was returned; but as they listened for a voice, they thought something passed them, and the avenue was not narrow enough to have prevented such a circumstance. Vivaldi rushed forward, but did not perceive any person issue from the arch into the highway, where the stronger twilight must have discovered him.

"Somebody certainly passed," whispered Bonarmo, "and I think I hear a sound from younder steps, that lead to the fortress."

"Let us follow," cried Vivaldi, and he began to ascend. "Stop, for heaven's sake stop!" said Bonarmo; "consider what you are about! Do not brave the utter darkness of these ruins; do not pursue the assassin to his den!"

"It is the monk himself!" exclaimed Vivaldi, still ascending; "he shall not escape me!"

Bonarmo paused a moment at the foot of the steps, and his friend disappeared; he hesitated what to do, till ashamed of suffering him to encounter danger alone, he sprang to the flight, and not without difficulty surmounted the rugged steps.

Having reached the summit of the rock, he found himself on a terrace, that ran along the top of the archway and had once been fortified; this, crossing the road, commanded the defile each way. Some remains of massy walls, that still exhibited loops for archers, were all that now hinted of its former use. It led to a watchtower almost concealed in thick pines, that crowned the opposite cliff, and had thus served not only for a strong

battery over the road, but, connecting the opposite sides of the defile, had formed a line of communication between the fort and this outpost.

Bonarmo looked round in vain for his friend, and the echoes of his own voice only, among the rocks, replied to his repeated calls. After some hesitation whether to enter the walls of the main building, or to cross to the watchtower, he determined on the former, and entered a rugged area, the walls of which, following the declivities of the precipice, could scarcely now be traced. The citadel, a round tower, of majestic strength, with some Roman arches scattered near, was all that remained of this once important fortress; except, indeed, a mass of ruins near the edge of the cliff, the construction of which made it difficult to guess for what purpose it had been designed.

Bonarmo entered the immense walls of the citadel, but the utter darkness within checked his progress, and, contenting himself with calling loudly on Vivaldi, he returned to the open air.

As he approached the mass of ruins, whose singular form had interested his curiosity, he thought he distinguished the low accents of a human voice, and while he listened in anxiety, a person rushed forth from a doorway of the ruin, carrying a drawn sword. It was Vivaldi himself. Bonarmo sprang to meet him; he was pale and breathless, and some moments elapsed before he could speak, or appeared to hear the repeated enquiries of his friend.

“Let us go,” said Vivaldi, “let us leave this place!”

“Most willingly,” replied Bonarmo, “but where have you been, and who have you seen, that you are thus affected.”

“Ask me no more questions, let us go,” repeated Vivaldi.

They descended the rock together, and when, having reached the archway, Bonarmo enquired, half sportively, whether they should remain any longer on the watch, his friend answered, “No!” with an emphasis that startled him. They passed hastily on the way to Naples, Bonarmo repeating enquiries which Vivaldi seemed reluctant to satisfy, and wondering no less at the cause of this sudden reserve, than anxious to know whom he had seen.

“It was the monk, then,” said Bonarmo; “you secured him at last?”

“I know not what to think,” replied Vivaldi, “I am more perplexed than ever.”

“He escaped you then?”

“We will speak of this in future,” said Vivaldi; “but be it as it may, the business rests not here. I will return in the night of tomorrow with a torch; dare you venture yourself with me?”

“I know not,” replied Bonarmo, “whether I ought to do so, since I am not informed for what purpose.”

“I will not press you to go,” said Vivaldi; “my purpose is already known to you.”

“Have you really failed to discover the stranger — have you still doubts concerning the person you pursued?”

“I have doubts, which tomorrow night, I hope, will dissipate.”

“This is very strange!” said Bonarmo, “It was but now that I witnessed the horror, with which you left the fortress of Paluzzi, and already you speak of returning to it! And why at night — why not in the day, when less danger would beset you?”

“I know not as to that,” replied Vivaldi, “you are to observe that daylight never pierces within the recess, to which I penetrated; we must search the place with torches at whatsoever hour we would examine it.”

“Since this is necessary,” said Bonarmo, “how happens it that you found your way in total darkness?”

“I was too much engaged to know how; I was led on, as by an invisible hand.”

“We must, notwithstanding,” observed Bonarmo, “go in daytime, if not by daylight, provided I accompany you. It would be little less than insanity to go twice to a place, which is probably infested with robbers, and at their own hour of midnight.”

“I shall watch again in the accustomed place,” replied Vivaldi, “before I use my last resource, and this cannot be done during the day. Besides, it is necessary that I should go at a particular hour, the hour when the monk has usually appeared.”

“He did escape you, then?” said Bonarmo, “and you are still ignorant concerning who he is?”

Vivaldi rejoined only with an enquiry whether his friend would accompany him.

“If not,” he added, “I must hope to find another companion.”

Bonarmo said, that he must consider of the proposal, and would acquaint him with his determination before the following evening.

While this conversation concluded, they were in Naples, and at the gates of the Vivaldi palace, where they separated for the remainder of the night.

Chapter 2

Olivia.
“Why what would you?”

Viola.
“Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantos of contemned love,
And sing them loud even in the dead of night:
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out, Olivia! O! you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth,
But you should pity me.”
Twelfth Night.

Since Vivaldi had failed to procure an explanation of the words of the monk, he determined to relieve himself from the tortures of suspence, respecting a rival, by going to the villa Altieri, and declaring his pretensions. On the morning immediately following his late adventure, he went thither, and on enquiring for Signora Bianchi, was told that she could not be seen. With much difficulty he prevailed upon the old housekeeper to deliver a request that he might be permitted to wait upon her for a few moments. Permission was granted him, when he was conducted into the very apartment where he had formerly seen Ellena. It was unoccupied and he was told that Signora Bianchi would be there presently.

During this interval, he was agitated at one moment with quick impatience, and at another with enthusiastic pleasure, while he gazed on the altar whence he had seen Ellena rise, and where, to his fancy, she still appeared; and on every object, on which he knew her eyes had lately dwelt. These objects, so familiar to her, had in the imagination of Vivaldi acquired somewhat of the sacred character she had impressed upon his

heart, and affected him in some degree as her presence would have done. He trembled as he took up the lute she had been accustomed to touch, and, when he awakened the chords, her own voice seemed to speak. A drawing, half-finished, of a dancing nymph remained on a stand, and he immediately understood that her hand had traced the lines. It was a copy from Herculaneum, and, though a copy, was touched with the spirit of original genius. The light steps appeared almost to move, and the whole figure displayed the airy lightness of exquisite grace. Vivaldi perceived this to be one of a set that ornamented the apartment, and observed with surprise, that they were the particular subjects, which adorned his father's cabinet, and which he had understood to be the only copies permitted from the originals in the royal museum.

Every object, on which his eyes rested, seemed to announce the presence of Ellena; and the very flowers that so gaily embellished the apartment, breathed forth a perfume, which fascinated his senses and affected his imagination. Before Signora Bianchi appeared, his anxiety and apprehension had encreased so much, that, believing he should be unable to support himself in her presence, he was more than once upon the point of leaving the house. At length, he heard her approaching step from the hall, and his breath almost forsook him. The figure of Signora Bianchi was not of an order to inspire admiration, and a spectator might have smiled to see the perturbation of Vivaldi, his faultering step and anxious eye, as he advanced to meet the venerable Bianchi, as he bowed upon her faded hand, and listened to her querulous voice. She received him with an air of reserve, and some moments passed before he could recollect himself sufficiently to explain the purpose of his visit; yet this, when he discovered it, did not apparently surprise her. She listened with composure, though with somewhat of a severe countenance, to his protestations of regard for her niece, and when he implored her to intercede for him in obtaining the hand of Ellena, she said, "I cannot be ignorant that a family of your rank must be averse to an union with one ofmine; nor am I unacquainted that a full sense of the value of birth is a marking feature in the characters of the Marchese and Marchesa di Vivaldi. This proposal must be disagreeable or, at least, unknown to them; and I am to inform you, Signor, that, though Signora di Rosalba is their inferior in rank, she is their equal in pride."

Vivaldi disdained to prevaricate, yet was shocked to own the truth thus abruptly. The ingenuous manner, however, with which he at length did this, and the energy of a passion too eloquent to be misunderstood, somewhat soothed the anxiety of Signora Bianchi, with whom other considerations began to arise. She considered that from her own age and infirmities she must very soon, in the course of nature, leave Ellena a young and friendless orphan; still somewhat dependent upon her own industry, and entirely so on her discretion. With much beauty and little knowledge of the world, the dangers of her future situation appeared in vivid colours to the affectionate mind of Signora Bianchi; and she sometimes thought that it might be right to sacrifice considerations, which in other circumstances would be laudable, to the obtaining for her niece the protection of a husband and a man of honour. If in this instance she descended from the lofty integrity, which ought to have opposed her consent that Ellena should clandestinely enter any family, her parental anxiety may soften the censure she deserved.

But, before she determined upon this subject, it was necessary to ascertain that Vivaldi was worthy of the confidence she might repose in him. To try, also, the constancy of his affection, she gave little present encouragement to his hopes. His request to see Ellena she absolutely refused, till she should have considered further of his proposals; and his enquiry whether he had a rival, and, if he had, whether Ellena was disposed to favour him, she evaded, since she knew that a reply would give more encouragement to his hopes, than it might hereafter be proper to confirm.

Vivaldi, at length, took his leave, released, indeed, from absolute despair, but scarcely encouraged to hope; ignorant that he had a rival, yet doubtful whether Ellena honoured himself with any share of her esteem.

He had received permission to wait upon Signora Bianchi on a future day, but till that day should arrive time appeared motionless; and, since it seemed utterly impossible to endure this interval of suspence, his thoughts on the way to Naples were wholy engaged in contriving the means of concluding it, till he reached the wellknown arch, and looked round, though hopelessly, for his mysterious tormentor. The stranger did not appear; and Vivaldi pursued the road, determined to revisit the spot at

night, and also to return privately to villa Altieri, where he hoped a second visit might procure for him some relief from his present anxiety.

When he reached home he found that the Marchese, his father, had left an order for him to await his arrival; which he obeyed; but the day passed without his return. The marchesa, when she saw him, enquired, with a look that expressed much, how he had engaged himself of late, and completely frustrated his plans for the evening, by requiring him to attend her to Portici. Thus he was prevented from receiving Bonarmo's determination, from watching at Paluzzi, and from revisiting Ellena's residence.

He remained at Portici the following evening, and, on his return to Naples, the Marchese being again absent, he continued ignorant of the intended subject of the interview. A note from Bonarmo brought a refusal to accompany him to the fortress, and urged him to forbear so dangerous a visit. Being for this night unprovided with a companion for the adventure, and unwilling to go alone, Vivaldi deferred it to another evening; but no consideration could deter him from visiting the villa Altieri. Not chusing to solicit his friend to accompany him thither, since he had refused his first request, he took his solitary lute, and reached the garden at an earlier hour than usual.

The sun had been set above an hour, but the horizon still retained somewhat of a saffron brilliancy, and the whole dome of the sky had an appearance of transparency, peculiar to this enchanting climate, which seemed to diffuse a more soothing twilight over the reposing world. In the south-east the outline of Vesuvius appeared distinctly, but the mountain itself was dark and silent.

Vivaldi heard only the quick and eager voices of some Lazaroni at a distance on the shore, as they contended at the simple game of maro. From the bowery lattices of a small pavilion within the orangery, he perceived a light, and the sudden hope, which it occasioned, of seeing Ellena, almost overcame him. It was impossible to resist the opportunity of beholding her, yet he checked the impatient step he was taking, to ask himself, whether it was honorable thus to steal upon her retirement, and become an unsuspected observer of her secret thoughts. But the temptation was too powerful for this honorable hesitation; the pause was momentary; and, stepping lightly towards the pavilion, he placed himself near an open lattice, so as to be shrouded from observation by the branches of an

orange-tree, while he obtained a full view of the apartment. Ellena was alone, sitting in a thoughtful attitude and holding her lute, which she did not play. She appeared lost to a consciousness of surrounding objects, and a tenderness was on her countenance, which seemed to tell him that her thoughts were engaged by some interesting subject. Recollecting that, when last he had seen her thus, she pronounced his name, his hope revived, and he was going to discover himself and appear at her feet, when she spoke, and he paused.

"Why this unreasonable pride of birth!" said she; "A visionary prejudice destroys our peace. Never would I submit to enter a family averse to receive me; they shall learn, at least, that I inherit nobility of soul. O! Vivaldi! but for this unhappy prejudice!" —

Vivaldi, while he listened to this, was immovable; he seemed as if entranced; the sound of her lute and voice recalled him, and he heard her sing the first stanza of the very air, with which he had opened the serenade on a former night, and with such sweet pathos as the composer must have felt when he was inspired with the idea.

She paused at the conclusion of the first stanza, when Vivaldi, overcome by the temptation of such an opportunity for expressing his passion, suddenly struck the chords of the lute, and replied to her in the second. The tremor of his voice, though it restrained his tones, heightened its eloquence. Ellena instantly recollected it; her colour alternately faded and returned; and, before the verse concluded, she seemed to have lost all consciousness. Vivaldi was now advancing into the pavilion, when his approach recalled her; she waved him to retire, and before he could spring to her support, she rose and would have left the place, had he not interrupted her and implored a few moments attention.

"It is impossible," said Ellena.

"Let me only hear you say that I am not hateful to you," rejoined Vivaldi; "that this intrusion has not deprived me of the regard, with which but now you acknowledged you honoured me." —

"Oh, never, never!" interrupted Ellena, impatiently; "forget that I ever made such acknowledgement; forget that you ever heard it; I know not what I said."

"Ah, beautiful Ellena! do you think it possible I ever can forget it? It will be the solace of my solitary hours, the hope that shall sustain me." —

“I cannot be detained Signor,” interrupted Ellena, still more embarrassed, “or forgive myself for having permitted such a conversation;” but as she spoke the last words, an involuntary smile seemed to contradict their meaning. Vivaldi believed the smile in spite of the words; but, before he could express the lightning joy of conviction, she had left the pavilion; he followed through the garden — but she was gone.

From this moment Vivaldi seemed to have arisen into a new existence; the whole world to him was Paradise; that smile seemed impressed upon his heart for ever. In the fulness of present joy, he believed it impossible that he could ever be unhappy again, and defied the utmost malice of future fortune. With footsteps light as air, he returned to Naples, nor once remembered to look for his old monitor on the way.

The Marchese and his mother being from home, he was left at his leisure to indulge the rapturous recollection, that pressed upon his mind, and of which he was impatient of a moment’s interruption. All night he either traversed his apartment with an agitation equal to that, which anxiety had so lately inflicted, or composed and destroyed letters to Ellena; sometimes fearing that he had written too much, and at others feeling that he had written too little; recollecting circumstances which he ought to have mentioned, and lamenting the cold expression of a passion, to which it appeared that no language could do justice.

By the hour when the domestics had risen, he had, however, completed a letter somewhat more to his satisfaction, and he dispatched it to the villa Altieri by a confidential person; but the servant had scarcely quitted the gates, when he recollected new arguments, which he wished to urge, and expressions to change of the utmost importance to enforce his meaning, and he would have given half the world to have recalled the messenger.

In this state of agitation he was summoned to attend the Marchese, who had been too much engaged of late to keep his own appointment. Vivaldi was not long in doubt as to the subject of this interview.

“I have wished to speak with you,” said the Marchese, assuming an air of haughty severity, “upon a subject of the utmost importance to your honour and happiness; and I wished, also, to give you an opportunity of contradicting a report, which would have occasioned me considerable uneasiness, if I could have believed it. Happily I had too much confidence in my son to credit this; and I affirmed that he understood too well what

was due both to his family and himself, to take any step derogatory from the dignity of either. My motive for this conversation, therefore, is merely to afford you a moment for refuting the calumny I shall mention, and to obtain for myself authority for contradicting it to the persons who have communicated it to me."

Vivaldi waited impatiently for the conclusion of this exordium, and then begged to be informed of the subject of the report.

"It is said," resumed the Marchese, "that there is a young woman, who is called Ellena Rosalba, — I think that is the name; — do you know any person of the name?"

"Do I know!" exclaimed Vivaldi, "but pardon me, pray proceed, my Lord."

The Marchese paused, and regarded his son with sternness, but without surprize.

"It is said, that a young person of this name has contrived to fascinate your affections, and" —

"It is most true, my Lord, that Signora Rosalba has won my affections," interrupted Vivaldi with honest impatience, "but without contrivance."

"I will not be interrupted," said the Marchese, interrupting in his turn. "It is said that she has so artfully adapted her temper to yours, that, with the assistance of a relation who lives with her, she has reduced you to the degrading situation of her devoted suitor."

"Signora Rosalba has, my Lord, exalted me to the honour of being her suitor," said Vivaldi, unable longer to command his feelings. He was proceeding, when the Marchese abruptly checked him, "You avow your folly then!"

"My Lord, I glory in my choice."

"Young man," rejoined his father, "as this is the arrogance and romantic enthusiasm of a boy, I am willing to forgive it for once, and observe me, only for once. If you will acknowledge your error, instantly dismiss this new favourite." —

"My Lord!"

"You must instantly dismiss her," repeated the Marchese with sterner emphasis; "and, to prove that I am more merciful than just, I am willing, on this condition, to allow her a small annuity as some reparation for the depravity, into which you have assisted to sink her."

“My Lord!” exclaimed Vivaldi aghast, and scarcely daring to trust his voice, “my Lord! — depravity?” struggling for breath. “Who has dared to pollute her spotless fame by insulting your ears with such infamous falsehood? Tell me, I conjure you, instantly tell me, that I may hasten to give him his reward. Depravity! — an annuity — an annuity! O Ellena! Ellena!” As he pronounced her name tears of tenderness mingled with those of indignation.

“Young man,” said the Marchese, who had observed the violence of his emotion with strong displeasure and alarm, “I do not lightly give faith to report, and I cannot suffer myself to doubt the truth of what I have advanced. You are deceived, and your vanity will continue the delusion, unless I condescend to exert my authority, and tear the veil from your eyes. Dismiss her instantly, and I will adduce proof of her former character which will stagger even your faith, enthusiastic as it is.”

“Dismiss her!” repeated Vivaldi, with calm yet stern energy, such as his father had never seen him assume; “My Lord, you have never yet doubted my word, and I now pledge you that honourable word, that Ellena is innocent. Innocent! O heavens, that it should ever be necessary to affirm so, and, above all, that it should ever be necessary for me to vindicate her!”

“I must indeed lament that it ever should,” replied the Marchese coldly. “You have pledged your word, which I cannot question. I believe, therefore, that you are deceived; that you think her virtuous, notwithstanding your midnight visits to her house. And grant she is, unhappy boy! what reparation can you make her for the infatuated folly, which has thus stained her character? What” —

“By proclaiming to the world, my Lord, that she is worthy of becoming my wife,” replied Vivaldi, with a glow of countenance, which announced the courage and the exultation of a virtuous mind.

“Your wife!” said the Marchese, with a look of ineffable disdain, which was instantly succeeded by one of angry alarm.— “If I believed you could so far forget what is due to the honour of your house, I would for ever disclaim you as my son.”

“O! why,” exclaimed Vivaldi, in an agony of conflicting passions, “why should I be in danger of forgetting what is due to a father, when I am only asserting what is due to innocence; when I am only defending her, who has

no other to defend her! Why may not I be permitted to reconcile duties so congenial! But, be the event what it may, I will defend the oppressed, and glory in the virtue, which teaches me, that it is the first duty of humanity to do so. Yes, my Lord, if it must be so, I am ready to sacrifice inferior duties to the grandeur of a principle, which ought to expand all hearts and impel all actions. I shall best support the honour of my house by adhering to its dictates."

"Where is the principle," said the Marchese, impatiently, "which shall teach you to disobey a father; where is the virtue which shall instruct you to degrade your family?"

"There can be no degradation, my Lord, where there is no vice," replied Vivaldi; "and there are instances, pardon me, my Lord, there are some few instances in which it is virtuous to disobey."

"This paradoxical morality," said the Marchese, with passionate displeasure, "and this romantic language, sufficiently explain to me the character of your associates, and the innocence of her, whom you defend with so chivalric an air. Are you to learn, Signor, that you belong to your family, not your family to you; that you are only a guardian of its honour, and not at liberty to dispose of yourself? My patience will endure no more!"

Nor could the patience of Vivaldi endure this repeated attack on the honor of Ellena. But, while he yet asserted her innocence, he endeavoured to do so with the temper, which was due to the presence of a father; and, though he maintained the independence of a man, he was equally anxious to preserve inviolate the dutie of a son. But unfortunately the Marchese and Vivaldi differed in opinion concerning the limits of these duties; the first extending them to passive obedience, and the latter conceiving them to conclude at a point, wherein the happiness of an individual is so deeply concerned as in marriage. They parted mutually inflamed; Vivaldi unable to prevail with his father to mention the name of his infamous informant, or to acknowledge himself convinced of Ellena's innocence; and the Marchese equally unsuccessful in his endeavours to obtain from his son a promise that he would see her no more.

Here then was Vivaldi, who only a few short hours before had experienced a happiness so supreme as to efface all impressions of the past, and to annihilate every consideration of the future; a joy so full that

it permitted him not to believe it possible that he could ever again taste of misery; he, who had felt as if that moment was as an eternity, rendering him independent of all others, — even he was thus soon fallen into the region of time and of suffering.

The present conflict of passion appeared endless; he loved his father, and would have been more shocked to consider the vexation he was preparing for him, had he not been resentful of the contempt he expressed for Ellena. He adored Ellena; and, while he felt the impractability of resigning his hopes, was equally indignant of the slander, which affected her name, and impatient to avenge the insult upon the original defamer.

Though the displeasure of his father concerning a marriage with Ellena had been already foreseen, the experience of it was severer and more painful than he had imagined; while the indignity offered to Ellena was as unexpected as intolerable. But this circumstance furnished him with an additional argument for addressing her; for, if it had been possible that his love could have paused, his honour seemed now engaged in her behalf; and, since he had been a means of sullying her fame, it became his duty to restore it. Willingly listening to the dictates of a duty so plausible, he determined to persevere in his original design. But his first efforts were directed to discover her slanderer, and recollecting, with surprize, those words of the Marchese, which had confessed a knowledge of his evening visits to the villa Altieri, the doubtful warnings of the monk seemed explained. He believed that this man was at once the spy of his steps, and the defamer of his love, till the inconsistency of such conduct with the seeming friendliness of his admonitions, struck Vivaldi and compelled him to believe the contrary.

Meanwhile, the heart of Ellena had been little less tranquil. It was divided by love and pride; but had she been acquainted with the circumstances of the late interview between the Marchese and Vivaldi, it would have been divided no longer, and a just regard for her own dignity would instantly have taught her to subdue, without difficulty, this infant affection.

Signora Bianchi had informed her niece of the subject of Vivaldi’s visit; but she had softened the objectionable circumstances that attended his proposal, and had, at first, merely hinted that it was not to be supposed his family would approve a connection with any person so much their inferior

in rank as herself. Ellena, alarmed by this suggestion, replied, that, since she believed so, she had done right to reject Vivaldi's suit; but her sigh, as she said this, did not escape the observation of Signora Bianchi, who ventured to add, that she had not absolutely rejected his offers.

While in this and future conversations, Ellena was pleased to perceive her secret admiration thus justified by an approbation so indisputable as that of her aunt, and was willing to believe that the circumstance, which had alarmed her just pride, was not so humiliating as she at first imagined, Bianchi was careful to conceal the real considerations, which had induced her to listen to Vivaldi, being well assured that they would have no weight with Ellena, whose generous heart and inexperienced mind would have revolted from mingling any motives of interest with an engagement so sacred as that of marriage. When, however, from further deliberation upon the advantages, which such an alliance must secure for her niece, Signora Bianchi determined to encourage his views, and to direct the mind of Ellena, whose affections were already engaged on her side, the opinions of the latter were found less ductile than had been expected. She was shocked at the idea of entering clandestinely the family of Vivaldi. But Bianchi, whose infirmities urged her wishes, was now so strongly convinced of the prudence of such an engagement for her niece, that she determined to prevail over her reluctance, though she perceived that this must be by means more gradual and persuasive than she had believed necessary. On the evening, when Vivaldi had surprised from Ellena an acknowledgment of her sentiments, her embarrassment and vexation, on her returning to the house, and relating what had occurred, sufficiently expressed to Signora Bianchi the exact situation of her heart. And when, on the following morning, his letter arrived, written with the simplicity and energy of truth, the aunt neglected not to adapt her remarks upon it, to the character of Ellena, with her usual address.

Vivaldi, after the late interview with the Marchese, passed the remainder of the day in considering various plans, which might discover to him the person, who had abused the credulity of his father; and in the evening he returned once more to the villa Altieri, not in secret, to serenade the dark balcony of his mistress, but openly, and to converse with Signora Bianchi, who now received him more courteously than on his former visit. Attributing the anxiety in his countenance to the uncertainty,

concerning the disposition of her niece, she was neither surprised or offended, but ventured to relieve him from a part of it, by encouraging his hopes. Vivaldi dreaded lest she should enquire further respecting the sentiments of his family, but she spared both his delicacy and her own on this point; and, after a conversation of considerable length, he left the villa Altieri with a heart somewhat soothed by approbation, and lightened by hope, although he had not obtained a sight of Ellena. The disclosure she had made of her sentiments on the preceding evening, and the hints she had received as to those of his family, still wrought upon her mind with too much effect to permit an interview.

Soon after his return to Naples, the Marchesa, whom he was surprised to find disengaged, sent for him to her closet, where a scene passed similar to that which had occurred with his father, except that the Marchesa was more dexterous in her questions, and more subtle in her whole conduct; and that Vivaldi, never for a moment, forgot the decorum which was due to a mother. Managing his passions, rather than exasperating them, and deceiving him with respect to the degree of resentment she felt from his choice, she was less passionate than the Marchese in her observations and menaces, perhaps, only because she entertained more hope than he did of preventing the evil she contemplated.

Vivaldi quitted her, unconvinced — by her arguments, unsubdued by her prophecies, and unmoved in his designs. He was not alarmed, because he did not sufficiently understand her character to apprehend her purposes. Despairing to effect these by open violence, she called in an auxiliary of no mean talents, and whose character and views well adapted him to be an instrument in her hands. It was, perhaps, the baseness of her own heart, not either depth of reflexion or keenness of penetration, which enabled her to understand the nature of his; and she determined to modulate that nature to her own views.

There lived in the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, at Naples, a man called father Schedoni; an Italian, as his name imported, but whose family was unknown, and from some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his origin. For whatever reason, he was never heard to mention a relative, or the place of his nativity, and he had artfully eluded every enquiry that approached the subject, which the curiosity of his associates had occasionally prompted. There were

circumstances, however, which appeared to indicate him to be a man of birth, and of fallen fortune; his spirit, as it had sometimes looked forth from under the disguise of his manners, seemed lofty; it shewed not, however, the aspirings of a generous mind, but rather the gloomy pride of a disappointed one. Some few persons in the convent, who had been interested by his appearance, believed that the peculiarities of his manners, his severe reserve and unconquerable silence, his solitary habits and frequent penances, were the effect of misfortunes preying upon a haughty and disordered spirit; while others conjectured them the consequence of some hideous crime gnawing upon an awakened conscience.

He would sometimes abstract himself from the society for whole days together, or when with such a disposition he was comelled to mingle with it, he seemed unconscious where he was, and continued shrouded in meditation and silence till he was again alone. There were times when it was unknown whither he had retired, notwithstanding that his steps had been watched, and his customary haunts examined. No one ever heard him complain. The elder brothers of the convent said that he had talents, but denied him learning; they applauded him for the profound subtlety which he occasionally discovered in argument, but observed that he seldom perceived truth when it lay on the surface; he could follow it through all the labysinths of disquisition, but overlooked it, when it was undisguised before him. In fact he cared no for truth, nor sought it by bold and broad argument, but loved to exert the wily cunning of his nature in hunting it through artificial perplexities. At length, from a habit of intricacy and suspicion, his vitiated mind could receive nothing for truth, which was simple and easily comprehended.

Among his associates no one loved him, many disliked him, and more feared him. His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air; something almost superhuman. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, encreased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was

something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that can not easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice. Yet, notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons, whom he wished to conciliate, with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph. This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchesa di Vivaldi. In the first effervescence of pride and indignation, which the discovery of her son’s intended marriage occasioned, she consulted him on the means of preventing it, and she soon perceived that his talents promised to equal her wishes. Each possessed, in a considerable degree, the power of assisting the other; Schedoni had subtlety with ambition to urge it; and the Marchesa had inexorable pride, and courtly influence; the one hoped to obtain a high benefice for his services, and the other to secure the imaginary dignity of her house, by her gifts. Prompted by such passions, and allured by such views, they concerted in private, and unknown even to the Marchese, the means of accomplishing their general end.

Vivaldi, as he quitted his mother’s closet, had met Schedoni in the corridor leading thither. He knew him to be her confessor, and was not much surprised to see him, though the hour was an unusual one. Schedoni bowed his head, as he passed, and assumed a meek and holy countenance; but Vivaldi, as he eyed him with a penetrating glance, now recoiled with involuntary emotion; and it seemed as if a shuddering presentiment of what this monk was preparing for him, had crossed his mind.

Chapter 3

— “Art thou any thing?
Art thou some God, some Angel, or some Devil
That mak’st my blood cold, and my hair to stand?
Speak to me, what thou art.”
Julius Cæsar.

Vivaldi, from the period of his last visit to Altieri, was admitted a frequent visitor to Signora Bianchi, and Ellena was, at length, prevailed upon to join the party, when the conversation was always on indifferent topics. Bianchi, understanding the disposition of her niece’s affections, and the accomplished mind and manners of Vivaldi, judged that he was more likely to succeed by silent attentions than by a formal declaration of his sentiments. By such declaration, Ellena, till her heart was more engaged in his cause, would, perhaps, have been alarmed into an absolute rejection of his addresses, and this was every day less likely to happen, so long as he had an opportunity of conversing with her.

Signora Bianchi had acknowledged to Vivaldi that he had no rival to apprehend; that Ellena had uniformly rejected every admirer who had hitherto discovered her within the shade of her retirement, and that her present reserve proceeded more from considerations of the sentiments of his family than from disapprobation of himself. He forbore, therefore, to press his suit, till he should have secured a stronger interest in her heart, and in this hope he was encouraged by Signora Bianchi, whose gentle remonstrances in his favour became every day more pleasing and more convincing.

Several weeks passed away in this kind of intercourse, till Ellena, yielding to the representations of Signora Bianchi, and to the pleadings of her own heart, received Vivaldi as an acknowledged admirer, and the sentiments of his family were no longer remembered, or, if remembered, it was with a hope that they might be overcome by considerations more powerful.

The lovers, with Signora Bianchi and a Signor Giotto, a distant relation of the latter, frequently made excursions in the delightful environs of Naples; for Vivaldi was no longer anxious to conceal his attachment, but wished to contradict any report injurious to his love, by the publicity of his conduct; while the consideration, that Ellena's name had suffered by his late imprudence, contributed, with the unsuspecting innocence and sweetness of her manners towards him, who had been the occasion of her injuries, to mingle a sacred pity with his love, which obliterated all family politics from his mind, and bound her irrecoverably to his heart.

These excursions sometimes led them to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo, and as, on their return, they glided along the moonlight bay, the melodies of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour, the voices of the vine-dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed, after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance from fishermen, on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while their company listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence, than is in the power of art alone to display; and at others, while they observed the airy natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasants of Naples. Frequently as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape, the cliffs, branching into wild forms, crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down their steeps in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants cabins hanging on the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand — all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moonlight. On the other hand, the sea trembling with a long line of radiance, and shewing in the clear distance the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented a prospect as grand as the landscape was beautiful.

One evening that Vivaldi sat with Ellena and Signora Bianchi, in the very pavilion where he had overheard that short but interesting soliloquy, which assured him of her regard, he pleaded with more than his usual earnestness for a speedy marriage. Bianchi did not oppose his arguments;

she had been unwell for some time, and, believing herself to be declining fast, was anxious to have their nuptials concluded. She surveyed with languid eyes, the scene that spread before the pavilion. The strong effulgence which a setting-sun threw over the sea, shewing innumerable gaily painted ships, and fishing-boats returning from Santa Lucia into the port of Naples, had no longer power to cheer her. Even the Roman tower that terminated the mole below, touched as it was with the slanting rays; and the various figures of fishermen, who lay smoking beneath its walls, in the long shadow, or stood in the sunshine on the beach, watching the approaching boats of their comrades, combined a picture which was no longer interesting. “Alas!” said she, breaking from meditative silence, “this sun so glorious, which lights up all the various colouring of these shores, and the glow of those majestic mountains; alas! I feel that it will not long shine for me — my eyes must soon close upon the prospect for ever!”

To Ellena’s tender reproach for this melancholy suggestion Bianchi replied only by expressing an earnest wish to witness the certainty of her being protected; adding, that this must be soon, or she should not live to see it. Ellena, extremely shocked both by this presage of her aunt’s fate, and by the direct reference made to her own condition in the presence of Vivaldi, burst into tears, while he, supported by the wishes of Signora Bianchi, urged his suit with encreased interest.

“This is not a time for fastidious scruples,” said Bianchi, “now that a solemn truth calls out to us. My dear girl, I will not disguise my feelings; they assure me I have not long to live. Grant me then the only request I have to make, and my last hours will be comforted.”

After a pause she added, as she took the hand of her niece, “This will, no doubt, be an awful separation to us both; and it must also be a mournful one, Signor,” turning to Vivaldi, “for she has been as a daughter to me, and I have, I trust, fulfilled to her the duties of a mother. Judge then, what will be her feelings when I am no more. But it will be your care to sooth them.”

Vivaldi looked at Ellena, and would have spoken; her aunt, however, proceeded. “My own feelings would now be little less poignant, if I did not believe that I was confiding her to a tenderness, which cannot diminish; that I should prevail with her to accept the protection of a husband. To you, Signor, I commit the legacy of my child. Watch over her future moments,

guard her from inquietude as vigilantly as I have done, and, if possible, from misfortune! I have yet much to say, but my spirits are exhausted."

While he listened to this sacred charge, and recollected the injury Ellena had already sustained for his sake, by the cruel obliquy which the Marchese had thrown upon her character, he suffered a degree of generous indignation, f which he scarcely could conceal the cause, and a succeeding tenderness that almost melted him to tears; and he secretly vowed to defend her fame and protect her peace, at the sacrifice of every other consideration.

Bianchi, as she concluded her exhortation, gave Ellena's hand to Vivaldi, who received it with emotion such as his countenance, only, could express, and with solemn fervour raising his eyes to heaven, vowed that he never would betray the confidence thus reposed in him, but would watch over the happiness of Ellena with a care as tender, as anxious, and as unceasing as her own; that from this moment he considered himself bound by ties not less sacred than those which the church confers, to defend her as his wife, and would do so to the latest moment of his existence. As he said this, the truth of his feelings appeared in the energy of his manner.

Ellena, still weeping, and agitated by various considerations, spoke not, but with drawing the handkerchief from her face, she looked at him through her tears, with a smile so meek, so affectionate, so timid, yet so confiding, as expressed all the mingled emotions of her heart, and appealed more eloquently to his, than the most energetic language could have done.

Before Vivaldi left the villa, he had some further conversation with Signora Bianchi, when it was agreed that the nuptials should be solemnized on the following week, if Ellena could be prevailed on to confirm her consent so soon; and that when he returned the next day, her determination would probably be made known to him.

He departed for Naples once more with the lightly-bounding steps of joy, which, however, when he arrived there, was somewhat alloyed by a message from the Marchese, demanding to see him in his cabinet. Vivaldi anticipated the subject of the interview, and obeyed the summons with reluctance.

He found his father so absorbed in thought, that he did not immediately perceive him. On raising his eyes from the floor, where discontent and

perplexity seemed to have held them, he fixed a stern regard on Vivaldi. “I understand,” said he, “that you persist in the unworthy pursuit against which I warned you. I have left you thus long to your own discretion, because I was willing to afford you an opportunity of retracting with grace the declaration, which you have dared to make me of your principles and intentions; but your conduct has not therefore been the less observed. I am informed that your visits have been as frequent at the residence of the unhappy young woman, who was the subject of our former conversation, as formerly, and that you are as much insatuated.”

“If it is Signora Rosalba, whom your lordship means,” said Vivaldi, “she is not unhappy; and I do not scruple to own, that I am as sincerely attached to her as ever. Why, my dear father,” continued he, subduing the feelings which this degrading mention of Ellena had aroused, “why will you persist in opposing the happiness of your son; and above all, why will you continue to think unjustly of her, who deserves your admiration, as much as my love?”

“As I am not a lover,” replied the Marchese, “and that the age of boyish credulity is past with me, I do not wilfully close my mind against examination, but am directed by proof and yield to conviction.”

“What proof is it, my Lord, that has thus easily convinced you?” said Vivaldi; “Who is it that persists in abusing your confidence, and in destroying my peace?”

The Marchese haughtily reproved his son for such doubts and questions, and a long conversation ensued, which seemed neither to reconcile the interests or the opinions of either party. The Marchese persisted in accusation and menace; and Vivaldi in defending Ellena, and in affirming, that his affections and intentions were irrecoverable.

Not any art of persuasion could prevail with the Marchese to adduce his proofs, or deliver up the name of his informer; nor any menace awe Vivaldi into a renunciation of Ellena; and they parted mutually dissatisfied. The Marchese had failed on this occasion to act with his usual policy, for his menaces and accusations had aroused spirit and indignation, when kindness and gentle remonstrance would certainly have awakened filial affection, and might have occasioned a contest in the breast of Vivaldi, Now, no struggle of opposing duties divided his resolution. He had no hesitation on the subject of their dispute; but, regarding his father

as a haughty oppressor who would rob him of his most sacred right; and as one who did not scruple to stain the name of the innocent and the defenceless, when his interest required it, upon the doubtful authority of a base informer, he suffered neither pity or remorse to mingle with the resolution of asserting the freedom of his nature; and was even more anxious than before, to conclude a marriage which he believed would secure his own happiness, and the reputation of Ellena.

He returned, therefore, on the following day to the villa Altieri, with encreased impatience to learn the result of Signora Bianchi's further conversation with her niece, and the day on which the nuptials might be solemnized. On the way thither, his thoughts were wholly occupied by Ellena, and he proceeded mechanically, and without observing where he was, till the shade which the wellknown arch threw over the road recalled him to local circumstances, and a voice instantly arrested his attention. It was the voice of the monk, whose figure again passed before him. "Go not to the villa Altieri," it said solemnly, "for death is in the house!"

Before Vivaldi could recover from the dismay into which this abrupt assertion and sudden appearance had thrown him, the stranger was gone. He had escaped in the gloom of the place, and seemed to have retired into the obscurity, from which he had so suddenly emerged, for he was not seen to depart from under the archway. Vivaldi pursued him with his voice, conjuring him to appear, and demanding who was dead; but no voice replied.

Believing that the stranger could not have escaped unseen from the arch by any way, but that leading to the fortress above, Vivaldi began to ascend the steps, when, considering that the more certain means of understanding this awful assertion would be, to go immediately to the villa Altieri, he left this portentous ruin, and hastened thither.

An indifferent person would probably have understood the words of the monk to allude to Signora Bianchi, whose infirm state of health rendered her death, though sudden, not improbable; but to the affrighted fancy of Vivaldi, the dying Ellena only appeared. His fears, however probabilities might sanction, or the event justify them, were natural to ardent affection; but they were accompanied by a presentiment as extraordinary as it was horrible; — it occurred to him more than once, that Ellena was murdered. He saw her wounded, and bleeding to death; saw her ashy countenance,

and her wasting eyes, from which the spirit of life was fast departing, turned piteously on himself, as if imploring him to save her from the fate that was dragging her to the grave. And, when he reached the boundary of the garden, his whole frame trembled so, with horrible apprehension, that he rested a while, unable to venture further towards the truth. At length, he summoned courage to dare it, and, unlocking a private gate, of which he had lately received the key, because it spared him a considerable distance of the road to Naples, he approached the house. Every place around it was silent and forsaken; many of the lattices were closed, and, as he endeavoured to collect from every trivial circumstance some conjecture, his spirits still sunk as he advanced, till, having arrived within a few paces of the portico, all his fears were confirmed. He heard from within a feeble sound of lamentation, and then some notes of that solemn and peculiar kind of recitative, which is in some parts of Italy the requiem of the dying. The sounds were so low and distant that they only murmured on his ear; but, without pausing for information, he rushed into the portico, and knocked loudly at the folding doors, now closed against him.

After repeated summonses, Beatrice, the old housekeeper, appeared. She did not wait for Vivaldi's enquiries. "Alas! Signor," said she, "alas-a-day! who would have thought it; who would have expected such a change as this! It was only yester-evening that you was here, — she was then as well as I am; who would have thought that she would be dead to-day?"

"She is dead, then!" exclaimed Vivaldi, struck to the heart; "she is dead!" staggering towards a pillar of the hall, and endeavouring to support himself against it. Beatrice, shocked at his condition, would have gone for assistance, but he waved her to stay. "When did she die," said he, drawing breath with difficulty, "how and where?"

"Alas! here in the villa, Signor," replied Beatrice, weeping; "who would have thought that I should live to see this day! I hoped to have laid down my old bones in peace."

"What has caused her death?" interrupted Vivaldi impatiently, "and when did she die?"

"About two of the clock this morning, Signor; about two o'clock. O miserable day, that I should live to see it!"

"I am better," said Vivaldi, raising himself; "lead me to her apartment, — I must see her. Do not hesitate, lead me on."

“Alas! Signor, it is a dismal sight; why should you wish to see her? Be persuaded; do not go, Signor; it is a woeful sight!”

“Lead me on,” repeated Vivaldi sternly; “or if you refuse, I will find the way myself.”

Beatrice, terrified by his look and gesture, no longer opposed him, begging only that he would wait till she had informed her lady of his arrival; but he followed her closely up the staircase and along a corridor that led round the west side of the house, which brought him to a suite of chambers darkened by the closed lattices, through which he passed towards the one where the body lay. The requiem had ceased, and no sound disturbed the awful stillness that prevailed in these deserted rooms. At the door of the last apartment, where he was compelled to stop, his agitation was such, that Beatrice, expecting every instant to see him sink to the floor, made an effort to support him with her feeble aid, but he gave a signal for her to retire. He soon recovered himself and passed into the chamber of death, the solemnity of which might have affected him in any other state of his spirits; but these were now too severely pressed upon by real suffering to feel the influence of local circumstances. Approaching the bed on which the corpse was laid, he raised his eyes to the mourner who hung weeping over it, and beheld — Ellena! who, surprized by this sudden intrusion, and still more by the agitation of Vivaldi, repeatedly demanded the occasion of it. But he had neither power or inclination to explain a circumstance, which must deeply would the heart of Ellena, since it would have told that the same event, which excited her grief, accidentally inspired his joy.

He did not long intrude upon the sacredness of sorrow, and the short time he remained was employed in endeavours to command his own emotion and to soothe her’s.

When he left Ellena, he had some conversation with Beatrice, as to the death of Signora Bianchi, and understood that she had retired to rest on the preceding night apparently in her usual state of health. “It was about one in the morning, Signor,” continued Beatrice, “I was waked out of my first sleep by a noise in my lady’s chamber. It is a grievous thing to me, Signor, to be waked from my first sleep, and I, Santa Maria forgive me! was angry at being disturbed! So I would not get up, but laid my head upon the pillow again, and tried to sleep; but presently I heard the noise again; nay now,

says I, somebody must be up in the house, that’s certain. I had scarcely said so, Signor, when I heard my young lady’s voice calling ‘Beatrice! Beatrice!’Ah! poor young lady! she was indeed in a sad fright, as well she might. She was at my door in an instant, and looked as pale as death, and trembled so!’Beatrice,’ said she,’rise this moment; my aunt is dying.’She did not stay for my answer, but was gone directly. Santa Maria protect me! I thought I should have swooned outright.”

“Well, but your lady?” said Vivaldi, whose patience the tedious circumlocution of old Beatrice had exhausted.

“Ah! my poor lady! Signor, I thought I never should have been able to reach her room; and when I got there, I was scarcely more alive than herself. — There she lay on her bed! O it was a grievous sight to see! there she lay, looking so piteously; I saw she was dying. She could not speak, though she tried often, but she was sensible, for she would look so at Signora Ellena, and then try again to speak; it almost broke one’s heart to see her. Something seemed to lie upon her mind, and she tried almost to the last to tell it; and as she grasped Signora Ellena’s hand, she would still look up in her face with such doleful expression as no one who had not a heart of stone could bear. My poor young mistress was quite overcome by it, and cried as if her heart would break. Poor young lady! she has lost a friend indeed, such a one as she must never hope to see again.”

“But she shall find one as firm and affectionate as the last!” exclaimed Vivaldi fervently.

“The good Saint grant it may prove so!” replied Beatrice, doubtingly. “All that could be done for our dear lady,” she continued, “was tried, but with no avail. She could not swallow what the Doctor offered her. She grew fainter and fainter, yet would often utter such deep sighs, and then would grasp my hand so hard! At last she turned her eyes from Signora Ellena, and they grew duller and fixed, and she seemed not to see what was before her. Alas! I knew then she was going; her hand did not press mine as it had done a minute or two before, and a deadly coldness was upon it. Her face changed so too in a few minutes! This was about two o’clock, and she died before her confessor could administer.”

Beatrice ceased to speak, and wept; Vivaldi almost wept with her, and it was some time before he could command his voice sufficiently to enquire,

what were the symptoms of Signora Bianchi's disorder, and whether she had ever been thus suddenly attacked before.

"Never, Signor!" replied the old housekeeper; "and though, to be sure, she has long been very infirm, and going down, as one may say, yet," —

"What is it you mean?" said Vivaldi. "Why, Signor, I do not know what to think about my lady's death. To be sure, there is nothing certain; and I may only get scoffed at, if I speak my mind abroad, for nobody would believe me, it is so strange, yet I must have my own thoughts, for all that."

"Do speak intelligibly," said Vivaldi, "you need not apprehend censure from me."

"Not from you, Signor, but if the report should get abroad, and it was known that I had set it a-going."

"That never shall be known from me," said Vivaldi, with encreased impatience, "tell me, without fear, all that you conjecture."

"Well then, Signor, I will own, that I do not like the suddenness of my lady's death, no, nor the manner of it, nor her appearance after death!"

"Speak explicitly, and to the point," said Vivaldi.

"Nay, Signor, there are some folks that will not understand if you speak ever so plain, I am sure I speak plain enough. If I might tell my mind, — I do not believe she came fairly by her death at last!"

"How!" said Vivaldi, "your reasons?"

"Nay, Signor, I have given them already; I said I did not like the suddenness of her death, nor her appearance after, nor" —

"Good heaven!" interrupted Vivaldi, "you mean poison!"

"Hush, Signor, hush! I do not say that; but she did not seem to die naturally."

"Who has been at the villa lately?" said Vivaldi, in a tremulous voice.

"Alas! Signor, nobody has been here; she lived so privately that she saw nobody."

"Not one person?" said Vivaldi, "consider well, Beatrice, had she no visitor?"

"Not of a long while, Signor, no visitors but yourself and her cousin Signor Giotto. The only other person that has been within these walls for many weeks, to the best of my remembrance, is a sister of the Convent, who comes for the silks my young lady embroiders."

"Embroiders! What convent?"

“The Santa Maria della Pieta, yonder, Signor; if you will step this way to the window, I will shew it you. Yonder, among the woods on the hill-side, just above those gardens that stretch down to the bay. There is an olive ground close beside it, and observe, Signor, there is a red and yellowish ridge of rocks rises over the woods higher still, and looks as if it would fall down upon those old spires. Have you found it, Signor?”

“How long is it since this sister came here?” said Vivaldi.

“Three weeks at least, Signor.”

“And you are certain that no other person has called within that time?”

“No other, Signor, except the fisherman and the gardener, and a man who brings maccaroni, and such sort of things; for it is such a long way to Naples, Signor, and I have so little time.

“Three weeks, say you! You said three weeks, I think? Are you certain as to this?”

“Three weeks, Signor! Santa della Pieta! Do you believe, Signor, that we could fast for three weeks! Why, they call almost every day.”

“I speak of the nun,” said Vivaldi.

“O yes, Signor,” replied Beatrice; “it is that, at least, since she was here.”

“This is strange!” said Vivaldi, musing,

“but I will talk with you some other time. Meanwhile, I wish you could contrive that I should see the face of your deceased lady, without the knowledge of Signora Ellena. And, observe me, Beatrice, be strictly silent as to your surmises concerning her death: do not suffer any negligence to betray your suspicions to your young mistress. Has she any suspicions herself of the same nature.”

Beatrice replied, that she believed Signora Ellena had none; and promised faithfully to observe his injunctions.

He then left the villa, meditating on the circumstances he had just learned, and on the prophetic assertion of the monk, between whom, and the cause of Bianchi’s sudden death, he could not forbear surmising there was some connection; and it now occurred to him, and for the first time, that this monk, this mysterious stranger, was no other than Schedoni, whom he had observed of late going more frequently than usual, to his mother’s apartment. He almost started, in horror of the suspicion, to which this conjecture led, and precipitately rejected it, as a poison that would

destroy his own peace for ever. But though he instantly dismissed the suspicion, the conjecture returned to his mind, and he endeavoured to recollect the voice and figure of the stranger, that he might compare them with those of the confessor. The voices were, he thought, of a different tone, and the persons of a different height and proportion. This comparison, however, did not forbid him to surmise that the stranger was an agent of the confessor's; that he was, at least, a secret spy upon his actions, and the defamer of Ellena; while both, if indeed there were two persons concerned, appeared to be at the command of his parents. Fired with indignation of the unworthy arts that he believed to have been employed against him, and impatient to meet the slanderer of Ellena, he determined to attempt some decisive step towards a discovery of the truth, and either to compel the confessor to reveal it to him, or to search out his agent, who, he fancied, was occasionally a resident within the ruins of Paluzzi.

The inhabitants of the convent, which Beatrice had pointed out, did not escape his consideration, but no reason appeared for supposing them the enemies of his Ellena, who, on the contrary, he understood had been for some years amicably connected with them. The embroidered silks, of which the old servant had spoken, sufficiently explained the nature of the connection, and discovering more fully the circumstances of Ellena's fortune, her conduct heightened the tender admiration, with which he had hitherto regarded her.

The hints for suspicion which Beatrice had given respecting the cause of her mistress's decease, incessantly recurred to him; and it appeared extraordinary, and sometimes in the highest degree improbable, that any person could be sufficiently interested in the death of a woman apparently so blameless, as to administer poison to her. What motive could have prompted so horrible a deed, was still more inexplicable. It was true that she had long been in a declining state; yet the suddenness of her departure and the singularity of some circumstances preceding as well as some appearances that had followed it, compelled Vivaldi to doubt as to the cause. He believed, however, that, after having seen the corpse, his doubts must vanish; and Beatrice had promised, that, if he could return in the evening, when Ellena had retired to rest, he should be permitted to visit the chamber of the deceased. There was something repugnant to his

feelings, in going thus secretly, or, indeed, at all, to the residence of Ellena at this delicate period, yet it was necessary he should introduce there some medical professor, on whose judgment he could rest, respecting the occasion of Bianchi’s death; and as he believed he should so soon acquire the right of vindicating the honour of Ellena, that consideration did not so seriously affect him as otherwise it would have done. The enquiry which called him thither was, besides, of a nature too solemn and important to be lightly resigned; he had, therefore, told Beatrice he would be punctual to the hour she appointed. His intention to search for the monk was thus again interrupted.

Chapter 4

“Unfold th’ impenetrable mystery,
That sets your soul and you at endless discord.”
Mysterious Mother.

When Vivaldi returned to Naples, he enquired for the Marchesa, of whom he wished to ask some questions concerning Schedoni, which, though he scarcely expected they would be explicitly answered, might yet lead to part of the truth he sought for.

The Marchesa was in her closet, and Vivaldi found the confessor with her. “This man crosses me, like my evil genius,” said he to himself as he entered, “but I will know whether he deserves my suspicions before I leave the room.”

Schedoni was so deeply engaged in conversation, that he did not immediately perceive Vivaldi, who stood for a moment examining his countenance, and tracing subjects for curiosity in its deep lines. His eyes, while he spoke, were cast downward, and his features were fixed in an expression at once severe and crafty. The Marchesa was listening with deep attention, her head inclined towards him, as if to catch the lowest murmur of his voice, and her face picturing the anxiety and vexation of her mind. This was evidently a conference, not a confession.

Vivaldi advancing, the monk raised his eyes; his countenance suffered no change, as they met those of Vivaldi. He rose, but did not take leave, and returned the slight and somewhat haughty salutation of Vivaldi, with an inclination of the head, that indicated a pride without pettishness, and a firmness bordering on contempt.

The Marchesa, on perceiving her son, was somewhat embarrassed, and her brow, before slightly contracted by vexation, now frowned with severity. Yet it was an involuntary emotion, for she endeavoured to chace the expression of it with a smile. Vivaldi liked the smile still less than the frown.

Schedoni seated himself quietly, and began, with almost the ease of a man of the world, to converse on general topics. Vivaldi, however, was

reserved and silent; he knew not how to begin a conversation, which might lead to the knowledge he desired, and the Marchesa did not relieve him from the difficulty. His eye and his ear assisted him to conjecture at least, if not to obtain the information he wished; and, as he listened to the deep tones of Schedoni's voice, he became almost certain, that they were not the accents of his unknown adviser, though he considered, at the same moment, that it was not difficult to disguise, or to feign a voice. His stature seemed to decide the question more reasonably; for the figure of Schedoni appeared taller than that of the stranger; and though there was something of resemblance in their air, which Vivaldi had never observed before, he again considered, that the habit of the same order, which each were, might easily occasion an artificial resemblance. Of the likeness, as to countenance, he could not judge, since the stranger's had been so much shrouded by his cowl, that Vivaldi had never distinctly seen a single feature. Schedoni's hood was now thrown back, so that he could not compare even the air of their heads under similar circumstances; but as he remembered to have seen the confessor on a former day approaching his mother's closet with the cowl shading his face, the same gloomy severity seemed to characterize both, and nearly the same terrible portrait was drawn on his fancy. Yet this again might be only an artificial effect, a character which the cowl alone gave to the head; and any face seen imperfectly beneath its dark shade, might have appeared equally severe. Vivaldi was still extremely perplexed in his opinion. One circumstance, however, seemed to throw some light on his judgment. The stranger had appeared in the habit of a monk, and, if Vivaldi's transient observation might be trusted, he was of the very same order with that of Schedoni. Yet if he were Schedoni, or even his agent, it was not probable that he would have shewn himself in a dress that might lead to a discovery of his person. That he was anxious for concealment, his manner had strongly proved; it seemed then, that this habit of a monk was only a disguise, assumed for the purpose of misleading conjecture. Vivaldi, however, determined to put some questions to Schedoni, and at the same time to observe their effect on his countenance. He took occasion to notice some drawings of ruins, which ornamented the cabinet of the Marchesa, and to say that the fortress of Paluzzi was worthy of being added to her collection. "You have seen it lately, perhaps, reverend father," added Vivaldi, with a penetrating glance.

“It is a striking relique of antiquity,” replied the confessor. “That arch,” resumed Vivaldi, his eye still fixed on Schedoni, “that arch suspended between two rocks, the one overtopped by the towers of the fortress, the other shadowed with pine and broad oak, has a fine effect. But a picture of it would want human figures. Now either the grotesque shapes of banditti lurking within the ruin, as if ready to start out upon the traveller, or a friar rolled up in his black garments, just stealing forth from under the shade of the arch, and looking like some supernatural messenger of evil, would finish the piece.”

The features of Schedoni suffered no change during this speech. “Your picture is complete,” said he, “and I cannot but admire the facility with which you have classed the monks together with banditti.”

“Your pardon, holy father,” said Vivaldi, “I did not draw a parallel between them.”

“O! no offence, Signor,” replied Schedoni, with a smile somewhat ghastly.

During the latter part of this conversation, if conversation it may be called, the Marchesa had followed a servant, who had brought her a letter, out of the apartment, and as the confessor appeared to await her return, Vivaldi determined to press his enquiry. “It appears, however,” said he, “that Palluzzi, if not haunted by robbers, is at least frequented by ecclesiastics; for I have seldom passed it without seeing one of the order, and that one has appeared so suddenly, and vanished so suddenly, that I have been almost compelled to believe he was literally a spiritual being!”

“The convent of the Black Penitents is not far distant,” observed the confessor.

“Does the dress of this convent resemble that of your order, reverend father? for I observed that the monk I speak of was habited like yourself; aye, and he was about your stature, and very much resembled you.”

“That well may be, Signor,” replied the confessor calmly; “there are many brethren who, no doubt, resemble each other; but the brothers of the Black Penitents are clothed in sackcloth; and the death’s head on the garment, the peculiar symbol of this order, would not have escaped your observation; it could not, therefore, be a member of their society whom you have seen.”

“I am not inclined to think that it was,” said Vivaldi; “but be it who it may, I hope soon to be better acquainted with him, and to tell him truths so strong, that he shall not be permitted even to affect the misunderstanding of them.”

“You will do right, if you have cause of complaint against him,” observed Schedoni.

“And only if I have cause of complaint, holy father? Are strong truths to be told only when there is direct cause of complaint? Is it only when we are injured that we are to be sincere?” He believed that he had now detected Schedoni, who seemed to have betrayed a consciousness that Vivaldi had reason for complaint against the stranger.

“You will observe, reverend father, that I have not said I am injured,” he added. “If you know that I am, this must be by other means than by my words; I have not even expressed resentment.”

“Except by your voice and eye, Signor,” replied Schedoni drily. “When a man is vehement and disordered, we usually are inclined to suppose he feels resentment, and that he has cause of complaint, either real or imaginary. As I have not the honour of being acquainted with the subject you allude to, I cannot decide to which of the two your cause belongs.”

“I have never been in doubt as to that,” said Vivaldi haughtily; “and if I had, you will pardon me, holy father, but I should not have requested your decision. My injuries are, alas! too real; and I now think it is also too certain to whom I may attribute them. The secret adviser, who steals into the bosom of a family only to poison its repose, the informer — the base asperser of innocence, stand revealed in one person before me.”

Vivaldi delivered these words with a tempered energy, at once dignified and pointed, which seemed to strike directly to the heart of Schedoni; but, whether it was his conscience or his pride that took the alarm, did not certainly appear. Vivaldi believed the former. A dark malignity overspread the features of the monk, and at that moment Vivaldi thought he beheld a man, whose passions might impel him to the perpetration of almost any crime, how hideous soever. He recoiled from him, as if he had suddenly seen a serpent in his path, and stood gazing on his face, with an attention so wholly occupied as to be unconscious that he did so.

Schedoni almost instantly recovered himself; his features relaxed from their first expression, and that portentous darkness passed away from his

countenance; but with a look that was still stern and haughty, he said, “Signor, however ignorant I may be of the subject of your discontent, I can not misunderstand that your resentment is, to some extent or other, directed against myself as the cause of it. Yet I will not suppose, Signor; I say I will not suppose,” raising his voice significantly, “that you have dared to brand me with the ignominious titles you have just uttered; but” —

“I have applied them to the author of my injuries,” interrupted Vivaldi; “you, father, can best inform me whether they applied to yourself.”

“I have then nothing to complain of,” said Schedoni, adroitly, and with a sudden calmness, that surprised Vivaldi. “If you directed them against the author of your injuries, whatever they may be, I am satisfied.”

The chearful complacency, with which he spoke this, renewed the doubts of Vivaldi, who thought it nearly impossible that a man conscious of guilt could assume, under the very charge of it, the tranquil and dignified air, which the confessor now displayed. He began to accuse himself of having condemned him with passionate rashness, and gradually became shocked at the indecorum of his conduct towards a man of Schedoni’s age and sacred profession. Those expressions of countenance, which had so much alarmed him, he was now inclined to think the effect of a jealous and haughty honour, and he almost forgot the malignity, which had mingled with Schedoni’s pride, in sorrow for the offence that had provoked it. Thus, not less precipitate in his pity than his anger, and credulous alike to the passion of the moment, he was now as eager to apologize for his error, as he had been hasty in committing it. The frankness, with which he apologized and lamented the impropriety of his conduct, would have won an easy forgiveness from a generous heart. Schedoni listened with apparent complacency and secret contempt. He regarded Vivaldi as a rash boy, who was swayed only by his passions; but while he suffered deep resentment for the evil in his character, he felt neither respect nor kindness for the good, for the sincerity, the love of justice, the generosity, which threw a brilliancy even on his foibles. Schedoni, indeed, saw only evil in human nature.

Had the heart of Vivaldi been less generous, he would now have distrusted the satisfaction, which the confessor assumed, and have discovered the contempt and malignity, that lurked behind the smile thus

imperfectly masking his countenance. The confessor perceived his power, and the character of Vivaldi lay before him as a map. He saw, or fancied he saw every line and feature of its plan, and the relative proportions of every energy and weakness of its nature. He believed, also, he could turn the very virtues of this young man against himself, and he exulted, even while the smile of goodwill was yet upon his countenance, in anticipating the moment that should avenge him for the past outrage, and which, while Vivaldi was ingenuously lamenting it, he had apparently forgotten.

Schedoni was thus ruminating evil against Vivaldi, and Vivaldi was considering how he might possibly make Schedoni atonement for the affront he had offered him, when the Marchesa returned to the apartment; and perceived in the honest countenance of Vivaldi some symptoms of the agitation which had passed over it; his complexion was flushed, and his brow slightly contracted. The face of Schedoni told nothing but complacency, except that now and then when he looked at Vivaldi, it was with half-shut eyes, that indicated treachery, or, at least, cunning, trying to conceal exasperated pride.

The Marchesa, with displeasure directed against her son, enquired the reason of his emotion; but he, stung with consciousness of his conduct towards the monk, could neither endure to explain it, or to remain in her presence, and saying that he would confide his honour to the discretion of the holy father, who would speak only too favourably of his fault, he abruptly left the room.

When he had departed, Schedoni gave, with seeming reluctance, the explanation which the Marchesa required, but was cautious not to speak too favourably of Vivaldi’s conduct, which, on the contrary, he represented as much more insulting than it really was; and, while he aggravated the offensive part of it, he suppressed all mention of the candour and self-reproach, which had followed the charge. Yet this he managed so artfully that he appeared to extenuate Vivaldi’s errors, to lament the hastiness of his temper, and to plead for a forgiveness from his irritated mother. “He is very young,” added the monk, when he perceived that he had sufficiently exasperated the Marchesa against her son; “he is very young, and youth is warm in its passions and precipitate in its judgments. He was, besides, jealous, no doubt, of the friendship, with which you are pleased to honour

me; and it is natural that a son should be jealous of the attention of such a mother."

"You are too good, father," said the Marchesa; her resentment encreasing towards Vivaldi in proportion as Schedoni displayed his artificial candour and meekness.

"It is true," continued the confessor, "that I perceive all the inconveniences to which my attachment, I should say my duty to your family exposes me; but I willingly submit to these, while it is yet possible that my advice may be a means of preserving the honour of your house unsullied, and of saving this inconsiderate young man from future misery and unavailing repentance."

During the warmth of this sympathy in resentment, the Marchesa and Schedoni mutually, and sincerely, lost their remembrance of the unworthy motives, by which each knew the other to be influenced, as well as that disgust which those who act together to the same bad end, can seldom escape from feeling towards their associates. The Marchesa, while she commended the fidelity of Schedoni, forgot his views and her promises as to a rich benefice; while the confessor imputed her anxiety for the splendor of her son's condition to a real interest in his welfare, not a care of her own dignity. After mutual compliments had been exchanged, they proceeded to a long consultation concerning Vivaldi, and it was agreed, that their efforts for what they termed his preservation should no longer be confined to remonstrances.

Chapter 5

— “For here have been
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.”
Shakespeare.

Ellena, on thus suddenly losing her aunt, her only relative, the friend of her whole life, felt as if left alone in the world. But it was not in the first moments of affliction that this feeling occurred. Her own forlorn situation was not even observed, while affection, pity, and irresistible grief for Bianchi, occupied her heart.

Bianchi was to be interred in the church belonging to the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta. The body attired according to the custom of the country, and decorated with flowers, was carried on an open bier to the place of interment, attended only by priests and torch-bearers. But Ellena could not endure thus lightly to part with the reliques of a beloved friend, and being restrained by custom from following the corpse to the grave, she repaired first to the convent, to attend the funeral service. Her sorrow did not allow her to join in the choral symphonies of the nuns, but their sacred solemnity was soothing to her spirits, and the tears she shed while she listened to the lengthening notes, assuaged the force of grief.

When the service concluded, she withdrew to the parlour of the lady Abbess, who mingled with her consolations many entreaties that Ellena would make the convent her present asylum; and her affliction required little persuasion on this subject. It was her wish to retire hither, as to a sanctuary, which was not only suitable to her particular circumstances, but especially adapted to the present state of her spirits. Here she believed that she should sooner acquire resignation, and regain tranquillity, than in a place less consecrated to religion; and, before she took leave of the Abbess, it was agreed, that she should be received as a boarder. To acquaint Vivaldi with her intention was, indeed, her chief motive for returning to the villa Altieri, after this her resolution had been taken. Her affection and esteem had been gradual in their progress, and had now

attained a degree of strength, which promised to decide the happiness or misery of her whole life. The sanction given by her aunt to this choice, and particularly the very solemn manner in which, on the evening preceding her death, she bequeathed Ellena to his care, had still endeared him to her heart, and imparted a sacredness to the engagement, which made her consider Vivaldi as her guardian and only surviving protector. The more tenderly she lamented her deceased relative, the more tenderly she thought of Vivaldi; and her love for the one was so intimately connected with her affection for the other, that each seemed strengthened and exalted by the union.

When the funeral was over, they met at Altieri. He was neither surprized or averse to her withdrawing a while to a convent, for there was a propriety in retiring, during the period of her grief, from a home where she had no longer a guardian, which delicacy seemed to demand. He only stipulated, that he might be permitted to visit her in the parlour of the convent, and to claim, when decorum should no longer object to it, the hand, which Bianchi had resigned to him.

Notwithstanding that he yielded to this arrangement without complaining, it was not entirely without repining; but being assured by Ellena of the worthiness of the Abbess of the Santa Maria della Pieta, he endeavoured to silence the secret murmurs of his heart with the conviction of his judgment.

Meanwhile, the deep impression made by his unknown tormentor, the monk, and especially by his prediction of the death of Bianchi, remained upon his mind, and he once more determined to ascertain, if possible, the true nature of this portentous visitant, and what were the motives which induced him thus to haunt his footsteps and interrupt his peace. He was awed by the circumstances which had attended the visitations of the monk, if monk it was; by the suddenness of his appearance, and departure; by the truth of his prophecies, and, above all, by the solemn event which had verified his last warning; and his imagination, thus elevated by wonder and painful curiosity, was prepared for something above the reach of common conjecture, and beyond the accomplishment of human agency. His understanding was sufficiently clear and strong to teach him to detect many errors of opinion, that prevailed around him, as well as to despise the common superstitions of his country, and, in the usual state of his

mind, he probably would not have paused for a moment on the subject before him; but his passions were now interested and his fancy awakened, and, though he was unconscious of this propensity, he would, perhaps, have been somewhat disappointed to have descended suddenly from the region of fearful sublimity, to which he had soared — the world of terrible shadows — to the earth, on which he daily walked, and to an explanation simply natural.

He designed to visit again, at midnight, the fortress of Paluzzi, and not to watch for the appearance of the stranger, but to carry torches into every recess of the ruin, and discover, at least, whether it was haunted by other human beings than himself. The chief difficulty, which had hitherto delayed him, was that of finding a person, in whom he could confide, to accompany him in the search, since his former adventure had warned him never to renew it alone. Signor Bonarmo persisted absolutely, and, perhaps, wisely, to refuse his request on this subject; and, as Vivaldi had no other acquaintance, to whom he chose to give so much explanation of the affair as might induce compliance, he at length determined to take with him Paulo, his own servant. On the evening, previous to the day of Ellena's departure to the Santa della Pieta, Vivaldi went to Altieri, to bid her adieu. During this interview his spirits were more than usually depressed; and, though he knew that her retirement was only for a short period, and had as much confidence in the continuance of her affection, as is, perhaps, possible to a lover, Vivaldi felt as if he was parting with her for ever. A thousand vague and fearful conjectures, such as he had never till this moment admitted, assailed him, and amongst them, it appeared probable, that the arts of the nuns might win her from the world, and sacrifice her to the cloister. In her present state of sorrow this seemed to be even more than probable, and not all the assurances which Ellena gave him, and in these parting moments she spoke with less reserve than she had hitherto done, could entirely reassured his mind. "It should seem Ellena, by these boding fears," said he, imprudently, "that I am parting with you for ever; I feel a weight upon my heart, which I cannot throw off. Yet I consent that you shall withdraw awhile to this convent, convinced of the propriety of the step; and I ought, also, to know that you will soon return; that I shall soon take you from its walls as my wife, never more to leave me, never more to pass from my immediate care and tenderness. I

ought to feel assured of all this; yet so apt are my fears that I cannot confide in what is probable, but rather apprehend what is possible. And is it then possible that I yet may lose you; and is it only probable that you may be mine for ever? How, under such circumstances, could I weakly consent to your retirement? Why did I not urge you to bestow immediately those indissoluble bands, which no human force can burst asunder? How could I leave the destiny of all my peace within the reach of a possibility, which it was once in my power to have removed. Which it was in my power! — It is, perhaps, still in my power. O Ellena! let the severities of custom yield to the security of my happiness. If you do go to the Santa Maria, let it be only to visit its altar!”

Vivaldi delivered this expostulation with a rapidity, that left no pause for Ellena to interrupt him. When, at length, he concluded, she gently reproached him for doubting the continuance of her regard, and endeavoured to sooth his apprehensions of misfortune, but would not listen to his request. She represented, that not only the state of her spirits required retirement, but that respect to the memory of her aunt demanded it; and added gravely, that if he had so little confidence in the steadiness of her opinions, as to doubt the constancy of her affection, and for so short a period, unless her vows were secured to him, he had done imprudently to elect her for the companion of his whole life.

Vivaldi, then ashamed of the weakness he had betrayed, besought her forgiveness, and endeavoured to appease apprehensions which passion only made plausible, and which reason reproved; notwithstanding which, he could recover neither tranquillity nor confidence; nor could Ellena, though her conduct was supported and encouraged by justness of sentiment, entirely remove the oppression of spirits she had felt from almost the first moment of this interview. They parted with many tears; and Vivaldi, before he finally took his leave, frequently returned to claim some promise, or to ascertain some explanation, till Ellena remarked with a forced smile, that these resembled eternal adieus, rather than those of only a few days; an observation which renewed all his alarm, and furnished an excuse for again delaying his departure. At length he tore himself away, and left the villa Altieri; but as the time was yet too early to suit his purposed enquiry at Paluzzi, he returned to Naples.

Ellena, meanwhile, endeavouring to dissipate melancholy recollections by employment, continued busied in preparation for her departure on the following day, till a late hour of the night. In the prospect of quitting, though only for so short a period, the home where she had passed almost every day since the dawn of her earliest remembrance, there was something melancholy, if not solemn. In leaving these wellknown scenes, where, it might be said, the shade of her deceased relative seemed yet to linger, she was quitting all vestige of her late happiness, all note of former years and of present consolation; and she felt as if going forth into a new and homeless world. Her affection for the place encreased as the passing time diminished, and it seemed as if the last moment of her stay would be precisely that, in which the villa Altieri would be most valued.

In her favourite apartments she lingered for a considerable time; and in the room where she had supped on the night immediately preceding the death of Signora Bianchi, she indulged many tender and mournful recollections, and probably would have continued to indulge them much longer, had not her attention been withdrawn by a sudden rustling of the foliage that surrounded the window, when, on raising her eyes, she thought she perceived some person pass quickly from before it. The lattices had, as usual, been left open to admit the fresh breeze from the bay below, but she now rose with some alarm to close them, and had scarcely done so when she heard a distant knocking from the portico, and in the next instant the screams of Beatrice in the hall.

Alarmed for herself, Ellena had, however, the courage to advance to the assistance of her old servant, when, on entering the passage leading to the hall, three men, masked and muffled up in cloaks, appeared, advancing from the opposite extremity. While she fled, they pursued her to the apartment she had quitted. Her breath and her courage were gone, yet she struggled to sustain herself, and endeavoured to ask with calmness what was their errand. They gave no reply, but threw a veil over her face, and, seizing her arms, led her almost unresisting, but supplicating, towards the portico. In the hall, Ellena perceived Beatrice bound to a pillar; and another ruffian, who was also masked, watching over and menacing her, not by words, but gestures. Ellena’s shrieks seemed to recall the almost lifeless Beatrice, for whom she supplicated as much as for herself; but entreaty was alike unavailing for each, and Ellena was borne from the

house and through the garden. All consciousness had now forsaken her. On recovering, she perceived herself in a carriage, which was driven with great rapidity, and that her arms were within the grasp of some persons, whom, when her recollection returned more fully, she believed to be the men, who had carried her from the villa. The darkness prevented her from observing their figures, and to all her questions and entreaties a deathlike silence was observed.

During the whole night the carriage proceeded rapidly, stopping only while the horses were changed, when Ellena endeavoured to interest by her cries the compassion of the people at the post-houses, and by her cries only, for the blinds were closely drawn. The postilions, no doubt, imposed on the credulity of these people, for they were insensible to her distress, and her immediate companions soon overcame the only means that had remained by which she could make it known.

For the first hours, a tumult of terror and amazement occupied her mind, but, as this began to subside, and her understanding to recover its clearness, grief and despondency mingled with her fears. She saw herself separated from Vivaldi, probably for ever, for she apprehended that the strong and invisible hand which governed her course, would never relinquish its grasp till it had placed her irrecoverably beyond the reach of her lover. A conviction that she should see him no more came, at intervals, with such overwhelming force, that every other consideration and emotion disappeared before it; and at these moments she lost all anxiety as to the place of her destination, and all fear as to her personal safety.

As the morning advanced and the heat encreased, the blinds were let down a little to admit air, and Ellena then perceived, that only two of the men, who had appeared at the villa Altieri, were in the carriage, and that they were still disguised in cloaks and visors. She had no means of judging through what part of the country she was travelling, for above the small openings which the blinds left she could see only the towering tops of mountains, or sometimes the veiny precipices and tangled thickets, that closely impended over the road.

About noon, as she judged from the excessive heat, the carriage stopped at a post-house, and ice-water was handed through the window, when, as the blind was lowered to admit it, she perceived herself on a wild and solitary plain, surrounded by mountains and woods. The people at the door

of the post-house seemed “unused to pity or be pitied.” The lean and sallow countenance of poverty stared over their gaunt bones, and habitual discontent had fixed the furrows of their cheeks. They regarded Ellena with only a feeble curiosity, though the affliction in her looks might have interested almost any heart that was not corroded by its own sufferings; nor did the masked faces of her companions excite a much stronger attention.

Ellena accepted the cool refreshment offered her, the first she had taken on the road. Her companions having emptied their glasses drew up the blind, and, notwithstanding the almost intolerable heat of noon, the carriage proceeded. Fainting under its oppression, Ellena entreated that the windows might be open, when the men, in compliance with their own necessity rather than with her request, lowered the blinds, and she had a glimpse of the lofty region of the mountains, but of no object that could direct her conjecture concerning where she was. She saw only pinnacles and vast precipices of various-tinted marbles, intermingled with scanty vegetation, such as stunted pinasters, dwarf oak and holly, which gave dark touches to the many-coloured cliffs, and sometimes stretched in shadowy masses to the deep vallies, that, winding into obscurity, seemed to invite curiosity to explore the scenes beyond. Below these bold precipices extended the gloomy region of olive-trees, and lower still other rocky steeps sunk towards the plains, bearing terraces crowned with vines, and where often the artificial soil was propped by thickets of juniper, pomegranate and oleander.

Ellena, after having been so long shut in darkness, and brooding over her own alarming circumstances, found temporary, though feeble, relief in once more looking upon the face of nature; till, her spirits being gradually revived and elevated by the grandeur of the images around her, she said to herself, “If I am condemned to misery, surely I could endure it with more fortitude in scenes like these, than amidst the tamer landscapes of nature! Here, the objects seem to impart somewhat of their own force, their own sublimity, to the soul. It is scarcely possible to yield to the pressure of misfortune while we walk, as with the Deity, amidst his most stupendous works!”

But soon after the idea of Vivaldi glancing athwart her memory, she melted into tears; the weakness however was momentary, and during the

rest of the journey she preserved a strenuous equality of mind.

It was when the heat and the light were declining that the carriage entered a rocky defile, which shewed, as through a telescope reversed, distant plains, and mountains opening beyond, lighted up with all the purple splendor of the setting sun. Along this deep and shadowy perspective a river, which was seen descending among the cliffs of a mountain, rolled with impetuous force, fretting and foaming amidst the dark rocks in its descent, and then flowing in a limpid lapse to the brink of other precipices, whence again it fell with thundering strength to the abyss, throwing its misty clouds of spray high in the air, and seeming to claim the sole empire of this solitary wild. Its bed took up the whole breadth of the chasm, which some strong convulsion of the earth seemed to have formed, not leaving space even for a road along its margin. The road, therefore, was carried high among the cliffs, that impended over the river, and seemed as if suspended in air; while the gloom and vastness of the precipices, which towered above and sunk below it, together with the amazing force and uproar of the falling waters, combined to render the pass more terrific than the pencil could describe, or language can express. Ellena ascended it, not with indifference but with calmness; she experienced somewhat of a dreadful pleasure in looking down upon the irresistible flood; but this emotion was heightened into awe, when she perceived that the road led to a slight bridge, which, thrown across the chasm at an immense height, united two opposite cliffs, between which the whole cataract of the river descended. The bridge, which was defended only by a slender railing, appeared as if hung amidst the clouds. Ellena, while she was crossing it, almost forgot her misfortunes. Having reached the opposite side of the glen, the road gradually descended the precipices for about half a mile, when it opened to extensive prospects over plains and towards distant mountains — the sunshine landscape, which had long appeared to bound this shadowy pass. The transition was as the passage through the vale of death to the bliss of eternity; but the idea of its resemblance did not long remain with Ellena. Perched high among the cliffs of a mountain, which might be said to terminate one of the jaws of this terrific gorge, and which was one of the loftiest of a chain that surrounded the plains, appeared the spires and long terraces of a

monastery; and she soon understood that her journey was to conclude there.

At the foot of this mountain her companions alighted, and obliged her to do the same, for the ascent was too steep and irregular to admit of a carriage. Ellena followed unresistingly, like a lamb to the sacrifice, up a path that wound among the rocks, and was cooly overshadowed by thickets of almond trees, figs, broad-leaved myrtle, and ever-green rose bushes, intermingled with the strawberry tree, beautiful in fruit and blossoms, the yellow jasmine, the delightful acacia mimosa, and a variety of other fragrant plants. These bowers frequently admitted glimpses of the glowing country below, and sometimes opened to expansive views bounded by the snowy mountains of Abruzzo. At every step were objects which would have afforded pleasure to a tranquil mind; the beautifully variegated marbles, that formed the cliffs immediately above, their fractured masses embossed with mosses and flowers of every vivid hue that paints the rainbow; the elegance of the shrubs that tufted, and the majestic grace of the palms which waved over them, would have charmed almost any other eye than Ellena's, whose spirit was wrapt in care, or than those of her companions, whose hearts were dead to feeling. Partial features of the vast edifice she was approaching, appeared now and then between the trees; the tall west window of the cathedral with the spires that overtopped it; the narrow pointed roofs of the cloisters; angles of the insurmountable walls, which fenced the garden from the precipices below, and the dark portal leading into the chief court; each of these, seen at intervals beneath the gloom of cypress and spreading cedar, seemed as if menacing the unhappy Ellena with hints of future suffering. She passed several shrines and images half hid among the shrubs and the cliffs; and, when she drew near the monastery, her companions stopped at a little chapel which stood beside the path, where, after examining some papers, an act which she observed with surprise, they drew aside, as if to consult respecting herself. Their conversation was delivered in voices so low, that she could not catch a single tone distinctly, and it is probable that if she could, this would not have assisted her in conjecturing who they were; yet the profound silence they had hitherto observed had much encreased her curiosity, now that they spoke.

One of them soon after quitted the chapel and proceeded alone to the monastery, leaving Ellena in the custody of his comrade, whose pity she now made a last, though almost hopeless, effort to interest. He replied to all her entreaties only by a waving of the hand, and an averted face; and she endeavoured to meet with fortitude and to endure with patience, the evil which she could neither avoid nor subdue. The spot where she awaited the return of the ruffian, was not of a character to promote melancholy, except, indeed, that luxurious and solemn kind of melancholy, which a view of stupendous objects inspires. It overlooked the whole extent of plains, of which she had before caught partial scenes, with the vast chain of mountains, which seemed to form an insurmountable rampart to the rich landscape at their feet. Their towering and fantastic summits, crowding together into dusky air, like flames tapering to a point, exhibited images of peculiar grandeur, while each minuter line and feature withdrawing, at this evening hour from observation, seemed to resolve itself into the more gigantic masses, to which the dubious tint, the solemn obscurity, that began to prevail over them, gave force and loftier character. The silence and deep repose of the landscape, served to impress this character more awfully on the heart, and while Ellena sat wrapt in the thoughtfulness it promoted, the vesper-service of the monks breathing softly from the cathedral above, came to her ear; it was a music which might be said to win on silence, and was in perfect unison with her feelings; solemn, deep, and full, it swelled in holy peels, and rolled away in murmurs, which attention pursued to the last faint note that melted into air. Ellena’s heart owned the power of this high minstrelsy; and while she caught for a moment the sweeter voices of the nuns mingling in the chorus, she indulged a hope that they would not be wholly insensible to her sufferings, and that she should receive some consolation from sympathy as soft as these tender-breathing strains appeared to indicate.

She had rested nearly half an hour on the turfy slope before the chapel, when she perceived through the twilight, two monks descending from the monastery towards the spot where she sat. As they drew near, she distinguished their dress of grey stuff, the hood, the shaven head, where only a coronet of white hair was left, and other ensigns of their particular order. On reaching the chapel they accosted her companion, with whom they retired a few paces, and conversed. Ellena heard, for the first time,

the sound of her conductor’s voice, and though this was but faintly, she marked it well. The other ruffian did not yet appear, but it seemed evident that these friars had left the convent in consequence of his information; and sometimes, when she looked upon the taller of the two, she fancied she saw the person of the very man whose absence she had remarked, a conjecture which strengthened while she more accurately noticed him. The portrait had certainly much resemblance in height and bulk; and the same gaunt awkwardness, which even the cloak of the ruffian had not entirely shrouded, obtruded itself from under the folded garments of the recluse. If countenance, too, might be trusted, this same friar had a ruffian’s heart, and his keen and cunning eye seemed habitually upon the watch for prey. His brother of the order shewed nothing strongly characteristic either in his face or manner.

After a private conversation of some length, the friars approached Ellena, and told her, that she must accompany them to the convent; when her disguised conductor, having resigned her to them, immediately departed and descended the mountain.

Not a word was uttered by either of the party as they pursued the steep tract leading to the gates of this secluded edifice, which were opened to them by a lay-brother, and Ellena entered a spacious court. Three sides of this were enclosed by lofty buildings, lined with ranges of cloisters; the fourth opened to a garden, shaded with avenues of melancholy cypress, that extended to the cathedral, whose fretted windows and ornamented spires appeared to close the perspective. Other large and detached buildings skirted the gardens on the left, while, on the right, spacious olive-grounds and vineyards spread to the cliffs that formed a barrier to all this side of the domain of the convent.

The friar, her conductor, crossed the court to the north wing, and there ringing a bell, a door was opened by a nun, into whose hands Ellena was given. A significant look was exchanged between the devotees, but no words; the friar departed, and the nun, still silent, conducted her through many solitary passages, where not even a distant foot-fall echoed, and whose walls were roughly painted with subjects indicatory of the severe superstitions of the place, tending to inspire melancholy awe. Ellena’s hope of pity vanished as her eyes glanced over these symbols of the disposition of the inhabitants, and on the countenance of the nun

characterised by a gloomy malignity which seemed ready to inflict upon others some portion of the unhappiness she herself suffered. As she glided forward with soundless step, her white drapery, floating along these solemn avenues, and her hollow features touched with the mingled light and shadow which the partial rays of a taper she held occasioned, she seemed like a spectre newly risen from the grave, rather than a living being. These passages terminated in the parlour of the Abbess, where the nun paused, and, turning to Ellena, said, “It is the hour of vespers; you will wait here till our lady of the convent leaves the church; she would speak with you.”

“To what saint is the convent dedicated,” said Ellena, “and who, sister, presides over it?”

The nun gave no reply, and after having eyed the forlorn stranger for a moment, with inquisitive ill-nature, quitted the room. The unhappy Ellena had not been left long to her own reflections, when the Abbess appeared; a stately lady, apparently occupied with opinions of her own importance, and prepared to receive her guest with rigour and supercilious haughtiness. This Abbess, who was herself a woman of some distinction, believed that of all possible crimes, next to that of sacrilege, offences against persons of rank were least pardonable. It is not surprising, therefore, that, supposing Ellena, a young woman of no family, to have sought clandestinely to unite herself with the noble house of Vivaldi, she should feel for her, not only disdain, but indignation, and that she should readily consent, not only to punish the offender, but at the same time, to afford means of preserving the ancient dignity of the offended.

“I understand,” said the Abbess, on whose appearance the alarmed Ellena had arisen, “I understand,” said she, without making any signal for her to be seated, “that you are the young person who is arrived from Naples.”

“My name is Ellena di Rosalba,” said her auditor, recovering some degree of courage from the manner which was designed to depress her.

“I know nothing of your name,” replied the Superior; “I am informed only that you are sent here to acquire a knowledge of yourself and of your duties. Till the period shall be passed, for which you are given into my charge, I shall scrupulously observe the obligations of the troublesome

office, which my regard for the honour of a noble family, has induced me to undertake."

By these words, the author and the motives of this extraordinary transaction were at once revealed to Ellena, who was for some moments almost overwhelmed by the sudden horrors that gathered on her mind, and stood silent and motionless. Fear, shame, and indignation, alternately assailed her; and the sting of offended honour, on being suspected, and thus accused of having voluntarily disturbed the tranquillity, and sought the alliance of any family, and especially of one who disdained her, struck forcibly to her heart, till the pride of conscious worth revived her courage and fortified her patience, and she demanded by whose will she had been torn from her home, and by whose authority she was now detained, as it appeared, a prisoner.

The Abbess, unaccustomed to have her power opposed, or her words questioned, was for a moment too indignant to reply; and Ellena observed, but no longer with dismay, the brooding tempest ready to burst over her head. "It is I only, who am injured," said she to herself, "and shall the guilty oppressor triumph, and the innocent sufferer sink under the shame that belongs only to guilt! Never will I yield to a weakness so contemptible. The consciousness of deserving well will recall my presence of mind, which, permitting me to estimate the characters of my oppressors by their actions, will enable me also to despise their power."

"I must remind you," said the Abbess, at length, "that the questions you make are unbecoming in your situation; and that contrition and humility are the best extenuations of error. You may withdraw."

"Most true," replied Ellena, bowing with dignity to the Superior; "and I most willingly resign them to my oppressors."

Ellena forbore to make further enquiry or remonstrance, and perceiving that reproach would not only be useless, but degrading to herself, she immediately obeyed the mandate of the Abbess, and determined, since she must suffer, to suffer, if possible, with firmness and dignity.

She was conducted from the parlour by the nun who had admitted her, and as she passed through the refectory where the nuns, just returned from vespers, were assembled, their inquisitive glances, their smiles and busy whispers, told her, that she was not only an object of curiosity, but of suspicion, and that little sympathy could be expected from hearts, which

even the offices of hourly devotion had not purified from the malignant envy, that taught them to exalt themselves upon the humiliation of others.

The little room, to which Ellena was led, and where, to her great satisfaction, she was left alone, rather deserved the denomination of a cell than of a chamber; since, like those of the nuns, it had only one small lattice; and a mattress, one chair, and a table, with a crucifix and a prayer book were all its furniture. Ellena, as she surveyed her melancholy habitation, suppressed a rising sigh, but she could not remain unaffected by recollections, which, on this view of her altered state, crowded to her mind; nor think of Vivaldi far away, perhaps for ever, and probably, even ignorant of her destination, without bitter tears. But she dried them, as the idea of the Marchesa obtruded on her thoughts, for other emotions than those of grief possessed her. It was to the Marchesa that she especially attributed her present situation; and it now appeared, that the family of Vivaldi had not only been reluctant, but absolutely averse to a connection with hers, contrary to the suggestions of Signora Bianchi, who had represented, that it might be supposed only, from their known character, that they would disapprove of the alliance, but would of course be reconciled to an event, which their haughtiest displeasure never could revoke. This discovery of their absolute rejection awakened all the proper pride, which the mistaken prudence of her aunt, and her affection for Vivaldi had lulled to rest; and she now suffered the most acute vexation and remorse, for having yielded her consent to enter clandestinely into any family. The imaginary honours of so noble an alliance vanished, when the terms of obtaining them were considered; and now, that the sound mind of Ellena was left to its own judgment, she looked with infinitely more pride and preference upon the industrious means, which had hitherto rendered her independent, than on all distinction which might be relunctantly conferred. The consciousness of innocence, which had supported her in the presence of the Superior, began to falter. “Her accusation was partly just!” said Ellena, “and I deserve punishment, since I could, even for a moment, submit to the humiliation of desiring an alliance, which I knew would be unwillingly conferred. But it is not yet too late to retrieve my own esteem by asserting my independence, and resigning Vivaldi for ever. By resigning him! by abandoning him who loves me, — abandoning him to misery! Him, whom I cannot even think of without tears, — to whom my

vows have been given, — who may claim me by the sacred remembrance of my dying friend, — him, to whom my whole heart is devoted! O! miserable alternative! — that I can no longer act justly, but at the expence of all my future happiness! Justly! And would it then be just to abandon him who is willing to resign every thing for me, — abandon him to ceaseless sorrow, that the prejudices of his family may be gratified?”

Poor Ellena perceived that she could not obey the dictates of a just pride, without such opposition from her heart as she had never experienced before. Her affections were now too deeply engaged to permit her to act with firmness, at the price of long suffering. The consideration of resigning Vivaldi was so very grievous, that she could scarcely endure to pause upon it for a moment; yet, on the other hand, when she thought of his family, it appeared that she never could consent to make a part of it. She would have blamed the erroneous judgment of Signora Bianchi, whose persuasions had so much assisted in reducing her to the present alternative, had not the tenderness with which she cherished her memory, rendered this impossible. All, that now remained for her, was to endeavour patiently to endure present evils, which she could not conquer; for, to forsake Vivaldi as the price of liberty, should liberty be offered her on such terms, or to accept him in defiance of honourable pride, should he ever effect her release, appeared to her distracted thoughts almost equally impracticable. But, as the probability of his never being able to discover her abode, returned to her consideration, the anguish she suffered told how much more she dreaded to lose than to accept Vivaldi, and that love was, after all, the most powerful affection of her heart.

Chapter 6

“The bell then beating one!”
Shakespeare.

Vivaldi, meanwhile, ignorant of what had occurred at villa Altieri, repaired as he had proposed, to Paluzzi, attended by his servant Paulo. It was deep night before he left Naples, and so anxious was he to conceal himself from observation, that though Paulo carried a torch, he did not permit it to be lighted, till after he should have remained some time within the archway, thinking it most prudent to watch a while in secret for his unknown adviser, before he proceeded to examine the fort.

His attendant, Paulo, was a true Neapolitan, shrewd, inquisitive, insinuating, adroit; possessing much of the spirit of intrigue, together with a considerable portion of humour, which displayed itself not so much in words, as in his manner and countenance, in the archness of his dark, penetrating eye, and in the exquisite adaptation of his gesture to his idea. He was a distinguished favourite with his master, who, if he had not humour himself, had a keen relish of it in others, and who certainly did possess wit, with all its lively accompaniments, in an eminent degree. Vivaldi had been won by the naïveté and humour of this man, to allow him an unusual degree of familiarity in conversation; and, as they now walked together towards Paluzzi, he unfolded to Paulo as much of his former adventure there as he judged necessary to interest his curiosity and excite his vigilance. The relation did both. Paulo, however, naturally courageous, was incredulous to superstition of any kind; and, having quickly perceived that his master was not altogether indisposed to attribute to a supernatural cause the extraordinary occurrences at Paluzzi, he began, in his manner, to rally him; but Vivaldi was not in temper to endure jesting; his mood was grave, even to solemnity, and he yielded, though reluctantly, to the awe which, at intervals, returned upon him with the force of a magical spell, binding up all his faculties to sternness, and fixing them in expectation. While he was nearly regardless of defence against human agency, his servant was, however, preparing for that alone; and very properly

represented the imprudence of going to Paluzzi in darkness. Vivaldi observed that they could not watch for the monk otherwise than in darkness, since the torch which lighted them would also warn him, and he had very particular reasons for watching before he proceeded to examine. He added, that after a certain time had elapsed, the torch might be lighted at a neighbouring cottage. Paulo objected, that in the meanwhile, the person for whom they watched might escape; and Vivaldi compromised the affair. The torch was lighted, but concealed within a hollow of the cliffs, that bordered the road, and the centinels took their station in darkness, within the deep arch, near the spot where Vivaldi had watched with Bonarmo. As they did this, the distant chime of a convent informed Vivaldi that midnight was turned. The sound recalled to his mind the words of Schedoni, concerning the vicinity of the convent of the Black Penitents, to Paluzzi, and he asked Paulo whether this was the chime of that convent. Paulo replied that it was, and that a remarkable circumstance had taught him to remember the Santa del Pianto, or Our Lady of Tears. “The place, Signor, would interest you,” said Paulo; “for there are some odd stories told of it; and I am inclined to think, this unknown monk must be one of that society, his conduct is so strange.”

“You believe then, that I am willing to give faith to wonderful stories,” said Vivaldi, smiling. “But what have you heard, that is so extraordinary, respecting this convent? Speak low, or we may be discovered.”

“Why, Signor, the story is not generally known,” said Paulo in a whisper; “I half promised never to reveal it.”

“If you are under any promise of secresy,” interrupted Vivaldi, “I forbid you to tell this wonderful tale, which, however, seems somewhat too big to rest within your brain.”

“The story would fain expand itself to your’s, Signor,” said Paulo; “and, as I did not absolutely promise to conceal it, I am very willing to reveal it.”

“Proceed, then,” said Vivaldi; “but let me once more caution you to speak low.”

“You are obeyed, Signor. You must know, then, Maestro, that it was on the eve of the festival of Santo Marco, and about six years since” —

“Peace!” said Vivaldi. They were silent; but every thing remaining still, Paulo, after some time, ventured to proceed, though in a yet lower whisper.

“It was on the eve of the Santo Marco, and when the last bell had rung, that a person” — He stopped again, for a rustling sound passed near him.

“You are too late,” said a sudden voice beside Vivaldi, who instantly recognized the thrilling accents of the monk.— “It is past midnight; she departed an hour ago. Look to your steps!”

Though thrilled by this wellknown voice, Vivaldi scarcely yielded to his feelings for a moment, but, checking the question which would have asked “who departed?” he, by a sudden spring, endeavoured to seize the intruder, while Paulo, in the first hurry of his alarm, fired a pistol, and then hastened for the torch. So certainly did Vivaldi believe himself to have leaped upon the spot whence the voice proceeded, that, on reaching it, he instantly extended his arms, and searching around, expected every moment to find his enemy in his grasp. Darkness again baffled his attempt.

“You are known,” cried Vivaldi; “you shall see me at the Santa dell Pianto! What, oh! Paulo, the torch! — the torch!”

Paulo, swift as the wind, appeared with it. “He passed up those steps in the rock, Signor; I saw the skirts of his garments ascending!”

“Follow me, then,” said Vivaldi, mounting the steps. “Away, away, Maestro!” said Paulo, impatiently; “but, for Heaven’s sake, name no more the convent of the Santa dell Pianto; our lives may answer it!”

He followed to the terrace above, where Vivaldi, holding high the torch, looked round for the monk. The place, however, as far as his eye could penetrate, was for saken and silent. The glare of the torch enlightened only the rude walls of the citadel, some points of the cliff below, and some tall pines that waved over them, leaving in doubtful gloom many a recess of the ruin, and many a tangled thicket, that spread among the rocks beyond.

“Do you perceive any person, Paulo?” said Vivaldi, waving the torch in the air to rouse the flame. “Among those arches on the left, Signor, those arches that stand duskily beyond the citadel, I thought I saw a shadowy sort of a figure pass. He might be a ghost, by his silence, for aught I know, Maestro; but he seems to have a good mortal instinct in taking care of himself, and to have as swift a pair of heels to assist in carrying him off, as any Lazaro in Naples need desire.”

“Fewer words, and more caution!” said Vivaldi, lowering the torch, and pointing it towards the quarter which Paulo had mentioned. “Be vigilant, and tread lightly.”

“You are obeyed, Signor; but their eyes will inform them, though their ears refuse, while we hold a light to our own steps.”

“Peace, with this buffoonery!” said Vivaldi, somewhat sternly; “follow in silence, and be on your guard.”

Paulo submitted, and they proceeded towards the range of arches, which communicated with the building, whose singular structure had formerly arrested the attention of Bonarmo, and whence Vivaldi himself had returned with such unexpected precipitancy and consternation.

On perceiving the place he was approaching, he suddenly stopped, and Paulo observing his agitation, and probably not relishing the adventure, endeavoured to dissuade him from further research: “For we know not who may inhabit this gloomy place, Signor, or their numbers, and we are only two of us after all! Besides, Signor, it was through that door, yonder;” and he pointed to the very spot whence Vivaldi had so fearfully issued; “through that door, that I fancied, just now, I saw something pass.”

“Are you certain as to this?” said Vivaldi, with increased emotion. “What was its form?”

“It was so dusky thereabout, Maestro, that I could not distinguish.” Vivaldi’s eyes were fixed upon the building, and a violent conflict of feelings seemed to shake his soul. A few seconds decided it. “I will go on,” said he, “and terminate, at any hazard, this state of intolerable anxiety. Paulo, pause a moment, and consider well whether you can depend on your courage, for it may be severely tried. If you can, descend with me in silence, and I warn you to be wary; if you cannot, I will go alone.”

“It is too late now, Signor, to ask myself that question,” replied Paulo, with a submissive air; “and if I had not settled it long ago, I should not have followed you thus far. My courage, Signor, you never doubted before.”

“Come on then,” said Vivaldi. He drew his sword, and entering the narrow doorway, the torch, which he had now resigned to Paulo, shewed a stone passage, that was, however, interminable to the eye.

As they proceeded, Paulo observed, that the walls were stained in several places with what appeared to be blood, but prudently forbore to point this out to his master, observing the strict injunction of silence he had received.

Vivaldi stepped cautiously, and often paused to listen, after which he went on with a quicker pace, making signs only to, Paulo to follow, and be vigilant. The passage terminated in a staircase, that seemed to lead to vaults below. Vivaldi remembered the light which had formerly appeared there, and, as recollection of the past gathered on his mind, he faultered in his purpose.

Again he paused, looked back upon Paulo, but was going forward, when Paulo himself seized his arm. “Stop! Signor,” said he in a low voice. “Do you not distinguish a figure standing yonder, in the gloom?”

Vivaldi looked onward, and perceived, indistinctly, something as of human form, but motionless and silent. It stood at the dusky extremity of the avenue, near the staircase. Its garments, if garments they were, were dark; but its whole figure was so faintly traced to the eye, that it was impossible to ascertain whether this was the monk. Vivaldi took the light, and held it forward, endeavouring to distinguish the object before he ventured further; but the enquiry was useless, and, resigning the torch to Paulo, he rushed on. When he reached the head of the staircase, however, the form, whatever it might be, was gone. Vivaldi had heard no footstep. Paulo pointed out the exact spot where it had stood, but no vestige of it appeared. Vivaldi called loudly upon the monk, but he heard only the lengthening echoes of his own voice revolving among the chambers below, and, after hesitating a while on the head of the stairs, he descended.

Paulo had not followed down many steps, when he called out, “It is there! Signor; I see it again! and now it flits away through the door that opens to the vaults!”

Vivaldi pursued so swiftly, that Paulo could scarcely follow fast enough with the light; and, as at length he rested to take breath, he perceived himself in the same spacious chamber to which he had formerly descended. At this moment Paulo perceived his countenance change. “You are ill, Signor,” said he. “In the name of our holy Saint, let us quit this hideous place. Its inhabitants can be nothing good, and no good can come of our remaining here.”

Vivaldi made no reply; he drew breath with difficulty, and his eyes remained fixed on the ground, till a noise, like the creaking of a heavy hinge, rose in a distant part of the vault. Paulo turned his eyes, at the same instant, towards the place whence it came, and they both perceived a door

in the wall slowly opened, and immediately closed again, as if the person within had feared to be discovered. Each believed, from the transient view he had of it, that this was the same figure which had appeared on the staircase, and that it was the monk himself. Reanimated by this belief, Vivaldi's nerves were instantly rebraced, and he sprang to the door, which was unfastened, and yielded immediately to his impetuous hand. "You shall not deceive me now," cried he, as he entered; "Paulo! keep guard at the door!"

He looked round the second vault, in which he now found himself, but no person appeared; he examined the place, and particularly the walls, without discovering any aperture, either of door or window, by which the figure could have quitted the chamber; a strongly-grated casement, placed near the roof, was all that admitted air, and probably light. Vivaldi was astonished! "Have you seen any thing pass?" said he Paulo.

"Nothing, Maestro," replied the servant.

"This is almost incredible," exclaimed Vivaldi; "'tis certain, this form can be nothing human!"

"If so, Signor," observed Paulo, "why should it fear us? as surely it does; or why should it have fled?"

"That is not so certain," rejoined Vivaldi; "it may have fled only to lead us into evil. But bring hither the torch; here is something in the wall which I would examine."

Paulo obeyed. It was merely a ruggedness in the stones, not the partition of a door, that had excited his curiosity. "This is inexplicable!" exclaimed Vivaldi, after a long pause. "What motive could any human being have for thus tormenting me."

"Or any being superhuman, either, my Signor?" said Paulo.

"I am warned of evils that await me," continued Vivaldi, musing; "of events that are regularly fulfilled; the being who warns me, crosses my path perpetually, yet, with the cunning of a demon, as constantly eludes my grasp, and baffles my pursuit! It is incomprehensible, by what means he glides thus away from my eye, and fades, as if into air, at my approach! He is repeatedly in my presence, yet is never to be found!"

"It is most true, Signor," said Paulo, "that he is never to be found, and therefore let me entreat you to give up the pursuit. This place is enough to make one believe in the horrors of purgatory! Let us go, Signor."

“What but spirit could have quitted this vault so mysteriously,” continued Vivaldi, not attending to Paulo; “what but spirit!” —

“I would fain prove,” said the servant, “that substance can quit it as easily; I would fain evaporate through that door myself.”

He had scarcely spoken the words, when the door closed, with a thundering clap that echoed through all the vaults; and Vivaldi and Paulo stood for a moment aghast! and then both hastened to open it, and to leave the place. Their consternation may be easily conceived, when they found that all their efforts at the door were ineffectual. The thick wood was inlaid with solid bars of iron; and was of such unconquerable strength, that it evidently guarded what had been designed for a prison, and appeared to be the keep or dungeon of the ancient fort.

“Ah, Signor mio!” said Paulo, “if this was a spirit, ‘tis plain he knew we were not so, by his luring us hither. Would we could exchange natures with him for a moment; for I know not how, as mere mortal men, we can ever squeeze ourselves out of this scrape. You must allow, Maestro, that this was not one of the evils he warned you of; or, if he did, it was through my organs, for I entreated you.” —

“Peace, good Signor Buffo!” said Vivaldi; “a truce with this nonsense, and assist in searching for some means of escape.”

Vivaldi again examined the walls, and as unsuccessfully as before; but in one corner of the vault lay an object, which seemed to tell the fate of one who had been confined here, and to hint his own: it was a garment covered with blood. Vivaldi and his servant discovered it at the same instant; and a dreadful foreboding of their own destiny fixed them, for some moments, to the spot. Vivaldi first recovered himself, when instead of yielding to despondency, all his faculties were aroused to devise some means for escaping; but Paulo’s hopes seemed buried beneath the dreadful vestments upon which he still gazed. “Ah, my Signor!” said he, at length, in a faultering accent, “who shall dare to raise that garment? What if it should conceal the mangled body whose blood has stained it!”

Vivaldi, shudderingly, turned to look on it again.

“It moves!” exclaimed Paulo; “I see it move!” as he said which, he started to the opposite side of the chamber. ‘Vivaldi stepped a few paces back, and as quickly returned; when; determined to know the event at once, he raised the garment upon the point of his sword, and perceived,

beneath, other remains of dress, heaped high together, while even the floor below was stained with gore.

Believing that fear had deceived the eyes of Paulo, Vivaldi watched this horrible spectacle for some time, but without perceiving the least motion; when he became convinced, that not any remains of life were shrouded beneath it, and that it contained only articles of dress, which had belonged to some unfortunate person, who had probably been decoyed hither for plunder, and afterwards murdered. This belief, and the repugnance he felt to dwell upon the spectacle, prevented him from examining further, and he turned away to a remote part of the vault. A conviction of his own fate, and of his servant's, filled his mind for a while with despair. It appeared that he had been ensnared by robbers, till, as he recollected the circumstances which had attended his entrance, and the several peculiar occurrences connected with the archway, this conjecture seemed highly improbable. It was unreasonable, that robbers should have taken the trouble to decoy, when they might at first have seized him; still more so, that they would have persevered so long in the attempt; and most of all, that when he had formerly been in their power, they should have neglected their opportunity, and suffered him to leave the ruin unmolested. Yet, granting that all this, improbable as it was, were, however, possible, the solemn warnings and predictions of the monk, so frequently delivered, and so faithfully fulfilled, could have no connection with the schemes of banditti. It appeared, therefore, that Vivaldi was not in the hands of robbers; or, if he were, that the monk, at least, had no connection with them; yet it was certain that he had just heard the voice of this monk beneath the arch; that his servant had said, he saw the vestments of one ascending the steps of the fort; and that they had both reason, afterward, to believe it was his shadowy figure, which they had pursued to the very chamber where they were now confined.

As Vivaldi considered all these circumstances, his perplexity encreased, and he was more than ever inclined to believe, that the form, which had assumed the appearance of a monk, was something superhuman.

"If this being had appeared only," said he to himself, "I should, perhaps, have thought it the perturbed spirit of him, who doubtless has been murdered here, and that it led me hither to discover the deed, that his bones might be removed to holy ground; but this monk, or whatever it is,

was neither silent, nor apparently anxious concerning himself; he spoke only of events connected with my peace, and predicted of the future, as well as reverted to the past! If he had either hinted of himself, or had been wholly silent, his appearance, and manner of eluding pursuit, is so extraordinary, that I should have yielded, for once, perhaps, to the tales of our grandfathers, and thought he was the spectre of a murdered person."

As Vivaldi expressed his incredulity, however, he returned to examine the garment once more, when, as he raised it, he observed, what had before escaped his notice, black drapery mingled with the heap beneath; and, on lifting this also on the point of his sword, he perceived part of the habiliment of a monk! He started at the discovery, as if he had seen the apparition, which had so long been tempting his credulity. Here were the vest and scapulary, rent and stained with blood! Having gazed for a moment, he let them drop upon the heap; when Paulo, who had been silently observing him, exclaimed, "Signor! that should be the garment of the demon who led us hither. Is it a winding-sheet for us, Maestro? Or was it one for the body he inhabited while on earth!" "Neither, I trust," replied Vivaldi, endeavouring to command the perturbation he suffered, and turning from the spectacle; "therefore we will try once more to regain our liberty."

This was a design, however, beyond his accomplishment; and, having again attacked the door, raised Paulo to the grated window, and vociferated for release with his utmost strength, in which he was very ably seconded by Paulo, he abandoned, for the present, all further attempts, and, weary and desponding, threw himself on the ground of the dungeon.

Paulo bitterly lamented his master's rashness in penetrating to this remote spot, and bewailed the probability of their being famished.

"For, supposing, Signor, that we were not decoyed hither for plunder and butchery, and supposing that we are not surrounded by malicious spirits, which San Januarius forbid I should take upon me to affirm is impossible! supposing all this, Signor, yet still there remains almost a certainty of our being starved to death; for how is it possible that any body can hear our cries, in a place so remote from all resort, and buried, as one may say, under ground, as this is?"

"Thou art an excellent comforter," said Vivaldi, groaning.

“You must allow, Signor, that you are even with me,” replied Paulo; “and that you are as excellent a conductor.”

Vivaldi gave no answer, but lay on the ground, abandoned to agonizing thought. He had now leisure to consider the late words of the monk, and to conjecture, for he was in a mood for conjecturing the worst, that they not only alluded to Ellena, but that his saying “she had departed an hour ago,” was a figurative manner of telling that she had died then. This was a conjecture which dispelled almost all apprehension for himself. He started from the ground, and paced his prison with quick and unequal steps; it was now no longer a heavy despondency that oppressed him, but an acute anxiety that stung him, and, with the tortures of suspense, brought also those of passionate impatience and horror concerning the fate of Ellena. The longer he dwelt upon the possibility of her death, the more probable it appeared. This monk had already forewarned him of the death of Bianchi; and when he recollected the suspicious circumstances which had attended it, his terrors for Ellena increased. The more he yielded to his feelings, the more violent they became, till, at length, his ungovernable impatience and apprehensions arose almost to frenzy.

Paulo forgot, for a while, his own situation in the superior sufferings of his master, and now, at least, endeavoured to perform the offices of a comforter, for he tried to calm Vivaldi’s mind, by selecting the fairest circumstances for hope which the subject admitted, and he passed without noticing, or, if noticing, only lightly touched upon, the most prominent possibilities of evil. His master, however, was insensible to all he said, till he mentioned again the convent del Pianto; and this subject, as it seemed connected with the monk, who had hinted the fate of Ellena, interested the unhappy Vivaldi, who withdrew awhile from his own reflections, to listen to a recital which might assist his conjectures.

Paulo complied with his command, but not without reluctance. He looked round the empty vault, as if he feared that some person might be lurking in the obscurity, who would overhear, and even answer him.

“We are tolerably retired here too, Signor,” said he, recollecting himself; “one may venture to talk secrets with little danger of being discovered. However, Maestro, it is best to make matters quite sure; and therefore, if you will please to take a seat on the ground, I will stand

beside you and relate all I know of the convent of Our Lady of Tears, which is not much after all."

Vivaldi, having seated himself, and bidden Paulo do the same, the servant began in a low voice— "It was on the vigil of the Santo Marco, just after the last vesper-bell had tolled — You never was at the Santa Maria del Pianto, Signor, or you would know what a gloomy old church it has. — It was in a confessional in one of the side ailes of this church, and just after the last bell had ceased, that a person, so muffled up, that neither face nor shape could be distinguished, came and placed himself on the steps of one of the boxes adjoining the confessional chair; but if he had been as airily dressed as yourself, Signor, he might have been just as well concealed; for that dusky aisle is lighted only by one lamp, which hangs at the end next the painted window, except when the tapers at the shrine of San Antonio happen to be burning at the other extremity, and even then the place is almost as gloomy as this vault. But that is, no doubt, contrived for the purpose, that people may not blush for the sins they confess; and, in good faith, this is an accommodation which may bring more money to the poor's box, for the monks have a shrewd eye that way, and" —

"You have dropt the thread of your story," said Vivaldi.

"True, Signor, let me recollect where I lost it. — Oh! at the steps of the confessional; — the stranger knelt down upon them, and for some time poured such groans into the ear of the confessor, as were heard all along the aisle. You are to know, Signor, that the brothers of Santa del Pianto are of the order of Black Penitents; and people who have more sins than ordinary to confess, sometimes go there, to consult with the grand penitentiary what is to be done. Now it happened, that Father Ansaldo, the grand penitentiary himself, was in the chair, as is customary on the vigil of the Santo Marco; and he gently reproved the penitent for bewailing so loud, and bade him take comfort; when the other replied only by a groan deeper than before, but it was not so loud, and then proceeded to confess. But what he did confess, Signor, I know not; for the confessor, you know, never must divulge, except, indeed, on very extraordinary occasions. It was, however, something so very strange and horrible, that the grand penitentiary suddenly quitted the chair, and before he reached the cloisters he fell into strong convulsions. On recovering himself, he asked the people about him, whether the penitent, who had visited such a confessional,

naming it, was gone; adding, that if he was still in the church, it was proper he should be detained. He described, at the same time, as well as he could, the sort of figure he had dimly seen approaching the confessional just before he had received the confession, at recollecting which, he seemed ready to go off again into his convulsions. One of the fathers, who had crossed the aisle, on his way to the cloisters, upon the first alarm of Ansaldo's disorder, remembered that a person, such as was described, had passed him hastily. He had seen a tall figure, muffled up in the habit of a white friar, gliding swiftly along the aisle, towards the door which opened into the outer court of the convent; but he was himself too much engaged to notice the stranger particularly. Father Ansaldo thought this must be the person; and the porter was summoned, and asked whether he had observed such an one pass. He affirmed that he had not seen any person go forth from the gate within the last quarter of an hour; which might be true enough, you know, Signor, if the rogue had been off his post. But he further said, that no one had entered, during the whole evening, habited in white, as the stranger was described to be: so the porter proved himself to be a vigilant watchman; for he must have been fast asleep too, or how could this personage have entered the convent, and left it again, without being seen by him!"

"In white, was he?" said Vivaldi; "if he had been in black, I should have thought this must have been the monk, my tormentor."

"Why, you know, Signor, that occurred to me before," observed Paulo, "and a man might easily change his dress, if that were all."

"Proceed," said Vivaldi.

"Hearing this account from the porter," continued Paulo, "the fathers believed, one and all, that the stranger must be secreted within the walls; and the convent, with every part of the precincts, was searched; but no person was found!"

"This must certainly be the monk," said Vivaldi, "notwithstanding the difference of his habit; there surely cannot be two beings in the world, who would conduct themselves in this same mysterious manner!"

He was interrupted by a low sound, which seemed, to his distracted fancy, to proceed from a dying person. Paulo also heard it; he started, and they both listened with intense and almost intolerable expectation.

"Ah!" said Paulo, at length, "it was only the wind."

“It was no more,” said Vivaldi; “proceed therefore.”

“From the period of this strange confession,” resumed Paulo, “Father Ansaldo was never properly himself; he” —

“Doubtless the crime confessed related to himself,” observed Vivaldi.

“Why, no, Signor, I never heard that that was the case; and some remarkable circumstances, which followed, seemed to prove it otherwise. About a month after the time I have mentioned, on the evening of a sultry day, when the monks were retiring from the last service.” —

“Hark!” cried Vivaldi.

“I hear whispers,” said Paulo, whispering himself.

“Be still!” said Vivaldi.

They listened attentively, and heard a murmuring, as of voices; but could not ascertain whether they came from the adjoining vault, or arose from beneath the one in which they were. The sound returned at intervals; and the persons who conversed, whatever they were, seemingly restrained their voices, as if they feared to be heard. Vivaldi considered whether it were better to discover himself, and call for assistance, or to remain still.

“Remember, Signor,” said Paulo, “what a chance we have of being starved, unless we venture to discover ourselves to these people, or whatever they are.”

“Venture!” exclaimed Vivaldi. “What has such a wretch as I to do with fear? O, Ellena, Ellena!”

He instantly called loudly to the person whom he believed he had heard, and was seconded by Paulo; but their continued vociferations availed them nothing; no answer was returned; and even the indistinct sounds, which had awakened their attention, were heard no more.

Exhausted by their efforts, they laid down on the floor of the dungeon, abandoning all further attempts at escape till the morning light might assist them. Vivaldi had no further spirits to enquire for the remainder of Paulo’s narrative. Almost despairing for himself, he could not feel an interest concerning strangers; for he had already perceived, that it could not afford him information connected with Ellena; and Paulo, who had roared himself hoarse, was very willing to be silent.

Chapter 7

Who may she be that steals through yonder cloister,
And, as the beam of evening tints her veil,
Unconsciously discloses saintly features,
Inform’d with the high soul of saintly virtue?

During several days after Ellena’s arrival at the monastery of San Stefano, she was not permitted to leave the room. The door was locked upon her, and not any person appeared except the nun, who brought her a scanty portion of food, and who was the same, that had first admitted her into that part of the convent appropriated to the abbess.

On the fourth day, when, probably, it was believed that her spirits were subdued by confinement, and by her experience of the suffering she had to expect from resistance, she was summoned to the parlour. The abbess was alone, and the air of austerity, with which she regarded Ellena, prepared the latter to endure.

After an exordium on the heinousness of her offence, and the necessity there was for taking measures to protect the peace and dignity of a noble family, which her late conduct had nearly destroyed; the abbess informed her, that she must determine either to accept the veil, or the person whom the Marchesa di Vivaldi had, of her great goodness, selected for her husband.

“You never can be sufficiently grateful,” added the abbess, “for the generosity the Marchesa displays, in allowing you a choice on the subject. After the injury you have endeavoured to inflict upon her and her family, you could not expect that any indulgence would be shewn you. It was natural to suppose, that the Marchesa would have punished you with severity; instead of which, she allows you to enter into our society; or, if you have not strength of mind sufficient to enable you to renounce a sinful world, she permits you to return into it, and gives you a suitable partner to support you through its cares and toils, — a partner much more suitable to your circumstances than him, to whom you had the temerity to lift your eye.”

Ellena blushed at this coarse appeal to her pride, and persevered in a disdainful silence. Thus to give to injustice the colouring of mercy, and to acts most absolutely tyrannical the softening tints of generosity, excited her honest indignation. She was not, however, shocked by a discovery of the designs formed against her, since, from the moment of her arrival at San Stefano, she had expected something terribly severe, and had prepared her mind to meet it with fortitude; for she believed, that, so supported, she should weary the malice of her enemies, and finally triumph over misfortune. It was only when she thought of Vivaldi that her courage failed, and that the injuries she endured seemed too heavy to be long sustained.

"You are silent!" said the abbess, after a pause of expectation. "Is it possible, then, that you can be ungrateful for the generosity of the Marchesa? But, though you may at present be insensible to her goodness, I will forbear to take advantage of your indiscretion, and will still allow you liberty of choice. You may retire to your chamber, to consider and to decide. But remember, that you must abide by the determination you shall avow; and, that you will be allowed no appeal from the alternatives, which are now placed before you. — If you reject the veil, you must accept the husband who is offered you."

"It is unnecessary," said Ellena, with an air of dignified tranquillity, "that I should withdraw for the purposes of considering and deciding. My resolution is already taken, and I reject each of the offered alternatives. I will neither condemn myself to a cloister, or to the degradation, with which I am threatened on the other hand. Having said this, I am prepared to meet whatever suffering you shall inflict upon me; but be assured, that my own voice never shall sanction the evils to which I may be subjected, and that the immortal love of justice, which fills all my heart, will sustain my courage no less powerfully than the sense of what is due to my own character. You are now acquainted with my sentiments and my resolutions; I shall repeat them no more."

The abbess, whose surprise had thus long suffered Ellena to speak, still fixed upon her a stern regard, as she said, "Where is it that you have learned these heroics, and acquired the rashness which thus prompts you to avow them! — the boldness which enables you to insult your Superior, a priestess of your holy religion, even in her sanctuary!"

“The sanctuary is prophaned,” said Ellena, mildly, but with dignity: “it is become a prison. It is only when the Superior ceases to respect the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts which teach her justice and benevolence, that she herself is no longer respected. The very sentiment which bids us revere its mild and beneficent laws, bids us also reject the violators of them: when you command me to reverence my religion, you urge me to condemn yourself.”

“Withdraw!” said the abbess, rising impatiently from her chair; “your admonition, so becomingly delivered, shall not be forgotten.”

Ellena willingly obeyed, and was led back to her cell, where she sat down pensively, and reviewed her conduct. Her judgment approved of the frankness, with which she had asserted her rights, and of the firmness, with which she had reproved a woman, who had dared to demand respect from the very victim of her cruelty and oppression. She was the more satisfied with herself, because she had never, for an instant, forgotten her own dignity so far, as to degenerate into the vehemence of passion, or to faulter with the weakness of fear. Her conviction of the abbess’s unworthy character was too clear to allow Ellena to feel abashed in her presence; for she regarded only the censure of the good, to which she had ever been as tremblingly alive, as she was obdurately insensible to that of the vicious.

Ellena, having now asserted her resolutions, determined to avoid, if possible, all repetition of scenes like the last, and to repel by silence only, whatever indignity might be offered her. She knew that she must suffer, and she resolved to endure. Of the three evils, which were placed before her, that of confinement, with all its melancholy accompaniments, appeared considerably less severe, than either the threatened marriage, or a formal renunciation of the world; either of which would devote her, during life, to misery, and that by her own act. Her choice, therefore, had been easy, and the way was plain before her. If she could endure with calmness the hardships which she could not avoid, half their weight would be unfelt; and she now most strenuously endeavoured to attain the strength of mind, which was necessary to support such equanimity.

For several days after the late interview with the abbess, she was kept a close prisoner; but on the fifth evening she was permitted to attend vespers. As she walked through the garden to the chapel, the ordinary freshness of the open air, and the verdure of the trees and shrubs were

luxuries to her, who had so long been restricted from the common blessings of nature. She followed the nuns to a chapel where they usually performed their devotions, and was there seated among the novices. The solemnity of the service, and particularly of those parts, which were accompanied by music, touched all her heart, and soothed and elevated her spirit.

Among the voices of the choir, was one whose expression immediately fixed her attention; it seemed to speak a loftier sentiment of devotion than the others, and to be modulated by the melancholy of an heart, that had long since taken leave of this world. Whether it swelled with the high peal of the organ, or mingled in low and trembling accents with the sinking chorus, Ellena felt that she understood all the feelings of the breast from which it flowed; and she looked to the gallery where the nuns were assembled, to discover a countenance, that might seem to accord with the sensibility expressed in the voice. As no strangers were admitted to the chapel, some of the sisters had thrown back their veils, and she saw little that interested her in their various faces; but the figure and attitude of a nun, kneeling in a remote part of the gallery, beneath a lamp, which threw its rays aslant her head, perfectly agreed with the idea she had formed of the singer, and the sound seemed to approach immediately from that direction. Her face was concealed by a black veil, whose transparency, however, permitted the fairness of her complexion to appear; but the air of her head, and the singularity of her attitude, for she was the only person who remained kneeling, sufficiently indicated the superior degree of fervency and penitence, which the voice had expressed.

When the hymn had ceased, she rose from her knees, and Ellena, soon after, observing her throw back her veil, discovered, by the lamp, which shed its full light upon her features, a countenance, that instantly confirmed her conjecture. It was touched with a melancholy kind of resignation; yet grief seemed still to occasion the paleness, and the air of languor, that prevailed over it, and which disappeared only when the momentary energy of devotion seemed to lift her spirit above this world, and to impart to it somewhat of a seraphic grandeur. At those moments her blue eyes were raised towards Heaven, with such meek, yet servent love, such sublime enthusiasm as the heads of Guido sometimes display, and

which renewed, with Ellena, all the enchanting effects of the voice she had just heard.

While she regarded the nun with a degree of interest which rendered her insensible to every other object in the chapel, she fancied she could perceive the calmness in her countenance to be that of despair, rather than of resignation; for, when her thoughts were not elevated in prayer, there was frequently a fixedness in her look, too energetic for common suffering, or for the temper of mind, which may lead to perfect resignation. It had, however, much that attached the sympathy of Ellena, and much that seemed to speak a similarity of feeling. Ellena was not only soothed, but in some degree comforted, while she gazed upon her; a selfishness which may, perhaps, be pardoned, when it is considered, that she thus knew there was one human being, at least, in the convent, who must be capable of feeling pity, and willing to administer consolation. Ellena endeavoured to meet her eye, that she might inform her of the regard she had inspired, and express her own unhappiness; but the nun was so entirely engaged by devotion, that she did not succeed.

As they left the chapel, however, the nun passed close by Ellena, who threw back her veil, and fixed upon her a look so supplicating and expressive, that the nun paused, and in her turn regarded the novice, not with surprize only, but with a mixture of curiosity and compassion. A faint blush crossed her cheek, her spirits seemed to faulter, and she was unwilling to withdraw her eyes from Ellena: but it was necessary that she should continue in the procession, and, bidding her farewel by a smile of ineffable pity, she passed on to the court, while Ellena followed with attention still fixed upon the sister, who soon disappeared beyond the doorway of the Abbess’s apartment, and Ellena had nearly reached her own, before her thoughts were sufficiently disengaged to permit her to enquire the name of the stranger.

“It is sister Olivia whom you mean, perhaps,” said her conductress.

“She is very handsome,” said Ellena.

“Many of the sisters are so,” replied Margaritone, with an air of pique.

“Undoubtedly,” said Ellena; “but she, whom I mean, has a most touching countenance; frank, noble, full of sensibility; and there is a gentle melancholy in her eye, which cannot but interest all who observe her.”

Ellena was so fascinated by this interesting nun, that she forgot she was describing her to a person, whose callous heart rendered her insensible to the influence of any countenance, except, perhaps, the commanding one of the lady abbess; and to whom, therefore, a description of the fine traits, which Ellena felt, was as unintelligible as would have been an Arabic inscription.

“She is passed the bloom of youth,” continued Ellena, still anxious to be understood; “but she retains all its interesting graces, and adds to them the dignity of.” —

“If you mean that she is of middle age,” interrupted Margaritone, peevishly, “it is sister Olivia you mention, for we are all younger than she is.”

Ellena, raising her eyes almost unconsciously, as the nun spoke this, fixed them upon a face fallow, meagre, seemingly near fifty years an inhabitant of this world; and she could scarcely suppress the surprize she felt, on perceiving such wretched vanity lingering among the chilled passions of so repulsive a frame, and within the sequestered shade of a cloister. Margaritone, still jealous of the praise bestowed on Olivia, repelled all further enquiry, and, having attended Ellena to her cell, locked her up for the night.

On the following evening Ellena was again permitted to attend vespers, and, on the way to the chapel, the hope of seeing her interesting favourite reanimated her spirits. In the same part of the gallery; as on the preceding night, she again appeared, and kneeling, as before, beneath the lamp, in private orison, for the service was not begun.

Ellena endeavoured to subdue the impatience she felt to express her regard, and to be noticed by the holy sister, till she should have finished. When the nun rose, and observed Ellena, she lifted her veil, and, fixing on her the same enquiring eye, her countenance brightened into a smile so full of compassion and intelligence, that Ellena, forgetting the decorums of the place, left her seat to approach her; it seemed as if the soul, which beamed forth in that smile, had long been acquainted with hers. As she advanced, the nun dropped her veil, a reproof which she immediately understood, and she withdrew to her seat; but her attention remained fixed on the nun during the whole service.

At the conclusion, when they left the chapel, and she saw Olivia pass without noticing her, Ellena could scarcely restrain her tears; she returned in deep dejection to her room. The regard of this nun was not only delightful, but seemed necessary to her heart, and she dwelt, with fond perseverance, on the smile that had expressed so much, and which threw one gleam of comfort, even through the bars of her prison.

Her reverie was soon interrupted by a light step, that approached her cell, and in the next moment the door was unlocked, and Olivia herself appeared. Ellena rose with emotion to meet her; the nun held forth her hand to receive hers.

“You are unused to confinement,” said she, curtsying mournfully, and placing on the table a little basket containing refreshment, “and our hard fare” —

“I understand you,” said Ellena, with a look expressive of her gratitude; “you have a heart that can pity, though you inhabit these walls; — you have suffered too, and know the delicate generosity of softening the sorrows of others, by any attention that may tell them your sympathy. O! if I could express how much the sense of this affects me!”

Tears interrupted her. Olivia pressed her hand, looked steadily upon her face, and was somewhat agitated, but she soon recovered apparent tranquillity, and said, with a serious smile, “You judge rightly, my sister, respecting my sentiments, however you may do concerning my sufferings. My heart is not insensible to pity, nor to you, my child. You were designed for happier days than you can hope to find within these cloisters!”

She checked herself as if she had allowed too much, and then added, “But you may, perhaps, be peaceful; and since it consoles you to know that you have a friend near you, believe me that friend — but believe it in silence. I will visit you when I am permitted — but do not enquire for me; and if my visits are short, do not press me to lengthen them.”

“How good this is!” said Ellena, in a faultering voice. “How sweet too it is! you will visit me, and I am pitied by you!”

“Hush!” said the nun, expressively; “no more; I may be observed. Good night, my sister; may your slumbers be light!”

Ellena’s heart sunk. She had not spirits to say, “Good night!” but her eyes, covered with tears, said more. The nun turned her own away suddenly, and, pressing her hand in silence, left the cell. Ellena, firm and

tranquil under the insults of the abbess, was now melted into tears by the kindness of a friend. These gentle tears were refreshing to her long-oppressed spirits, and she indulged them. Of Vivaldi she thought with more composure than she had done since she left the villa Altieri; and something like hope began to revive in her heart, though reflection offered nothing to support it.

On the following morning, she perceived that the door of her cell had not been closed. She rose impatiently, and, not without a hope of liberty, immediately passed it. The cell, opening upon a short passage, which communicated with the main building, and which was shut up by a door, was secluded, and almost insulated from every other chamber; and this door being now secured, Ellena was as truly a prisoner as before. It appeared then, that the nun had omitted to fasten the cell only for the purpose of allowing her more space to walk in the passage, and she was grateful for the attention. Still more she was so, when, having traversed it, she perceived one extremity terminate in a narrow stair case, that appeared to lead to other chambers.

She ascended the winding steps hastily, and found they led only to a door, opening into a small room, where nothing remarkable appeared, till she approached the windows, and beheld thence an horizon, and a landscape spread below, whose grandeur awakened all her heart. The consciousness of her prison was lost, while her eyes ranged over the wide and freely-sublime scene without. She perceived that this chamber was within a small turret, projecting from an angle of the convent over the walls, and suspended, as in air, above the vast precipices of granite, that formed part of the mountain. These precipices were broken into cliffs, which, in some places, impended far above their base, and, in others, rose, in nearly-perpendicular lines, to the walls of the monastery, which they supported. Ellena, with a dreadful pleasure, looked down them, shagged as they were with larch, and frequently darkened by lines of gigantic pine bending along the rocky ledges, till her eye rested on the thick chesnut woods that extended over their winding base, and which, softening to the plains, seemed to form a gradation between the variegated cultivation there, and the awful wildness of the rocks above. Round these extensive plains were tumbled the mountains, of various shape and altitude, which Ellena had admired on her approach to San Stefano; some shaded with

forests of olive and almond trees, but the greater part abandoned to the flocks, which, in summer, feed on their aromatic herbage, and on the approach of winter, descend to the sheltered plains of the Tavogliere di Puglia.

On the left opened the dreadful pass which she had traversed, and the thunder of whose waters now murmured at a distance. The accumulation of overtopping points, which the mountains of this dark perspective exhibited, presented an image of grandeur superior to any thing she had seen while within the pass itself.

To Ellena, whose mind was capable of being highly elevated, or sweetly soothed, by scenes of nature, the discovery of this little turret was an important circumstance. Hither she could come, and her soul, refreshed by the views it afforded, would acquire strength to bear her, with equanimity, thro' the persecutions that might await her. Here, gazing upon the stupendous imagery around her, looking, as it were, beyond the awful veil which obscures the features of the Deity, and conceals Him from the eyes of his creatures, dwelling as with a present God in the midst of his sublime works; with a mind thus elevated, how insignificant would appear to her the transactions, and the sufferings of this world! How poor the boasted power of man, when the fall of a single cliff from these mountains would with ease destroy thousands of his race assembled on the plains below! How would it avail them, that they were accoutred for battle, armed with all the instruments of destruction that human invention ever fashioned? Thus man, the giant who now held her in captivity, would shrink to the diminutiveness of a fairy; and she would experience, that his utmost force was unable to enchain her soul, or compel her to fear him, while he was destitute of virtue.

Ellena's attention was recalled from the scene without by a sound from within the gallery, and she then heard a key turning in the door of the passage. Fearing that it was sister Margaritone who approached, and who, informed by her absence of the consolatory turret she had discovered, would perhaps debar her from ever returning to it, Ellena descended with a palpitating heart, and found that nun in the cell. Surprize and severity were in her countenance, when she enquired by what means Ellena had unclosed the door, and whither she had been.

Ellena answered without any prevarication, that she had found the door unfastened, and that she had visited the turret above; but she forbore to express a wish to return thither, judging that such an expression would certainly exclude her in future. Margaritone, after sharply rebuking her for prying beyond the passage, and setting down the breakfast she had brought, left the room, the door of which she did not forget to secure. Thus Ellena was at once deprived of so innocent a means of consolation as her pleasant turret had afforded.

During several days, she saw only the austere nun, except when she attended vespers; where, however, she was so vigilantly observed, that she feared to speak with Olivia, even by her eyes. Olivia's were often fixed upon her face, and with a kind of expression which Ellena, when she did venture to look at her, could not perfectly interpret. It was not only of pity, but of anxious curiosity, and of something also like fear. A blush would sometimes wander over her cheek, which was succeeded by an extreme paleness, and by an air of such universal languor as precedes a fainting fit; but the exercises of devotion seemed frequently to recal her fleeting spirits, and to elevate them with hope and courage.

When she left the chapel, Ellena saw Olivia no more that night; but on the following morning she came with breakfast to the cell. A character of peculiar sadness was on her brow.

"O! how glad I am to see you!" said Ellena; "and how much I have regretted your long absence! I was obliged to remember constantly what you had enjoined, to forbear enquiring after you."

The nun replied with a melancholy smile, "I come in obedience to our lady abbess," said she, as she seated herself on Ellena's mattress.

"And did you not wish to come?" said Ellena, mournfully.

"I did wish it," replied Olivia; "but" — and she hesitated.

"Whence then this reluctance?" enquired Ellena.

Olivia was silent a moment.

"You are a messenger of evil news:!" said Ellena; "you are only reluctant to afflict me."

"It is as you say," replied Olivia; "I am only reluctant to afflict you; and I fear you have too many attachments to the world, to allow you to receive, without sorrow, what I have to communicate. I am ordered to prepare you for the vows, and to say, that, since you have rejected the husband which

was proposed to you, you are to accept the veil; that many of the customary forms are to be dispensed with; and that the ceremony of taking the black veil, will follow without delay that of receiving the white one."

The nun paused; and Ellena said, "You are an unwilling bearer of this cruel message; and I reply only to the lady abbess, when I declare, that I never will accept either; that force may send me to the altar, but that it never shall compel me to utter vows which my heart abhors; and if I am constrained to appear there, it shall be only to protest against her tyranny, and against the form intended to sanction it:"

To Olivia this answer was so far from being displeasing, that it appeared to give her satisfaction.

"I dare not applaud you resolution," said she; "but I will not condemn it. You have, no doubt, connections in the world which would render a seclusion from it afflicting. You have relations, friends, from whom it would be dreadful to part?"

"I have neither," said Ellena, sighing.

"No! Can that be possible? and yet you are so unwilling to retire!"

"I have only one friend," replied Ellena, "and it is of him they would deprive me!"

"Pardon, my love, the abruptness of these enquiries," said Olivia; "yet, while I entreat your forgiveness, I am inclined to offend again, and to ask your name."

"That is a question I will readily answer, My name is Ellena di Rosalba."

"How?" said Olivia, with an air of deliberation; "Ellena di" —

"Di Rofalba," repeated her companion; "and permit me to ask your motive for the enquiry: do you know any person of my name?"

"No," replied the nun, mournfully; "but your features have some resemblance to those of a friend I once had."

As she said this, her agitation was apparent, and she rose to go. "I must not lengthen my visit, left I should be forbidden to repeat it," said she. "What answer shall I give to the abbess? If you are determined to reject the veil, allow me to advise you to soften your refusal as much as possible. I am, perhaps, better acquainted with her character than you are; and O, my sister! I would not see you pining away your existence in this solitary cell."

“How much I am obliged by the interest you express for my welfare,” said Ellena, “and by the advice you offer! I will yield my judgment in this instance to yours; you shall modulate my refusal as you think proper: but remember that it must be absolute; and beware, lest the abbess should mistake gentleness for irresolution.”

“Trust me, I will be cautious in all that relates to you,” said Olivia. “Farewell! I will visit you, if possible, in the evening. In the mean time the door shall be left open, that you may have more air and prospect than this cell affords. That staircase leads to a pleasant chamber.”

“I have visited it already,” replied Ellena, “and have to thank you for the goodness, which permitted me to do so. To go thither will greatly soothe my spirits; if I had some book, and my drawing-instruments, I could almost forget my sorrows there.”

“Could you so?” said the nun, with an affectionate smile. “Adieu! I will endeavour to see you in the evening. If sister Margaritone returns, be careful not to enquire for me; nor once ask her for the little indulgence I give you.”

Olivia withdrew, and Ellena retired to the chamber above, where she lost for a while all sense of sorrow amidst the great scenery, which its windows exhibited.

At noon, the step of Margaritone summoned Ellena from her retreat, and she was surprised that no reproof followed this second discovery of her absence. Margaritone only said, that the abbess had the goodness to permit Ellena to dine with the novices, and that she came to conduct her to their table.

Ellena did not rejoice in this permission, preferring to remain in her solitary turret, to the being exposed to the examining eyes of strangers; and she followed dejectedly, through the silent passages to the apartment where they were assembled. She was not less surprised than embarrassed to observe, in the manners of young people residing in a convent, an absence of that decorum, which includes beneath its modest shade every grace that ought to adorn the female character, like the veil which gives dignity to their air and softness to their features. When Ellena entered the room, the eyes of the whole company were immediately fixed upon her; the young ladies began to whisper and smile, and shewed, by various means, that she was the subject of conversation, not otherwise than

censorious. No one advanced to meet and to encourage her, to welcome her to the table, or still less display one of those nameless graces, with which a generous and delicate mind delights to reanimate the modest and the unfortunate.

Ellena took a chair in silence; and, though she had at first felt forlorn and embarrassed by the impertinent manners of her companions, a consciousness of innocence gradually revived her spirits, and enabled her to resume an air of dignity, which repressed this rude presumption.

Ellena returned to her cell, for the first time, with eagerness. Margaritone did not fasten the door of it, but she was careful to secure that of the passage; and even this small indulgence she seemed to allow with a furly reluctance, as if compelled to obey the command of a superior. The moment she was gone, Ellena withdrew to her pleasant turret, where, after having suffered from the coarse manners of the novices, her gratitude was the more lively, when she perceived the delicate attention of her beloved nun. It appeared that she had visited the chamber in Ellena's absence, and had caused to be brought thither a chair and a table, on which were placed some books, and a knot of fragrant flowers. Ellena did not repress the grateful tears, which the generous feelings of Olivia excited; and she forbore, for some moments, to examine the books, that the pleasing emotions she experienced might not be interrupted.

On looking into these books, however, she perceived, that some of them treated of mystical subjects, which she laid aside with disappointment; but in others she observed a few of the best Italian poets, and a volume or two of Guicciardini's history. She was somewhat surprised, that the poets should have found their way to the library of a nun, but was too much pleased with the discovery to dwell on the enquiry.

Having arranged her books, and set her little room in order, she seated herself at a window, and, with a volume of Tasso, endeavoured to banish every painful remembrance from her mind. She continued wandering in the imaginary scenes of the poet, till the fading light recalled her to those of reality. The sun was set, but the mountain-tops were still lighted up by his beams, and a tint of glorious purple coloured all the west, and began to change the snowy points on the horizon. The silence and repose of the vast scene, promoted the tender melancholy that prevailed in her heart; she thought of Vivaldi, and wept — of Vivaldi, whom she might, perhaps,

never see again, though she doubted not that he would be indefatigable in searching for her. Every particular of their last conversation, when he had so earnestly lamented the approaching separation, even while he allowed of its propriety, came to her mind; and, while she witnessed, in imagination, the grief and distraction, which her mysterious departure and absence must have occasioned him, the fortitude, with which she had resisted her own sufferings, yielded to the picture of his.

The vesper-bell, at length, summoned her to prepare for mass, and she descended to her cell to await the arrival of her conductress. It was Margaritone, who soon appeared; but in the chapel she, as usual, saw Olivia, who, when the service had concluded, invited her into the garden of the convent. There, as she walked beneath the melancholy cypresses, that, ranged on either side the long walks, formed a majestic canopy, almost excluding the evening twilight, Olivia conversed with her on serious, but general, topics, carefully avoiding any mention of the abbess, and of the affairs of Ellena. The latter, anxious to learn the effect of her repeated rejection of the veil, ventured to make some enquiries, which the nun immediately discouraged, and as cautiously checked the grateful effusions of her young friend for the attentions she had received.

Olivia accompanied Ellena to her cell, and there no longer scrupled to relieve her from uncertainty. With a mixture of frankness and discretion, she related as much of the conversation, that had passed between herself and the abbess, as it appeared necessary for Ellena to know, from which it seemed that the former was as obstinate, as the latter was firm.

“Whatever may be your resolution,” added the nun, “I earnestly advise you, my sister, to allow the Superior some hope of compliance, lest she proceed to extremities.”

“And what extremity can be more terrible,” replied Ellena, “than either of those, to which she would now urge me? Why should I descend to practice dissimulation?”

“To save yourself from undeserved sufferings,” said Olivia mournfully.

“Yes, but I should then incur deserved ones,” observed Ellena; “and forfeit such peace of mind as my oppressors never could restore to me.” As she said this, she looked at the nun with an expression of gentle reproach and disappointment.

“I applaud the justness of your sentiment,” replied Olivia, regarding her with tenderest compassion. “Alas! that a mind so noble should be subjected to the power of injustice and depravity!”

“Not subjected,” said Ellena, “do not say subjected. I have accustomed myself to contemplate those sufferings; I have chosen the least of such as were given to my choice, and I will endure them with fortitude; and can you then say that I am subjected?”

“Alas, my sister! you know not what you promise,” replied Olivia; “you do not comprehend the sufferings which may be preparing for you.”

As she spoke, her eyes filled with tears, and she withdrew them from Ellena, who, surprised at the extreme concern on her countenance, entreated she would explain herself.

“I am not certain, myself, as to this point,” said Olivia; “and if I were, I should not dare to explain it.”

“Not dare!” repeated Ellena, mournfully. “Can benevolence like yours know fear, when courage is necessary to prevent evil?”

“Enquire no further!” said Olivia; but no blush of conscious duplicity stained her cheek. “It is sufficient that you understand the consequence of open resistance to be terrible, and that you consent to avoid it.”

“But how avoid it, my beloved friend, without incurring a consequence which, in my apprehension, would be yet more dreadful? How avoid it, without either subjecting myself to a hateful marriage, or accepting the vows? Either of these events would be more terrible to me, than any thing with which I may be menaced.”

“Perhaps not,” said the nun. “Imagination cannot draw the horrors of — But, my sister, let me repeat, that I would save you! O, how willingly save you from the evils preparing! and that the only chance of doing so is, by prevailing with you to abandon at least the appearance of resistance.”

“Your kindness deeply affects me,” said Ellena; “and I am fearful of appearing insensible of it, when I reject your advice; yet I cannot adopt it. The very dissimulation, which I should employ in selfdefence, might be a means of involving me in destruction.”

As Ellena concluded, and her eyes glanced upon the nun, unaccountable suspicion occurred to her, that Olivia might be insincere, and that, at this very moment, when she was advising dissimulation, she was endeavouring to draw Ellena into some snare, which the abbess had laid. She sickened at

this dreadful supposition, and dismissed it without suffering herself to examine its probability. That Olivia, from whom she had received so many attentions, whose countenance and manners announced so fair a mind, and for whom she had conceived so much esteem and affection, should be cruel and treacherous, was a suspicion that gave her more pain, than the actual imprisonment in which she suffered; and when she looked again upon her face, Ellena was consoled by a clear conviction, that she was utterly incapable of perfidy.

“If it were possible that I could consent to practise deceit,” resumed Ellena, after a long pause, “what could it avail me? I am entirely in the power of the abbess, who would soon put my sincerity to the proof; when a discovery of my duplicity would only provoke her vengeance, and I should be punished even for having sought to avoid injustice.”

“If deceit is at any time excusable,” replied Olivia, reluctantly, “it is when we practise it in selfdefence. There are some rare situations, when it may be resorted to without our incurring ignominy, and yours is one of those. But I will acknowledge, that all the good I expect is from the delay which temporizing may procure you. The Superior, when she understands there is a probability of obtaining your consent to her wishes, may be willing to allow you the usual time of preparation for the veil, and meanwhile something may occur to rescue you from your present situation.”

“Ah! could I but believe so!” said Ellena; “but, alas! what power can rescue me? And I have not one relative remaining even to attempt my deliverance. To what possibility do you allude?”

“The Marchesa may relent.”

“Does, then, your possibility of good rest with her, my dear friend? If so, I am in despair again; for such a chance of benefit, there would certainly be little policy in forfeiting one’s integrity.”

“There are also other possibilities, my sister,” said Olivia; “but hark! what bell is that? It is the chime which assembles the nuns in the apartment of the abbess, where she dispenses her evening benediction. My absence will be observed. Good night, my sister. Reflect on what I have advised; and remember, I conjure you, to consider, that the consequence of your decision must be solemn, and may be fatal.”

The nun spoke this with a look and emphasis so extraordinary, that Ellena at once wished and dreaded to know more; but before she had recovered from her surprize, Olivia had left the room.

Chapter 8

— “He, like the tenant
Of some night-haunted ruin, bore an aspect
Of horror, worn to habitude.”
Mysterious Mother.

The adventurous Vivaldi, and his servant Paulo, after passing the night of Ellena’s departure from villa Altieri in one of the subterraneous chambers of the fort of Paluzzi, and yielding, at length, to exhausted nature, awoke in terror and utter darkness, for the flambeau had expired. When a recollection of the occurrences of the preceding evening returned, they renewed their efforts for liberty with ardour. The grated window was again examined, and being found to overlook only a confined court of the fortress, no hope appeared of escaping.

The words of the monk returned with Vivaldi’s first recollections, to torture him with apprehension, that Ellena was no more; and Paulo, unable either to console or to appease his master, sat down dejectedly beside him. Paulo had no longer a hope to suggest, or a joke to throw away; and he could not forbear seriously remarking, that to die of hunger was one of the most horrible means of death, or lamenting the rashness which had made them liable to so sad a probability.

He was in the midst of a very pathetic oration, of which, however, his master did not hear a single word, so wholly was his attention engaged by his own melancholy thoughts, when on a sudden he became silent, and then, starting to his feet, exclaimed, “Signor, what is yonder? Do you see nothing?”

Vivaldi looked round.

“It is certainly a ray of light,” continued Paulo; “and I will soon know where it comes from.”

As he said this he sprung forward, and his surprize almost equalled his joy when he discovered that the light issued through the door of the vault, which stood a little open. He could scarcely believe his senses, since the door had been strongly fastened on the preceding night, and he had not

heard its ponderous bolts undrawn. He threw it widely open, but recollecting himself, stopped to look into the adjoining vault before he ventured forth; when Vivaldi darted past him, and bidding him follow instantly, ascended to the day. The courts of the fortress were silent and vacant, and Vivaldi reached the archway without having observed a single person, breathless with speed, and scarcely daring to believe that he had regained his liberty.

Beneath the arch he stopped to recover breath, and to consider whether he should take the road to Naples, or to the villa Altieri, for it was yet early morning, and at an hour when it appeared improbable that Ellena's family would be risen. The apprehension of her death had vanished as Vivaldi's spirits revived, which the pause of hesitation sufficiently announced: but even this was the pause only of an instant; a strong anxiety concerning her determined him to proceed to the villa Altieri, notwithstanding the unsuitableness of the hour, since he could, at least, reconnoitre her residence, and await till some sign of the family having risen should appear.

"Pray, Signor," said Paulo, while his master was deliberating, "do not let us stop here lest the enemy should appear again; and do, Signor, take the road which is nearest to some house where we may get breakfast, for the fear of starving has taken such hold upon me, that it has nearly anticipated the reality of it already."

Vivaldi immediately departed for the villa. Paulo, as he danced joyfully along, expressed all the astonishment that filled his mind, as to the cause of their late imprisonment and escape; but Vivaldi, who had now leizure to consider the subject, could not assist him in explaining it. The only certainty that appeared, was, that he had not been confined by robbers; and what interest any person could have in imprisoning him for the night, and suffering him to escape in the morning, did not appear.

On entering the garden at Altieri, he was surprized to observe that several of the lower lattices were open at this early hour, but surprize changed to terror, when, on reaching the portico, he heard a moaning of distress from the hall, and when, after loudly calling, he was answered by the piteous cries of Beatrice. The hall door was fastened, and, Beatrice being unable to open it, Vivaldi, followed by Paulo, sprang through one of the unclosed lattices; when on reaching the hall, he found the housekeeper

bound to a pillar, and learned that Ellena had been carried off during the night by armed men.

For a moment he was almost stupified by the shock of this intelligence, and then asked Beatrice a thousand questions concerning the affair, without allowing her time to answer one of them. When, however, he had patience to listen, he learned that the ruffians were four in number; that they were masked; that two of them had carried Ellena through the garden, while the others, after binding Beatrice to a pillar, threatening her with death if she made any noise, and watching over her till their comrades had secured their prize, left her a prisoner. This was all the information she could give respecting Ellena.

Vivaldi, when he could think coolly, believed he had discovered the instigators and the design of the whole affair, and the cause, also, of his late confinement. It appeared that Ellena had been carried off by order of his family, to prevent the intended

marriage, and that he had been decoyed into the fort of Paluzzi, and kept a prisoner there, to prevent him from intercepting the scheme, which his presence at the villa Altieri would effectually have done. He had himself spoken of his former adventure at Paluzzi; and it now appeared, that his family had taken advantage of the curiosity he had expressed, to lead him into the vaults. The event of this design was the more certain, since, as the fort lay in the direct road to the villa Altieri, Vivaldi could not go thither without being observed by the creatures of the Marchesa, who, by an artful manoeuvre, might make him their prisoner, without employing violence.

As he considered these circumstanes, it appeared certain, also, that father Schedoni was in truth the monk who had so long haunted his steps; that he was the secret adviser of his mother, and one of the authors of the predicted misfortunes, which, it seemed, he possessed a too certain means of fulfilling. Yet Vivaldi, while he admitted the probability of all this, reflected with new astonishment on the conduct of Schedoni, during his interview with him in the Marchesa’s cabinet; — the air of dignified innocence, with which he had repressed accusation, the apparent simplicity, with which he had pointed out circumstances respecting the stranger, that seemed to make against himself; and Vivaldi’s opinion of the confessor’s duplicity began to waver. “Yet what other person,” said he, “could be so intimately acquainted with my concerns, or have an interest

sufficiently strong for thus indefatigably thwarting me, except this confessor, who is, no doubt, well rewarded for his perseverance? The monk can be no other than Schedoni, yet it is strange that he should have forborn to disguise his person, and should appear in his mysterious office in the very habit he usually wears!”

Whatever might be the truth as to Schedoni, it was evident that Ellena had been carried away by order of Vivaldi’s family, and he immediately returned towards Naples with an intention of demanding her at their hands, not with any hope of their compliance, but believing that they might accidentally afford him some lights on the subject. If, however, he should fail to obtain any hint that might assist him in traceing the route she had been carried, he determined to visit Schedoni, accuse him of perfidy, urge him to a full explanation of his conduct, and, if possible, obtain from him a knowledge of Ellena’s place of confinement.

When, at length, he obtained an interview with the Marchese, and, throwing himself at his feet, supplicated that Ellena might be restored to her home, the unaffected surprize of his father overwhelmed him with astonishment and despair. The look and manner of the Marchese could not be doubted; Vivaldi was convinced that he was absolutely ignorant of any step which had been taken against Ellena.

“However ungraciously you have conducted yourself,” said the Marchese, “my honour has never yet been fullied by duplicity; however I may have wished to break the unworthy connection you have formed, I should disdain to employ artifice as the means. If you really design to marry this person, I shall make no other effort to prevent such a measure, than by telling you the consequence you are to expect; — from thenceforth I will disown you for my son.”

The Marchese quitted the apartment when he had said this, and Vivaldi made no attempt to detain him. His words expressed little more than they had formerly done, yet Vivaldi was shocked by the absolute menace now delivered. The stronger passion of his heart, however, soon overcame their effect; and this moment, when he began to fear that he had irrecoverably lost the object of his dearest affections, was not the time, in which he could long feel remoter evils, or calculate the force of misfortunes which never might arrive. The nearer interest pressed solely upon his mind, and he was conscious only to the loss of Ellena.

The interview, which followed with his mother, was of a different character from that, which had occurred with the Marchese. The keen dart of suspicion, however, sharpened as it was by love and by despair, pierced beyond the veil of her duplicity; and Vivaldi as quickly detected her hypocrisy as he had yielded his conviction to the sincerity of the Marchese. But his power rested here; he possessed no means of awakening her pity or actuating her justice, and could not obtain even a hint, that might guide him in his search of Ellena.

Schedoni, however, yet remained to be tried; Vivaldi had no longer a doubt as to his having caballed with the Marchesa, and that he had been an agent in removing Ellena. Whether he was the person who haunted the ruins of Paluzzi, still remained to be proved, for, though several circumstances seemed to declare that he was, others, not less plausible, asserted the contrary.

On leaving the Marchesa's apartment, Vivaldi repaired to the convent of the Spirito Santo, and enquired for father Schedoni. The lay-brother who opened the gate, informed him that the father was in his cell, and Vivaldi stepped impatiently into the court requesting to be shewn thither.

"I dare not leave the gate, Signor," said the brother, "but if you cross the court, and ascend that staircase which you see yonder beyond the doorway on your right, it will lead you to a gallery, and the third door you will come to is father Schedoni's."

Vivaldi passed on without seeing another human being, and not a found disturbed the silence of this sanctuary, till, as he ascended the stairs, a feeble note of lamentation proceeded from the gallery, and he concluded it was uttered by some penitent at confession.

He stopped, as he had been directed, at the third door, when, as he gently knocked, the sound ceased, and the same profound silence returned. Vivaldi repeated his summons, but, receiving no answer, he ventured to open the door. In the dusky cell within no person appeared, but he still looked round, expecting to discover some one in the dubious gloom. The chamber contained little more than a mattress, a chair, a table, and a crucifix; some books of devotion were upon the table, one or two of which were written in unknown characters; several instruments of torture lay beside them. Vivaldi shuddered as he hastily examined these, though he did not comprehend the manner of their application, and he left the

chamber, without noticing any other object, and returned to the court. The porter said, that since father Schedoni was not in his cell, he was probably either in the church or in the gardens, for that he had not passed the gates during the morning.

“Did he pass yester-evening?” said Vivaldi, eagerly.

“Yes, he returned to vespers,” replied the brother with surprize.

“Are you certain as to that, my friend?” rejoined Vivaldi, “are you certain that he slept in the convent last night?”

“Who is it that asks the question?” said the lay-brother, with displeasure, “and what right has he to make it? You are ignorant of the rules of our house, Signor, or you would perceive such questions to be unnecessary; any member of our community is liable to be severely punished if he sleep a night without these walls, and father Schedoni would be the last among us so to trespass. He is one of the most pious of the brotherhood; few indeed have courage to imitate his severe example. His voluntary sufferings are sufficient for a saint. He pass the night abroad? Go, Signor, yonder is the church, you will find him there, perhaps.”

Vivaldi did not linger to reply. “The hypocrite!” said he to himself as he crossed to the church, which formed one side of the quadrangle; “but I will unmask him.”

The church, which he entered, was vacant and silent like the court. “Whither can the inhabitants of this place have withdrawn themselves?” said he; “wherever I go, I hear only the echoes of my own footsteps; it seems as if death reigned here over all! But, perhaps, it is one of the hours of general mediation, and the monks have only retired to their cells.”

As he paced the long aisles, he suddenly stopped to catch the startling found that murmured through the lofty roof; but it seemed to be only the closing of a distant door. Yet he often looked forward into the sacred gloom, which the painted windows threw over the remote perspective, in the expectation of perceiving a monk. He was not long disappointed; a person appeared, standing silently in an obscure part of the cloister, cloathed in the habit of this society, and he advanced towards him.

The monk did not avoid Vivaldi, or even turn to observe who was approaching, but remained in the same attitude, fixed like a statue. This tall and gaunt figure had, at a distance, reminded him of Schedoni, and

Vivaldi, as he now looked under the cowl, discovered the ghastly countenance of the confessor.

“Have I found you at last?” said Vivaldi. “I would speak with you, father, in private. This is not a proper place for such discourse as we must hold.”

Schedoni made no reply, and Vivaldi, once again looking at him, observed that his features were fixed, and his eyes bent towards the ground. The words of Vivaldi seemed not to have reached his understanding, nor even to have made any impression on his senses.

He repeated them in a louder tone, but still not a single line of Schedoni’s countenance acknowledged their influence. “What means this mummery?” said he, his patience exhausted, and his indignation aroused; “This wretched subterfuge shall not protect you, you are detected, your stratagems are known! Restore Ellena di Rosalba to her home, or confess where you have concealed her.”

Schedoni was still silent and unmoved. A respect for his age and profession withheld Vivaldi from seizing and compelling him to answer; but the agony of impatience and indignation which he suffered, formed a striking contrast to the deathlike apathy of the monk. “I now also know you,” continued Vivaldi, “for my tormentor at Paluzzi, the prophet of evils, which you too well practised the means of fulfilling, the predictor of the death of Signora Bianchi.” Schedoni frowned. “The forewarner of Ellena’s departure; the phantom who decoyed me into the dungeons of Paluzzi; the prophet and the artificer of all my misfortunes.”

The monk raised his eyes from the ground, and fixed them with terrible expression upon Vivaldi, but was still silent.

“Yes, father,” added Vivaldi, “I know and will proclaim you to the world. I will strip you of the holy hypocrisy in which you shroud yourself; announce to all your society the despicable artifices you have employed, and the misery you have occasioned. Your character shall be announced aloud.”

While Vivaldi spoke, the monk had withdrawn his eyes, and fixed them again on the ground. His countenance had resumed its usual expression.

“Wretch! restore to me Ellena di Rosalba!” cried Vivaldi, with the sudden anguish of renewed despair. “Tell me at least, where she may be

found, or you shall be compelled to do so. Whither, whither have you conveyed her?”

As he pronounced this in loud and passionate accents, several ecclesiastics entered the cloisters, and were passing on to the body of the church, when his voice arrested their attention. They paused, and perceiving the singular attitude of Schedoni, and the frantic gesticulations of Vivaldi, hastily advanced towards them. “Forbear!” said one of the strangers, as he seized the cloak of Vivaldi, “do you not observe!”

“I observe a hypocrite,” replied Vivaldi, stepping back and disengaging himself, “I observe a destroyer of the peace, it was his duty to protect. I” —

“Forbear this desperate conduct,” said the priest, “lest it provoke the just vengeance of Heaven! Do you not observe the holy office in which he is engaged?” pointing to the monk, “Leave the church while you are permitted to do so in safety; you suspect not the punishment you may provoke.”

“I will not quit the spot till you answer my enquiries,” said Vivaldi to Schedoni, without deigning even to look upon the priest; “Where, I repeat, is Ellena di Rosalba?” The confessor was still silent and unmoved.

“This is beyond all patience, and all belief,” continued Vivaldi. “Speak! Answer me, or dread what I may unfold. Yet silent! Do you know the convent del Pianto? Do you know the confessional of the Black Penitents?”

Vivaldi thought he perceived the countenance of the monk suffer some change. “Do you remember that terrible night,” he added, “when, on the steps of that confessional, a tale was told?” —

Schedoni raised his eyes, and fixing them once more on Vivaldi, with a look that seemed intended to strike him to the dust, “Avaunt!” cried he in a tremendous voice; “avaunt! sacrilegious boy! Tremble for the consequence of thy desperate impiety!”

As he concluded, he started from his position, and gliding with the silent swiftness of a shadow along the cloister, vanished in an instant. Vivaldi, when attempting to pursue him, was seized by the surrounding monks. Insensible to his sufferings, and exasperated by his assertions, they threatened, that if he did not immediately leave the convent, he should be confined, and undergo the severe punishment to which he had become

liable, for having disturbed and even insulted one of their holy order while performing an act of penance.

“He has need of such acts,” said Vivaldi; “but when can they restore the happiness his treachery has destroyed? Your order is disgraced by such a member, reverend fathers; your” —

“Peace!” cried a monk, “he is the pride of our house; he is severe in his devotion, and in self-punishment terrible beyond the reach of — But I am throwing away my commendations, I am talking to one who is not permitted to value or to understand the sacred mysteries of our exercises.”

“Away with him to the Padre Abbate!” cried an enraged priest; “away with him to the dungeon!”

“Away! away!” repeated his companions, and they endeavoured to force Vivaldi through the cloisters. But with the sudden strength which pride and indignation lent him, he burst from their united hold, and, quitting the church by another door, escaped into the street.

Vivaldi returned home in a state of mind that would have engaged the pity of any heart, which prejudice or self-interest had not hardened. He avoided his father, but sought the Marchesa, who, triumphant in the success of her plan, was still insensible to the sufferings of her son.

When the Marchesa had been informed of his approaching marriage, she had, as usual, consulted with her confessor on the means of preventing it, who had advised the scheme she adopted, a scheme which was the more easily carried into effect, since the Marchesa had early in life been acquainted with the abbess of San Stefano, and knew, therefore, enough of her character and disposition to confide, without hesitation, the management of this important affair to her discretion. The answer of the abbess to her proposal, was not merely acquiescent, but zealous, and it appeared that she too faithfully justified the confidence reposed in her. After this plan had been so successfully prosecuted, it was not to be hoped that the Marchesa would be prevailed upon to relinquish it by the tears, the anguish, or all the varied sufferings of her son. Vivaldi now reproved the easiness of his own confidence in having hoped it, and quitted her cabinet with a despondency that almost reached despair.

The faithful Paulo obeyed the hasty summons of his master, but he had not succeeded in obtaining intelligence of Ellena; and Vivaldi, having dismissed him again on the same enquiry, retired to his apartment, where

the excess of grief, and a feeble hope of devising some successful mode of remedy, alternately agitated and detained him.

In the evening, restless and anxious for change, though scarcely knowing whither to bend his course, he left the palace, and strolled down to the sea-beach. A few fishermen and lazzaroni only were loitering along the strand, waiting for boats from St. Lucia. Vivaldi, with folded arms, and his hat drawn over his face to shade his sorrow from observation, paced the edge of the waves, listening to their murmur, as they broke gently at his feet, and gazing upon their undulating beauty, while all consciousness was lost in melancholy reverie concerning Ellena. Her late residence appeared at a distance, rising over the shore. He remembered how often from thence they had together viewed this lovely scene! Its features had now lost their charm; they were colourless and uninteresting, or impressed only mournful ideas. The sea fluctuating beneath the setting sun, the long mole and its lighthouse tipped with the last rays, fishermen reposing in the shade, little boats skimming over the smooth waters, which their oars scarcely dimpled; these were images that brought to his recollection the affecting evening when he had last seen this picture from the villa Altieri, when, seated in the orangery with Ellena and Bianchi, on the night preceding the death of the latter, Ellena herself had so solemnly been given to his care, and had so affectingly consented to the dying request of her relative. The recollection of that scene came to Vivaldi with all the force of contrast, and renewed all the anguish of despair; he paced the beach with quicker steps, and long groans burst from his heart. He accused himself of indifference and inactivity, for having been thus long unable to discover a single circumstance which might direct his search; and though he knew not whither to go, he determined to leave Naples immediately, and return no more to his father’s mansion till he should have rescued Ellena.

Of some fishermen who were conversing together upon the beach, he enquired whether they could accommodate him with a boat, in which he meant to coast the bay; for it appeared probable that Ellena had been conveyed from Altieri by water, to some town or convent on the shore, the privacy and facility of such a mode of conveyance being suitable to the designs of her enemies.

“I have but one boat, Signor,” said a fisherman, “and that is busy enough in going to and fro between here and Santa Lucia, but my comrade, here, perhaps can serve you. What, Carlo, can you help the Signor to your little skiff? the other, I know, has enough to do in the trade.”

His comrade, however, was too much engaged with a party of three or four men, who were listening in deep attention round him, to reply; Vivaldi advancing to urge the question, was struck by the eagerness with which he delivered his narrative, as well as the uncouthness of his gesticulation; and he paused a moment in attention. One of the auditors seemed to doubt of something that had been asserted. “I tell you,” replied the narrator, “I used to carry fish there, two and three times a week, and very good sort of people they were; they have laid out many a ducat with me in their time. But as I was saying, when I got there, and knocked upon the door, I heard, all of a sudden, a huge groaning, and presently I heard the voice of the old housekeeper herself, roaring out for help; but I could give her none, for the door was fastened; and, while I ran away for assistance to old Bartoli, you know old Bartoli, he lives by the road side as you go to Naples; well, while I ran to him, comes a Signor, and jumps through the window and sets her at liberty at once. So then, I heard the whole story.” —

“What story?” said Vivaldi, “and of whom do you speak?”

“All in good time, Maestro, you shall hear,” said the fisherman, who looking at him for a moment, added, “Why, Signor, it should be you I saw there, you should be the very Signor that let Beatrice loose.”

Vivaldi, who had scarcely doubted before, that it was Altieri of which the man had spoken, now asked a thousand questions respecting the route the ruffians had taken Ellena, but obtained no relief to his anxiety.

“I should not wonder,” said a Lazzaro who had been listening to the relation; “I should not wonder if the carriage that passed Bracelli early on the same morning, with the blinds drawn up, though it was so hot that people could scarcely breathe in the open air, should prove to be it which carried off the lady!”

This hint was sufficient to reanimate Vivaldi, who collected all the information the Lazzaro could give, which was, however, little more than that a carriage, such as he described, had been seen by him, driving furiously through Bracelli, early on the morning mentioned as that of

Signora di Rosalba’s departure. Vivaldi had now no doubt as to its being the one which conveyed her away, and he determined to set out immediately for that place, where he hoped to obtain from the postmaster further intelligence concerning the road she had pursued.

With this intention he returned once more to his father’s mansion, not to acquaint him with his purpose, or to bid him farewel, but to await the return of his servant Paulo, who he meant should accompany him in the search. Vivaldi’s spirits were now animated with hope, slender as were the circumstances that supported it; and, believing his design to be wholly unsuspected by those who would be disposed to interrupt it, he did not guard either against the measures, which might impede his departure from Naples, or those which might overtake him on his journey.

Chapter 9

“What, would’st thou have a serpent sting thee twice?”
Shakespear.

The Marchesa, alarmed at some hints dropped by Vivaldi in the late interview between them, and by some circumstances of his latter conduct, summoned her constant adviser, Schedoni. Still suffering with the insult he had received in the church of the Spirito Santo, he obeyed with sullen reluctance, yet not without a malicious hope of discovering some opportunity for retaliation. That insult, which had pointed forth his hypocrisy, and ridiculed the solemn abstraction he assumed, had sunk deep in his heart, and, fermenting the direst passions of his nature, he meditated a terrible revenge. It had subjected him to mortifications of various kinds. Ambition, it has already appeared, was one of his strongest motives of action, and he had long since assumed a character of severe sanctity, chiefly for the purposes of lifting him to promotion. He was not beloved in the society of which he was a member; and many of the brotherhood, who had laboured to disappoint his views, and to detect his errors, who hated him for his pride, and envied him for his reputed sanctity, now gloried in the mortification he had received, and endeavoured to turn the circumstance to their own advantage. They had not scrupled already to display by insinuation and pointed sneers, their triumph, and to menace his reputation; and Schedoni, though he deserved contempt, was not of a temper to endure it.

But above all, some hints respecting his past life, which had fallen from Vivaldi, and which occasioned him so abruptly to leave the church, alarmed him. So much terror, indeed, had they excited, that it is not improbable that he would have sealed his secret in death, devoting Vivaldi to the grave, had he not been restrained by the dreaded vengeance of the Vivaldi family. Since that hour he had known no peace, and had never slept; he had taken scarcely any food, and was almost continually on his knees upon the steps of the high altar. The devotees who beheld him, paused and admired; such of the brothers as disliked him, sneered and

passed on. Schedoni appeared alike insensible to each; lost to this world, and preparing for a higher.

The torments of his mind and the severe penance he had observed, had produced a surprising change in his appearance, so that he resembled a spectre rather than a human being. His visage was wan and wasted, his eyes were sunk and become nearly motionless, and his whole air and attitudes exhibited the wild energy of something — not of this earth.

When he was summoned by the Marchesa, his conscience whispered this to be the consequence of circumstances, which Vivaldi had revealed; and, at first, he had determined not to attend her; but, considering that if it was so, his refusal would confirm suspicion, he resolved to trust once more to the subtilty of his address for deliverance.

With these apprehensions, tempered by this hope, he entered the Marchesa's closet. She almost started on observing him, and could not immediately withdraw her eyes from his altered visage, while Schedoni was unable wholly to conceal the perturbation which such earnest observation occasioned. "Peace rest with you, daughter!" said he, and he seated himself, without lifting his eyes from the floor.

"I wished to speak with you, father, upon affairs of moment," said the Marchesa gravely, "which are probably not unknown to you." She paused, and Schedoni bowed his head, awaiting in anxious expectation what was to follow.

"You are silent, father," resumed the Marchesa. "What am I to understand by this?"

"That you have been misinformed," replied Schedoni, whose apt conscience betrayed his discretion.

"Pardon me," said the Marchesa, "I am too well informed, and should not have requested your visit if any doubt had remained upon my mind."

"Signora! be cautious of what you credit," said the confessor imprudently; "you know not the consequence of a hasty credulity."

"Would that mine were a rash credulity!" replied the Marchesa; "but — we are betrayed."

"We?" repeated the monk, beginning to revive: "What has happened?"

The Marchesa informed him of Vivaldi's absence, and inferred from its length, for it was now several days since his departure, that he had

certainly discovered the place of Ellena’s confinement, as well as the authors of it.

Schedoni differed from her, but hinted, that the obedience of youth was hopeless, unless severer measures were adopted.

“Severer!” exclaimed the Marchesa; “good father, is it not severe enough to confine her for life?”

“I mean severer with respect to your son, lady,” replied Schedoni. “When a young man has so far overcome all reverence for an holy ordinance as publicly to insult its professors, and yet more, when that professor is in the very performance of his duties, it is time he should be controlled with a strong hand. I am not in the practice of advising such measures, but the conduct of Signor Vivaldi is such as calls aloud for them. Public decency demands it. For myself, indeed, I should have endured patiently the indignity which has been offered me, receiving it as a salutary mortification, as one of those inflictions that purity the soul from the pride which even the holiest men may unconsciously cherish. But I am no longer permitted to consider myself; the public good requires that an example should be made of the horrible impiety of which your son, it grieves me, daughter, to disclose it! — your son, unworthy of such a mother! has been guilty.”

It is evident that in the style, at least, of this accusation, Schedoni suffered the force of his resentment to prevail over the usual subtilty of his address, the deep and smooth insinuation of his policy.

“To what do you allude, righteous father?” enquired the astonished Marchesa; “what indignity, what impiety has my son to answer for? I entreat you will speak explicitly, that I may prove I can lose the mother in the strict severity of the judge.”

“That is spoken with the grandeur of sentiment, which has always distinguished you, my daughter! Strong minds perceive that justice is the highest of the moral attributes, mercy is only the favourite of weak ones.”

Schedoni had a view in this commendation beyond that of confirming the Marchesa’s present resolution against Vivaldi. He wished to prepare her for measures, which might hereafter be necessary to accomplish the revenge he meditated, and he knew that by flattering her vanity, he was most likely to succeed. He praised her, therefore, for qualities he wished her to possess, encouraged her to reject general opinions by admiring as

the symptoms of a superior understanding, the convenient morality upon which she had occasionally acted; and, calling sternness justice, extolled that for strength of mind, which was only callous insensibility.

He then described to her Vivaldi's late conduct in the church of the Spirito Santo, exaggerated some offensive circumstances of it, invented others, and formed of the whole an instance of monstrous impiety and unprovoked insult.

The Marchesa listened to the relation with no less indignation than surprize, and her readiness to adopt the confessor's advice allowed him to depart with renovated spirits and most triumphant hopes.

Meanwhile, the Marchese remained ignorant of the subject of the conference with Schedoni. His opinions had formerly been sounded, and having been found decidedly against the dark policy it was thought expedient to practise, he was never afterwards consulted respecting Vivaldi. Parental anxiety and affection began to revive as the lengthened absence of his son was observed. Though jealous of his rank, he loved Vivaldi; and, though he had never positively believed that he designed to enter into a sacred engagement with a person, whom the Marchese considered to be so much his inferior as Ellena, he had suffered doubts, which gave him considerable uneasiness. The present extraordinary absence of Vivaldi renewed his alarm. He apprehended that if she was discovered at this moment, when the fear of losing her for ever, and the exasperation, which such complicated opposition occasioned, had awakened all the passions of his son, this rash young man might be prevailed upon to secure her for his own by the indissoluble vow. On the other hand, he dreaded the effect of Vivaldi's despair, should he fail in the pursuit; and thus, fearing at one moment that for which he wished in the next, the Marchese suffered a tumult of mind inferior only to his son's.

The instructions, which he delivered to the servants whom he sent in pursuit of Vivaldi, were given under such distraction of thought, that scarcely any person perfectly understood his commission; and, as the Marchesa had been careful to conceal from him her knowledge of Ellena's abode, he gave no direction concerning the route to San Stefano.

While the Marchese at Naples was thus employed, and while Schedoni was forming further plans against Ellena, Vivaldi was wandering from village to village, and from town to town, in pursuit of her, whom all his

efforts had hitherto been unsuccessful to recover. From the people at the post-house at Bracelli, he had obtained little information that could direct him; they only knew that a carriage, such as had been already described to Vivaldi, with the blinds drawn up, changed horses there on the morning, which he remembered to be that of Ellena's departure, and had proceeded on the road to Morgagni.

When Vivaldi arrived thither, all trace of Ellena was lost; the master of the post could not recollect a single circumstance connected with the travellers, and, even if he had noticed them, it would have been insufficient for Vivaldi's purpose, unless he had also observed the road they followed; for at this place several roads branched off into opposite quarters of the country; Vivaldi, therefore, was reduced to chuse one of these, as chance or fancy directed; and, as it appeared probable that the Marchesa had conveyed Ellena to a convent, he determined to make enquiries at every one on his way.

He had now passed over some of the wildest tracts of the Apennine, among scenes, which seemed abandoned by civilized society to the banditti who haunted their recesses. Yet even here amidst wilds that were nearly inaccessible, convents, with each its small dependent hamlet, were scattered, and, shrouded from the world by woods and mountains, enjoyed unsuspectedly many of its luxuries, and displayed, unnoticed, some of its elegance. Vivaldi, who had visited several of these in search of Ellena, had been surprized at the refined courtesy and hospitality, with which he was received.

It was on the seventh day of his journey, and near sun-set, that he was bewildered in the woods of Rugieri. He had received a direction for the road he was to take at a village some leagues distant, and had obeyed it confidently till now, when the path was lost in several tracts that branched out among the trees. The day was closing, and Vivaldi's spirits began to fail, but Paulo, light of heart and ever gay, commended the shade and pleasant freshness of the woods, and observed, that if his master did lose his way, and was obliged to remain here for the night, it could not be so very unlucky, for they could climb up among the branches of a chestnut, and find a more neat and airy lodging than any inn had yet afforded them.

While Paulo was thus endeavouring to make the best of what might happen, and his master was sunk in reverie, they suddenly heard the sound

of instruments and voices from a distance. The gloom, which the trees threw around, prevented their distinguishing objects afar off, and not a single human being was visible, nor any trace of his art, beneath the shadowy scene. They listened to ascertain from what direction the sounds approached, and heard a chorus of voices, accompanied by a few instruments, performing the evening service.

“We are near a convent, Signor,” said Paulo, “listen! they are at their devotions.”

“It is as you say,” replied Vivaldi; “and we will make the best of our way towards it.”

“Well, Signor! I must say, if we find as good doings here as we had at the Capuchin’s, we shall have no reason to regret our beds al-fresco among the chestnut branches.”

“Do you perceive any walls or spires beyond the trees?” said Vivaldi, as he led the way.

“None, Signor,” replied Paulo; “yet we draw nearer the sounds. Ah, Signor! do you hear that note? How it dies away! And those instruments just touched in symphony! This is not the music of peasants; a convent must be near, though we do not see it.”

Still as they advanced, no walls appeared. and soon after the music ceased; but other sounds led Vivaldi forward to a pleasant part of the woods, where, the trees opening, he perceived a party of pilgrims seated on the grass. They were laughing and conversing with much gaiety, as each spread before him the supper, which he drew from his scrip; while he, who appeared to be the Father-director of the pilgrimage, sat with a jovial countenance in the midst of the company, dispensing jokes and merry stories, and receiving in return a tribute from every scrip. Wines of various sorts were ranged before him, of which he drank abundantly, and seemed not to refuse any dainty that was offered.

Vivaldi, whose apprehensions were now quieted, stopped to observe the groupe, as the evening rays, glancing along the skirts of the wood, threw a gleam upon their various countenances, shewing, however, in each a spirit of gaiety that might have characterized the individuals of a party of pleasure, rather than those of a pilgrimage. The Father-director and his flock seemed perfectly to understand each other; the Superior willingly resigned the solemn austerity of his office, and permitted the company to

make themselves as happy as possible, in consideration of receiving plenty of the most delicate of their viands; yet somewhat of dignity was mingled with his condescensions, that compelled them to receive even his jokes with a degree of deference, and perhaps they laughed at them less for their spirit than because they were favors.

Addressing the Superior, Vivaldi requested to be directed how he might regain his way. The father examined him for a moment before he replied, but observing the elegance of his dress, and a certain air of distinction; and perceiving, also, that Paulo was his servant, he promised his services, and invited him to take a seat at his right hand, and partake of the supper.

Vivaldi, understanding that the party was going his road, accepted the invitation; when Paulo, having fastened the horses to a tree, soon became busy with the supper. While Vivaldi conversed with the father, Paulo engrossed all the attention of the pilgrims near him; they declared he was the cleverest and the merriest fellow they had ever seen, and often expressed a wish that he was going as far with them as to the shrine in a convent of Carmelites, which terminated their pilgrimage. When Vivaldi understood that this shrine was in the church of a convent, partly inhabited by nuns, and that it was little more than a league and a half distant, he determined to accompany them, for it was as possible that Ellena was confined there as in any other cloister; and of her being imprisoned in some convent, he had less doubt, the more he considered the character and views of his mother. He set forward, therefore, with the pilgrims, and on foot, having resigned his horse to the weary Father-director.

Darkness closed over them long before they reached the village where they designed to pass the night; but they beguiled the way with songs and stories, now and then, only, stopping at command of the Father, to repeat some prayer or sing a hymn. But, as they drew near a village, at the base of the mountain on which the shrine stood, they halted to arrange themselves in procession; and the Superior having stopped short in the midst of one of his best jokes, dismounted Vivaldi’s horse, placed himself at their head, and beginning a loud strain, they proceeded in full chorus of melancholy music.

The peasants, hearing their sonorous voices, came forth to meet and conduct them to their cabins. The village was already crowded with devotees, but these poor peasants, looking up to them with love and

reverence, made every possible contrivance to accommodate all who came; notwithstanding which, when Paulo soon after turned into his bed of straw, he had more reasons than one to regret his chestnut mattress.

Vivaldi passed an anxious night, waiting impatiently for the dawning of that day, which might possibly restore to him Ellena. Considering that a pilgrim’s habit would not only conceal him from suspicion, but allow him opportunities for observation, which his own dress would not permit, he employed Paulo to provide him one. The address of the servant, assisted by a single ducat, easily procured it, and at an early hour he set forward on his enquiry.

Chapter 1 0

Bring roses, violets, and the cold snow-drop,
Beautiful in tears, to strew the pathway
Of our saintly sister.

A few devotees only had begun to ascend the mountain, and Vivaldi kept aloof even from these, pursuing a lonely track, for his thoughtful mind desired solitude. The early breeze sighing among the foliage, that waved high over the path, and the hollow dashing of distant waters, he listened to with complacency, for these were sounds which soothed yet promoted his melancholy mood; and he some times rested to gaze upon the scenery around him, for this too was in harmony with the temper of his mind. Disappointment had subdued the wilder energy of the passions, and produced a solemn and lofty state of feeling; he viewed with pleasing sadness the dark rocks and precipices, the gloomy mountains and vast solitudes, that spread around him; nor was the convent he was approaching a less sacred feature of the scene, as its gray walks and pinnacles appeared beyond the dusky groves. “Ah! if it should enclose her!” said Vivaldi, as he caught a first glimpse of its hall. “Vain hope! I will not invite your illusions again, I will not expose myself to the agonies of new disappointment; I will search, but not expect. Yet, if she should be there!”

Having reached the gates of the convent, he passed with hasty steps into the court; where his emotion encreased as he paused a moment and looked round its silent cloisters. The porter only appeared, when Vivaldi, fearful lest he should perceive him not to be a pilgrim, drew his hood over his face, and, gathering up his garments still closer in his folded arms, passed on without speaking, though he knew not which of the avenues before him led to the shrine. He advanced, however, towards the church, a stately edifice, detached, and at some little distance, from the other parts of the convent. Its highly vaulted aisles, extending in twilight perspective, where a monk, or a pilgrim only, now and then crossed, whose dark figures, passing without sound, vanished like shadows; the universal stillness of the place, the gleam of tapers from the high altar, and of lamps, which

gave a gloomy pomp to every shrine in the church: — all these circumstances conspired to impress a sacred awe upon his heart.

He followed some devotees through a side aisle to a court, that was overhung by a tremendous rock, in which was a cave, containing the shrine of our Lady of Mount Carmel. This court was enclosed by the rock, and by the choir of the church, except that to the south a small opening led the eye to a glimpse of the landscape below, which, seen beyond the dark jaws of the cliff, appeared free, and light, and gaily coloured, melting away into the blue and distant mountains.

Vivaldi entered the cave, where, enclosed within a filigree screen of gold, lay the image of the saint, decorated with flowers and lighted up by innumerable lamps and tapers. The steps of the shrine were thronged with kneeling pilgrims, and Vivaldi, to avoid singularity, kneeled also; till a high peal of the organ, at a distance, and the deep voices of choiristers announced that the first mass was begun. He left the cave, and, returning into the church, loitered at an extremity of the aisles, where he listened awhile to the solemn harmony pealing along the roofs, and softening away in distance. It was such full and entrancing music as frequently swells in the high festivals of the Sicilian church, and is adapted to inspire that sublime enthusiasm, which sometimes elevates its disciples. Vivaldi, unable to endure long the excess of feeling, which this harmony awakened, was leaving the church, when suddenly it ceased, and the tolling of a bell sounded in its stead. This seemed to be the knel of death, and it occurred to him, that a dying person was approaching to receive the last sacrament; when he head remotely a warbling of female voices, mingling with the deeper tones of the monks, and with the hollow note of the bell, as it struck at intervals. So sweetly, so plaintively, did the strain grow on the air, that those, who listened, as well as those, who sung, were touched with sorrow, and seemed equally to mourn for a departing friend.

Vivaldi hastened to the choir, the pavement of which was strewn with palm-branches and fresh flowers. A pall of black velvet lay upon the steps of the altar, where several priests were silently attending. Every where appeared the ensigns of solemn pomp and ceremony, and in every countenance the stillness and observance of expectation. Meanwhile the sounds drew nearer, and Vivaldi perceived a procession of nuns approaching from a distant aisle.

As they advanced, he distinguished the lady abbess leading the train, dressed in her pontifical robes, with the mitre on her head; and well he marked her stately step, moving in time to the slow minstrelsy, and the air of proud yet graceful dignity, with which she characterized herself. Then followed the nuns, according to their several orders, and last came the novices, carrying lighted tapers, and surrounded by other nuns, who were distinguished by a particular habit.

Having reached a part of the church appropriated for their reception, they arranged themselves in order. Vivaldi with a palpitating heart enquired the occasion of this ceremony, and was told that a nun was going to be professed.

“You are informed, no doubt, brother,” added the prior who gave him this intelligence, “that on the morning of our high festival, our lady’s day, it is usual for such as devote themselves to heaven, to receive the veil. Stand bye a while, and you will see the ceremony.”

“What is the name of the novice who is now to receive it?” said Vivaldi, in a voice whose tremulous accents betrayed his emotion.

The friar glanced an eye of scrutiny upon him, as he replied, “I know not her name, but if you will step a little this way, I will point her out to you.”

Vivaldi, drawing his hood over his face, obeyed in silence.

“It is she on the right of the abbess,” said the stranger, “who leans on the arm of a nun, she is covered with a white veil, and is taller than her companions.”

Vivaldi observed her with a fearful eye, and, though he did not recognize the person of Ellena, yet, whether it was that his fancy was possessed with her image, or that there was truth in his surmise, he thought he perceived a resemblance of her. He enquired how long the novice had resided in the convent, and many other particulars, to which the stranger either could not or dared not reply.

With what anxious solicitude did Vivaldi endeavour to look through the veils of the several nuns in search of Ellena, whom he believed the barbarous policy of his mother might already have devoted to the cloister! With a solicitude still stronger, he tried to catch a glimpse of the features of the novices, but their faces were shaded by hoods, and their white veils, though thrown half back, were disposed in such artful folds that they

concealed them from observation, as effectually as did the pendant lawn the features of the nuns.

The ceremony began with the exhortation of the Father–Abbot, delivered with solemn energy; then the novice kneeling before him, made her profession, for which Vivaldi listened with intense attention, but it was delivered in such low and trembling accents, that he could not ascertain even the tone. But during the anthem that mingled with the ensuing part of the service, he thought he distinguished the voice of Ellena, that touching and wellknown voice, which in the church of San Lorenzo had first attracted his attention. He listened, scarcely daring to draw breath, lest he should lose a note; and again he fancied her voice spoke in a part of the plaintive response delivered by the nuns.

Vivaldi endeavoured to command his emotion, and to await with patience some further unfolding of the truth; but when the priest prepared to withdraw the white veil from the face of the novice, and throw the black one over her, a dreadful expectation that she was Ellena seized him, and he with difficulty forbore stepping forward and discovering himself on the instant.

The veil was at length withdrawn, and a very lovely face appeared, but not Ellena’s. Vivaldi breathed again, and waited with tolerable composure, for the conclusion of the ceremony; till, in the solemn strain that followed the putting on of the black veil, he heard again the voice, which he was now convinced was her’s. Its accents were low, and mournful, and tremulous, yet his heart acknowledged instantaneously their magic influence.

When this ceremony had concluded, another began; and he was told it was that of a noviciation. A young woman, supported by two nuns, advanced to the altar, and Vivaldi thought he beheld Ellena. The priest was beginning the customary exhortation, when she lifted her half-veil, and, shewing a countenance where meek sorrow was mingled with heavenly sweetness, raised her blue eyes, all bathed in tears, and waved her hand as if she would have spoken. — It was Ellena herself.

The priest attempted to proceed.

“I protest in the presence of this congregation,” said she solemnly, “that I am brought hither to pronounce vows which my heart disclaims. I protest” —

A confusion of voices interrupted her, and at the same instant she perceived Vivaldi rushing towards the altar. Ellena gazed for a moment, and then, stretching forth her supplicating hands towards him, closed her eyes, and sunk into the arms of some persons round her, who vainly endeavoured to prevent him from approaching and assisting her. The anguish, with which he bent over her lifeless form, and called upon her name, excited the commiseration even of the nuns, and especially of Olivia, who was most assiduous in efforts to revive her young friend.

When Ellena unclosed her eyes, and looking up, once more beheld Vivaldi, the expression, with which she regarded him, told that her heart was unchanged, and that she was unconscious of the miseries of inprisonment while he was with her. She desired to withdraw, and, assisted by Vivaldi and Olivia, was leaving the church, when the abbess ordered that she should be attended by the nuns only; and, retiring from the altar, she gave directions that the young stranger should be conducted to the parlour of the convent.

Vivaldi, though he refused to obey an imperious command, yielded to the entreaties of Ellena, and to the gentle remonstrances of Olivia; and, bidding Ellena farewell for a while, he repaired to the parlour of the abbess. He was not without some hope of awakening her to a sense of justice, or of pity; but he found that her notions of right were inexorably against him, and that pride and resentment usurped the influence of every other feeling. She began her lecture with expressing the warm friendship she had so long cherished for the Marchesa, proceeded to lament that the son of a friend, whom she so highly esteemed, should have forgotten his duty to his parents, and the observance due to the dignity of his house, so far as to seek connection with a person of Ellena di Rosalba’s inferior station; and concluded with a severe reprimand for having disturbed the tranquillity of her convent and the decorum of the church by his intrusion.

Vivaldi listened with submitting patience to this mention of morals and decorum from a person, who, with the most perfect self-applause, was violating some of the plainest obligations of humanity and justice; who had conspired to tear an orphan from her home, and who designed to deprive her for life of liberty, with all the blessings it inherits. But, when she proceeded to speak of Ellena with the caussice of severe reprobation, and to hint at the punishment, which her public rejection of the vows had

incurred, the patience of Vivaldi submitted no longer; indignation and contempt rose high against the Superior, and he exhibited a portrait of herself in the strong colours of truth. But the mind, which compassion could not persuade, reason could not appal; selfishness had hardened it alike to the influence of each; her pride only was affected, and she retaliated the mortification she suffered by menance and denunciation.

Vivaldi, on quitting her apartment, had no other resource than an application to the Abate, whose influence, at least, if not his authority, might assuage the severity of her power. In this Abate, a mildness of temper, and a gentleness of manner were qualities of less value than is usually and deservedly imputed to them; for, being connected with feebleness of mind, they were but the pleasing merits of easy times, which in an hour of difficulty never assumed the character of virtues, by inducing him to serve those, for whom he might feel. And thus, with a temper and disposition directly opposite to those of the severe and violent abbess, he was equally selfish, and almost equally culpable, since by permiting evil, he was nearly as injurious in his conduct as those who planned it. Indolence and timidity, a timidity the consequence of want of clear perception, deprived him of all energy of character; he was prudent rather than wise, and so fearful of being thought to do wrong that he seldom did right.

To Vivaldi’s temperate representations and earnest entreaties that he would exert some authority towards liberating Ellena, he listened with patience; acknowledged the hardships of her situation; lamented the unhappy divisions between Vivaldi and his family, and then declined advancing a single step in so delicate an affair. Signora di Rosalba, he said, was in the care of the abbess, over whom he had no right of control in matters relative to her domestic concerns. Vivaldi then supplicated, that, though he possessed no authority, he would, at least, intercede or remonstrate against so unjust a procedure as that of detaining Ellena a prisoner, and assist in restoring her to the home, from which she had been forcibly carried.

“And this, again,” replied the Abate, “does not come within my jurisdiction; and I make it a rule never to encroach upon that of another person.”

“And can you endure, holy father,” said Vivaldi, “to witness a flagrant act of injustice and not endeavour to counteract it? not even step forward to rescue the victim when you perceive the preparation for the sacrifice?”

“I repeat, that I never interfere with the authority of others,” replied the Superior; “having asserted my own, I yield to them in their sphere, the obedience which I require in mine.”

“Is power then,” said Vivaldi, “the infallible test of justice? Is it morality to obey where the command is criminal? The whole world have a claim upon the fortitude, the active fortitude of those who are placed as you are, between the alternative of confirming a wrong by your consent, or preventing it by your resistance. Would that your heart expanded towards that world, reverend father!”

“Would that the whole world were wrong that you might have the glory of setting it right!” said the Abate, smiling. “Young man! you are an enthusiast, and I pardon you. You are a knight of chivalry, who would go about the earth fighting with every body by way of proving your right to do good; it is unfortunate that you are born somewhat too late.”

“Enthusiasm in the cause of humanity” — said Vivaldi, but he checked himself; and despairing of touching a heart so hardened by selfish prudence, and indignant at beholding an apathy so vicious in its consequence, he left the Abate without other effort. He perceived that he must now have recourse to further stratagem, a recourse which his frank and noble mind detested, but he had already tried, without success, every other possibility of rescuing the innocent victim of the Marchesa’s prejudice and pride.

Ellena meanwhile had retired to her cell, agitated by a variety of considerations, and contrary emotions, of which, however, those of joy and tenderness were long predominant. Then came anxiety, apprehension, pride, and doubt, to divide and torture her heart. It was true that Vivaldi had discovered her prison, but, if it were possible, that he could release her, she must consent to quit it with him; a step from which a mind so tremblingly jealous of propriety as hers, recoiled with alarm, though it would deliver her from captivity. And how, when she considered the haughty character of the Marchese di Vivaldi, the imperious and vindictive nature of the Marchesa, and, still more, their united repugnance to a connection with her, how could she endure to think, even for a moment, of

intruding herself into such a family! Pride, delicacy, good sense seemed to warn her against a conduct so humiliating and vexatious in its consequences, and to exhort her to preserve her own dignity by independence; but the esteem, the friendship, the tender affection, which she had cherished for Vivaldi, made her pause, and shrink with emotions, of little less than horror, from the eternal renunciation, which so dignified a choice required. Though the encouragement, which her deceased relative had given to this attachment, seemed to impart to it a sacred character, that considerably soothed the alarmed delicacy of Ellena, the approbation thus implied, had no power to silence her own objections, and she would have regretted the mistaken zeal, which had contributed to lead her into the present distressing situation, had she revered the memory of her aunt, or loved Vivaldi, less. Still, however, the joy, which his presence had occasioned, and which the consciousness that he was still near her had prolonged, was not subdued, though it was frequently obscured, by such anxious considerations. With jealous and indiscreet solicitude, she now recollected every look, and the accent of every word, which had told that his affection was undiminished, thus seeking, with inconsistent zeal, for a conviction of the very tenderness, which but a moment before she had thought it would be prudent to lament, and almost necessary to renounce.

She awaited with extreme anxiety the appearance of Olivia, who might probably know the result of Vivaldi’s conference with the abbess, and whether he was yet in the convent.

In the evening Olivia came, a messenger of evil; and Ellena, informed of the conduct of the abbess, and the consequent departure of Vivaldi, perceived all her courage, and all the half-formed resolutions, which a consideration of his family had suggested, faulter and expire. Sensible only of grief and despondency, she ascertained, for the first time, the extent of her affection and the severity of her situation. She perceived, also, that the injustice, which his family had exercised towards her, absolved her from all consideration of their displeasure, otherwise than as it might affect herself; but this was a conviction, which it were now probably useless to admit.

Olivia not only expressed the tenderest interest in her welfare, but seemed deeply affected with her situation; and, whether it was, that the nun’s misfortunes bore some resemblance to Ellena’s, or from whatever

cause, it is remarkable that her eyes were often filled with tears, while she regarded her young friend, and she betrayed so much emotion that Ellena noticed it with surprise. She was, however, too deliate to hint any curiosity on the subject; and too much engaged by a nearer interest, to dwell long upon the circumstance.

When Olivia withdrew, Ellena retired to her turret, to soothe her spirits with a view of serene and majestic nature, a recourse which seldom failed to elevate her mind and soften the asperities of affliction. It was to her like sweet and solemn music, breathing peace over the soul — like the oaten stop of Milton's Spirit,

"Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song, Well knew to still the wild winds when they roar And hush the waving woods."

While she sat before a window, observing the evening light beaming up the valley, and touching all the distant mountains with misty purple, a reed as sweet, though not as fanciful, sounded from among the rocks below. The instrument and the character of the strain were such as she had been unaccustomed to hear within the walls of San Stefano, and the tone diffused over her spirits a pleasing melancholy, that rapt all her attention. The liquid cadence, as it trembled and sunk away, seemed to tell the dejection of no vulgar feelings, and the exquisite taste, with which the complaining notes were again swelled, almost convinced her, that the musician was Vivaldi.

On looking from the lattice, she perceived a peson perched on a point of the cliff below, whither it appeared almost impracticable for any human step to have climbed, and preserved from the precipice only by some dwarf shrubs that fringed the brow. The twilight did not permit her immediately to ascertain whether it was Vivaldi, and the situation was so dangerous that she hoped it was not he. Her doubts were removed, when, looking up, he perceived Ellena, and she heard his voice.

Vivaldi had learned from a lay-brother of the convent, whom Paulo had bribed, and who, when he worked in the garden, had sometimes seen Ellena at the window, that she frequented this remote turret; and, at the hazard of his life, he had now ventured thither, with a hope of conversing with her,

Ellena, alarmed at his tremendous situation, refused to listen to him, but he would not leave the spot till he had communicated a plan concerted for

her escape, and, entreating that she would confide herself to his care, assured her she would be conducted wherever she judged proper. It appeared that the brother had consented to assist his views, in consideration of an ample reward, and to admit him within the walls on this evening, when, in his pilgrim's habit, he might have an opportunity of again seeing Ellena. He conjured her to attend, if possible, in the convent parlour during supper, explaining, in a few words, the motive for this request, and the substance of the following particulars:

The Lady-abbess, in observance of the custom upon high festivals, gave a collation to the Padre-abate, and such of the priests as had assisted at the vesper-service. A few strangers of distinction and pilgrims were also to partake of the entertainments of this night, among which was included a concert to be performed by the nuns. At the collation was to be displayed a profusion of delicacies, arranged by the sisters, who had been busy in preparing the pastry and confectionary during several days, and who excelled in these articles no less than in embroidery and other ingenious arts. This supper was to be given in the abbess's outer parlour, while she herslf, attended by some nuns of high rank, and a few favourites, was to have a table in the inner apartment, where, separated only by the grate, she could partake of the conversation of the holy fathers. The tables were to be ornamented with artificial flowers, and a variety of other fanciful devices upon which the ingenuity of the sisters had been long employed, who prepared for these festivals with as much vanity, and expected them to dissipate the gloomy monotony of their usual life, with as much eagerness of delight, as a young beauty anticipates a first ball.

On this evening, therefore, every member of the convent would be engaged either by amusement or business, and to Vivaldi, who had been careful to inform himself of these circumstances, it would be easy, with the assistance of the brother, to obtain admittance, and mingle himself among the spectators, disguised in his pilgrim's habit. He entreated, therefore, that Ellena would contrive to be in the abbess's apartment this evening, when he would endeavour to convey to her some further particulars of the plan of escape, and would have mules in waiting at the foot of the mountain, to conduct her to the villa Altieri, or to the neighbouring convent of the Santa della Pieta. Vivaldi secretly hoped that she might be prevailed with to give him her hand on quitting San Stefano,

but he forbore to mention this hope, lest it should be mistaken for a condition, and that Ellena might be either reluctant to accept his assistance, or, accepting it, might consider herself bound to grant a hasty consent.

To his mention of escape she listened with varying emotion; at one moment attending to it with hope and joy, as promising her only chance of liberation from an imprisonment, which was probably intended to last for her life, and of restoring her to Vivaldi; and at another, recoiling from the thought of departing with him, while his family was so decidedly averse to their marriage. Thus, unable to form any instant resolution on the subject, and entreating that he would leave his dangerous station before the thickening twilight should encrease the hazard of his descent, Ellena added, that she would endeavour to obtain admittance to the apartment of the abbess, and to acquaint him with her final determination. Vivaldi understood all the delicacy of her scruples, and though they afflicted him, he honoured the good sense and just pride that suggested them.

He lingered on the rock till the last moments of departing light, and then, with a heart fluttering with hopes and fears, bade Ellena farewel, and descended; while she watched his progress through the silent gloom, faintly distinguishing him gliding along ledges of the precipice, and making his adventurous way from cliff to cliff, till the winding thickets concealed him from her view. Still anxious, she remained at the lattice, but he appeared no more; no voice announced disaster; and, at length, she returned to her cell, to deliberate on the subject of her departure.

Her considerations were interrupted by Olivia, whose manner indicated something extraordinary; the usual tranquillity of her countenance was gone, and an air of grief mingled with apprehension appeared there. Before she spoke, she examined the passage and looked round the cell. “It is as I feared,” said she abruptly; “my suspicions are justified, and you, my child, are sacrificed, unless it were possible for you to quit the convent this night.”

“What is it that you mean?” said the alarmed Ellena.

“I have just learned,” resumed the nun, “that your conduct this morning, which is understood to have thrown a premeditated insult upon the abbess, is to be punished with what they call imprisonment; alas! why should I

soften the truth, — with what I believe is death itself, for who ever returned alive from that hideous chamber.”

“With death!” said Ellena, aghast; “Oh, heavens! how have I deserved death?”

“That is not the question, my daughter, but how you may avoid it. Within the deepest recesses of our convent, is a stone chamber, secured by doors of iron, to which such of the sisterhood as have been guilty of any heinous offence have, from time to time, been consigned. This condemnation admits of no reprieve, the unfortunate captive is left to languish in chains and darkness, receiving only an allowance of bread and water just sufficient to prolong her sufferings, till nature, at length, sinking under their intolerable pressure, obtains refuge in death. Our records relate several instances of such horrible punishment, which has generally been inflicted upon nuns, who, weary of the life which they have chosen under the first delusions of the imagination, or which they have been comelled to accept by the rigour or avarice of parents, have been detected in escaping from the convent.”

The nun paused, but Ellena remaining wrapt in silent thought, she resumed: “One miserable instance of this severity has occurred within my memory. I saw the wretched victim enter that apartment — never more to quit it alive! I saw, also, her poor remains laid at rest in the convent garden! During nearly two years she languished upon a bed of straw, denied even the poor consolation of conversing through the grate with such of the sisters as pitied her; and who of us was there that did not pity her! A severe punishment was threatened to those, who should approach with any compassionate intention; thank God! I incurred it, and I endured it, also, with secret triumph.”

A gleam of satisfaction passed over Olivia’s countenance as she spoke this; it was the sweetest that Ellena had ever observed there. With a sympathetic emotion, she threw herself on the bosom of the nun, and wept; for some moments they were both silent. Olivia, at length said, “Do you not believe, my child, that the officious and offended abbess will readily seize upon the circumstance of your disobedience, as a pretence for confining you in that fatal chamber? The wishes of the Marchesa will thus surely be accomplished, without the difficulty of exacting your obedience to the vows. Alas! I have received proof too absolute of her intention, and

that tomorrow is assigned as the day of your sacrifice; you may, perhaps, be thankful that the business of the festival has obliged her to defer executing the sentence even till tomorrow."

Ellena replied only with a groan, as her head still drooped upon the shoulder of the nun; she was not now hesitating whether to accept the assistance of Vivaldi, but desponding lest his utmost efforts for her deliverance should be vain.

Olivia, who mistook the cause of her silence, added, "Other hints I could give, which are strong as they are dreadful, but I will forbear. Tell me how it is possible I may assist you; I am willing to incur a second punishment, in endeavouring to relieve a second sufferer."

Ellena's tears flowed fast at this new instance of the nun's generosity. "But if they should discover you in assisting me to leave the convent," she said, in a voice convulsed by her gratitude,— "O! if they should discover you!" —

"I can ascertain the punishment," Olivia replied with firmness, "and do not fear to meet it."

"How nobly generous this is!" said the weeping Ellena; "I ought not to suffer you to be thus careless of yourself!"

"My conduct is not wholly disinterested," the nun modestly replied; "for I think I could endure any punishment with more fortitude than the sickening anguish of beholding such suffering as I have witnessed. What are bodily pains in comparison with the subtle, the exquisite tortures of the mind! Heaven knows I can support my own afflictions, but not the view of those of others when they are excessive. The instruments of torture I believe I could endure, if my spirit was invigorated with the consciousness of a generous purpose; but pity touches upon a nerve that vibrates instantly to the heart, and subdues resistance. Yes, my child, the agony of pity is keener than any other, except that of remorse, and even in remorse, it is, perhaps, the mingling unavailing pity, that points the sting. But, while I am indulging this egotism, I am perhaps, increasing your danger of the suffering I deprecate."

Ellena, thus encouraged by the generous sympathy of Olivia, mentioned Vivaldi's purposed visit of this evening; and consulted with her on the probability of procuring admittance for herself to the abbess's parlour. Reanimated by this intelligence, Olivia advised her to repair not only to

the supper-room, but to attend the previous concert, to which several strangers would be admitted, among whom might probably be Vivaldi. When to this, Ellena objected her dread of the abbess's observation, and of the immediate seclusion that would follow, Olivia soothed her fears of discovery, by offering her the disguise of a nun's veil, and promising not only to conduct her to the apartment, but to afford her every possible assistance towards her escape.

"Among the crowd of nuns, who will attend in that spacious apartment," Olivia added, "it is improbable you would be distinguished, even if the sisters were less occupied by amusement, and the abbess were at leisure to scrutinize. As it is, you will hazard little danger of discovery; the Superior, if she thinks of you at all, will believe that you are still a prisoner in your cell, but this is an evening of too much importance to her vanity, for any consideration, distinct from that emotion, to divide her attention. Let hope, therefore, support you, my child, and do you prepare a few lines to acquaint Vivaldi with your consent to his proposal, and with the urgency of your circumstances; you may, perhaps, find an opportunity of conveying them through the grate."

They were still conversing on this subject, when a particular chime sounded, which Olivia said summoned the nuns to the concert-room; and she immediately hastened for a black veil, while Ellena wrote the few lines that were necessary for Vivaldi.

Chapter 1 1

That lawn conceals her beauty
As the thin cloud, just silver’d by the rays,
The trembling moon: think ye ‘tis shrouded from
The curious eye?

Wrapt in Olivia’s veil, Ellena descended to the music-room, and mingled with the nuns, who were assembled within the grate. Among the monks and pilgrims without it, were some strangers in the usual dress of the country, but she did not perceive any person who resembled Vivaldi; and she considered, that, if he were present, he would not venture to discover himself, while her nun’s veil concealed her as effectually from him as from the lady Abbess. It would be necessary, therefore, to seek an opportunity of withdrawing it for a moment at the grate, an expedient, which must certainly expose her to the notice of strangers.

On the entrance of the lady Abbess, Ellena’s fear of observation rendered her insensible to every other consideration; she fancied, that the eyes of the Superior were particularly directed upon herself. The veil seemed an insufficient protection from their penetrating glances, and she almost sunk with the terror of instant discovery.

The Abbess, however, passed on, and, having conversed for a few moments with the padre Abate and some visitors of distinction, took her chair; and the performance immediately opened with one of those solemn and impressive airs, which the Italian nuns know how to give with so much taste and sweetness. It rescued even Ellena for a moment from a sense of danger, and she resigned herself to the surrounding scene, of which the coup-d’ oeil was striking and grand. In a vaulted apartment of considerable extent, lighted by innumerable tapers, and where even the ornaments, though pompous, partook of the solemn character of the institution, were assembled about fifty nuns, who, in the interesting habit of their order, appeared with graceful plainness. The delicacy of their air, and their beauty, softened by the lawn that thinly veiled it, were contrasted by the severe majesty of the lady Abbess, who, seated on an elevated chair,

apart from the audience, seemed the Empress of the scene, and by the venerable figures of the father Abate and his attendant monks, who were arranged without that screen of wire-work, extending the whole breadth of the apartment, which is called the grate. Near the holy father were placed the strangers of distinction, dressed in the splendid Neapolitan habit, whose gay colouring and airy elegance opposed well with the dark drapery of the ecclesiastics; their plumed hats lostily overtopping the half-cowled heads and grey locks of the monks. Nor was the contrast of countenances less striking; the grave, the austere, the solemn, and the gloomy, intermingling with the light, the blooming, and the debonaire, expressed all the various tempers, that render life a blessing or a burden, and, as with the spell of magic, transform this world into a transient paradise or purgatory. In the back ground of the picture stood some pilgrims, with looks less joyous and more demure than they had worn on the road the preceding day; and among them were some inferior brothers and attendants of the convent. To this part of the chamber Ellena frequently directed her attention, but did not distinguish Vivaldi; and, though she had taken a station near the grate, she had not courage indecorously to withdraw her veil before so many strangers. And thus, if he even were in the apartment, it was not probable he would venture to come forward.

The concert concluded without his having been discovered by Ellena; and she withdrew to the apartment, where the collation was spread, and where the Abbess and her guests soon after appeared. Presently, she observed a stranger, in a pilgrim’s habit, station himself near the grate; his face was partly muffled in his cloak, and he seemed to be a spectator rather than a partaker of the feast.

Ellena, who understood this to be Vivaldi, was watchful for an opportunity of approaching, unseen by the Abbess, the place where he had fixed himself. Engaged in conversation with the ladies around her, the Superior soon favoured Ellena’s wish, who, having reached the grate, ventured to lift her veil for one instant. The stranger, letting his cloak fall, thanked her with his eyes for her condescension, and she perceived, that he was not Vivaldi! Shocked at the interpretation, which might be given to a conduct apparently so improper, as much as by the disappointment, which Vivaldi’s absence occasioned, she was hastily retiring, when another stranger approached with quick steps, whom she instantly knew, by the

grace and spirit of his air, to be Vivaldi; but, determined not to expose herself a second time to the possibility of a mistake, she awaited for some further signal of his identity, before she discovered herself. His eyes were fixed upon her in earnest attention for some moments, before he drew aside the cloak from his face. But he soon did so; — and it was Vivaldi himself.

Ellena, perceiving that she was known, did not raise her veil, but advanced a few steps towards the grate. Vivaldi there deposited a small folded paper and before she could venture to deliver her own billet; he had retired among the crowd. As she stepped forward to secure his letter, she observed a nun hastily approach the spot where he had laid it, and she paused. The garment of the Reluctant wasted it from the place where it had been partly concealed; and when Ellena perceived the nun's foot rest upon the paper, she with difficulty disguised her apprehensions.

A friar, who from without the grate addressed the sister, seemed with much earnestness, yet with a certain air of secresy, communicating some important intelligence. The fears of Ellena suggested that he had observed the action of Vivaldi, and was making known his suspicions; and she expected, every instant, to see the nun lift up the paper, and deliver it to the Abbess.

From this immediate apprehension, however, she was released when the sister pushed it gently aside, without examination, a circumstance that not less surprized than relieved her. But, when the conference broke up, and the friar, hastily retreating among the crowd, disappeared from the apartment, and the nun approached and whispered the Superior, all her terrors were renewed. She scarcely doubted, that Vivaldi was detected, and that his letter was designedly left where it had been deposited, for the purpose of alluring her to betray herself. Trembling, dismayed, and almost sinking with apprehension, she watched the countenance of the Abbess, while the nun addressed her, and thought she read her own fate in the frown that appeared there.

Whatever might be the intentions or the directions of the Superior, no active measure was at present employed; the Recluse, having received an answer, retired quietly among the sisters, and the Abbess resumed her usual manner. Ellena, however, supposing she was now observed, did not dare to seize the paper, though she believed it contained momentous

information, and feared that the time was now escaping, which might facilitate her deliverance. Whenever she ventured to look round, the eyes of the Abbess seemed pointed upon her, and she judged from the position of the nun, for the veil concealed her face, that she also was vigilantly regarding her.

Above an hour had elapsed in this state of anxious suspense, when the collation concluded, and the assembly broke up; during the general bustle of which, Ellena ventured to the grate, and secured the paper. As she concealed it in her robe, she scarcely dared to enquire by a hasty glance whether she had been observed, and would have withdrawn immediately to examine the contents, had she not perceived, at the same instant, the Abbess quitting the apartment. On looking round for the nun, Ellena discovered that she was gone.

Ellena followed distantly in the Abbess's train; and, as she drew nearer to Olivia, gave a signal, and passed on to her cell. There, once more alone, and having secured the door, she sat down to read Vivaldi's billet, trying to command her impatience, and to understand the lines, over which her sight rapidly moved, when in the eagerness of turning over the paper, the lamp dropt from her trembling hand and expired. Her distress now nearly reached despair. To go forth into the convent for a light was utterly impracticable, since it would betray that she was no longer a prisoner, and not only would Olivia suffer from a discovery of the indulgence she had granted, but she herself would be immediately confined. Her only hope rested upon Olivia's arrival before it might be too late to practice the instructions of Vivaldi, if, indeed, they were still practicable; and she listened with intense solicitude for an approaching footstep, while she yet held, ignorant of its contents, the billet, that probably would decide her fate. A thousand times she turned about the eventful paper, endeavoured to trace the lines with her fingers, and to guess their import, thus enveloped in mystery; while she experienced all the various torture that the consciousness of having in her very hand the information, on a timely knowledge of which her life, perhaps, depended, without being able to understand it, could inflict.

Presently she heard advancing steps, and a light gleamed from the passage before she considered they might be some other than Olivia's; and that it was prudent to conceal the billet she held. The consideration,

however, came too late to be acted upon; for, before the rusting paper was disposed of, a person entered the cell, and Ellena beheld her friend. Pale, trembling, and silent, she took the lamp from the nun, and, eagerly running over Vivaldi's note, learned, that at the time it was written, brother Jeronimo was in waiting with out the gate of the nun's garden, where Vivaldi designed to join him immediately, and conduct her by a private way beyond the walls. He added, that horses were stationed at the foot of the mountain, to convey her where-ever she should judge proper; and conjured her to be expeditious, since other circumstances, besides the universal engagement of the Recluses, were at that moment particularly favourable to an escape.

Ellena, desponding and appalled, gave the paper to Olivia, requesting she would read it hastily, and advise her how to act. It was now an hour and a half since Vivaldi had said, that success depended upon expedition, and that he had probably watched at the appointed place; in such an interval, how many circumstances might have occurred to destroy every possibility of a retreat, which it was certain the engagement of the Abbess and the sisters no longered favoured!

The generous Olivia, having read the billet, partook of all her young friend's distress, and was as willing, as Ellena was anxious, to dare every danger for the chance of obtaining deliverance.

Ellena could feel gratitude for such goodness even at this moment of agonizing apprehension. After a pause of deep consideration, Olivia said, "In every avenue of the convent we are now liable to meet some of the nuns; but my veil, though thin, has hitherto protected you, and we must hope it may still assist your purpose. It will be necessary, however, to pass through the refectory, where such of the sisters as did not partake of the collation, are assembled at supper, and will remain so, till the first mattin calls them to the chapel. If we wait till then, I fear it will be to no purpose to go at all."

Ellena's fears perfectly agreed with those of Olivia; and entreating that another moment might not be lost in hesitation, and that she would lead the way to the nun's garden, they quitted the cell together.

Several of the sisters passed them, as they descended to the refectory, but without particularly noticing Ellena; who; as she drew near that alarming apartment, wrapt her veil closer, and leaned with heavier

pressure upon the arm of her faithful friend. At the door they were met by the Abbess, who had been overlooking the nuns assembled at supper, and missing Olivia had enquired for her. Ellena shrunk back to elude observation, and to let the Superior pass; but Olivia was obliged to answer to the summons. Having, however, unveiled herself, she was permitted to proceed; and Ellena, who had mingled with the crowd that surrounded the Abbess, and thus escaped detection, followed. Olivia with faltering steps, through the refectory. The nuns were luckily too much engaged by the entertainment, at this moment, to look round them, and the fugitive reached, unsuspected, an opposite door.

In the hall, to which they descended, the adventurers were frequently crossed by servants bearing dishes from the refectory to the kitchen; and, at the very moment when they were opening the door, that led into the garden a sister, who had observed them, demanded whether they had yet heard the mattin-bell, since they were going towards the chapel.

Terrified at this critical interruption, Ellena pressed Olivia's arm, in signal of silence, and was hastening forward, when the latter, more prudent, paused, and calmly answering the question, was then suffered to proceed.

As they crossed the garden towards the gate, Ellena's anxiety left Vivaldi should have been compelled to leave it, encreased so much, that she had scarcely power to proceed. "O if my strength should fail before I reach it!" she said softly to Olivia, "or if I should reach it too late!"

Olivia tried to cheer her, and pointed out the gate, on which the moonlight fell; "At the end of this walk only," said Olivia, "see! — where the shadows of the trees open, is our goal."

Encouraged by the view of it, Ellena fled with lighter steps along the alley; but the gate seemed to mock her approach, and to retreat before her. Fatigue overtook her in this long alley, before she could overtake the spot so anxiously fought, and, breathless and exhausted, she was once more compelled to stop, and once more in the agony of terror exclaimed— "O, if my strength should fail before I reach it! — O, if I should drop even while it is within my view."

The pause of a moment enabled her to proceed, and she stopped not again till she arrived at the gate; when Olivia suggested the prudence of ascertaining who was without, and of receiving an answer to the signal,

which Vivaldi had proposed, before they ventured to make themselves known. She then struck upon the wood, and, in the anxious pause that followed, whispering voices were distinctly heard from without, but no signal spoke in reply to the nun's.

"We are betrayed!" said Ellena softly, "but I will know the worst at once; and she repeated the signal, when, to her unspeakable joy, it was answered by three smart raps upon the gate. Olivia, more distrustful, would have checked the sudden hope of her friend, till some further proof had appeared, that it was Vivaldi who waited without, but her precaution came too late; a key already grated in the lock; the door opened, and two persons mussled in their garments appeared at it. Ellena was hastily retreating, when a wellknown voice recalled her, and she perceived, by the rays of a half-hooded lamp, which Jeronimo held, Vivaldi.

"O heavens!" he exclaimed, in a voice tremulous with joy, as he took her hand, "is it possible that you are again my own! If you could but know what I have suffered during this last hour!" — Then observing Olivia, he drew back, till Ellena expressed her deep sense of obligation to the nun.

"We have no time to lose," said Jeronimo sullenly; "we have stayed too long already, as you will find, perhaps."

"Farewel, dear Ellena!" said Olivia, "may the protection of heaven never leave you!"

The fears of Ellena now gave way to affectionate sorrow, as, weeping on the bosom of the nun, she said "farewel! O farewel, my dear, my tender friend! I must never, never see you more, but I shall always love you; and you have promised, that I shall hear from you; remember the convent della Pieta!"

"You should have settled this matter within," said Jeronimo, "we have been here these two hours already."

"Ah Ellena!" said Vivaldi, as he gently disengaged her from the nun, "do I then hold only the second place in your heart?"

Ellena, as she dismissed her tears, replied with a smile more eloquent than words; and when, she had again and again bade adieu to Olivia, she gave him her hand; and quitted the gate.

"It is moonlight," observed Vivaldi to Jeronimo, "your lamp is useless, and may betray us."

“It will be necessary in the church,” replied Jeronimo, “and in some circuitous, avenues we must pass, for I dare not lead you out through the great gates, Signor; as you well know.”

“Lead on; then,” replied Vivaldi, and they reached one of the cypress walks; that extended to the church; but, before they entered it; Ellena paused and looked back to the garden gate, that she might see Olivia once again. The nun was still there, and Ellena perceived her faintly in the moonlight, waving her hand in signal of a last adieu. Ellena’s heart was full; she wept, and lingered, and returned the signal, till the gentle violence of Vivaldi withdrew her from the spot.

“I envy your friend those tears,” said he, “and feel jealous of the tenderness that excites them. Weep no more, my Ellena.”

“If you knew her worth,” replied Ellena, “and the obligations I owe her!” — Her voice was lost in sighs, and Vivaldi only pressed her hand in silence.

As they traversed the gloomy walk, that led to the church, Vivaldi said, “Are you certain, father, that not any of the brothers are doing penance at the shrines in our way?”

“Doing penance on a festival, Signor! they are more likely, by this time, to be taking down the ornaments.”

“That would be equally unfortunate for us,” said Vivaldi; “cannot we avoid the church, father?”

Jeronimo assured him, that this was impossible; and they immediately entered one of its lonely aisles, where he unhooded the lamp, for the tapers, which had given splendour, at an earlier hour, to the numerous shrines, had expired, except those at the high altar, which were so remote, that their rays faded into twilight long before they reached the part of the church where the fugitives passed. Here and there, indeed, a dying lamp shot a tremulous gleam upon the shrine below, and vanished again, serving to mark the distances in the long perspective of arches, rather than to enlighten the gloomy solitude; but no found, not even of a whisper, stole along the pavement.

They crossed to a side door communicating with the court, and with the rock, which enshrined the image of our Lady of mount Carmel. There, the sudden glare of tapers issuing from the cave, alarmed the fugitives, who had begun to retreat, when Jeronimo, stepping forward to examine the

place, assured them, there was no symptom of any person being within, and that lights burned day and night around the shrine.

Revived by this explanation, they followed into the cave, where their conductor opened a part of the wire-work enclosing the saint, and led them to the extremity of the vault, sunk, deep within which appeared a small door. While Ellena trembled with apprehension, Jeronimo applied a key, and they perceived, beyond the door, a narrow passage winding away into the rock. The monk was leading on, but Vivaldi, who had the suspicions of Ellena, paused at the entrance, and demanded whither he was conducting them.

To the place of your destination," replied the brother, in a hollow voice, an answer which alarmed Ellena, and did not satisfy Vivaldi. "I have given myself to your guidance," he said, "and have confided to you what is dearer to me than existence. Your life," pointing to the short sword concealed beneath his pilgrim's vest, "your life, you may rely upon my word, shall answer for your treachery. If your purpose is evil, pause a moment, and repent, or you shall not quit this passage alive."

"Do you menace me!" replied the brother, his countenance darkening. "Of what service would be my death to you? Do you not know that every brother in the convent would rise to avenge it?"

"I know only that I will make sure of one traitor, if there be one," said Vivaldi, "and desend this lady against your host of monks; and, since you also know this, proceed accordingly."

At this instant it occurring to Ellena, that the passage in question probably led to the prison-chamber, which Olivia had described as situated within some deep recess of the convent, and that Jeronimo had certainly betrayed them, she refused to go further. "If your purpose is honest," said she, "why do you not conduct us through some direct gate of the convent; why are we brought into these subterraneous labysinths?"

"There is no direct gate but that of the portal," Jeronimo replied, "and this is the only other avenue leading beyond the walls." "And why can we not go out through the portal?" Vivaldi asked.

"Because it is beset with pilgrims, and lay brothers," replied Jeronimo, "and though you might pass them safely enough, what is to become of the lady? But all this you knew before, Signor; and was willing enough to trust me, then. The passage we are entering opens upon the cliffs, at some

distance. I have run hazard enough already, and will waste no more time; so if you do not chuse to go forward, I will leave you, and you may act as you please."

He concluded with a laugh of derision, and was relocking the door, when Vivaldi, alarmed for the probable consequence of his resentment, and somewhat reassured by the indifference he discovered as to their pursuing the avenue or not, endeavoured to appease him, as well as to encourage Ellena; and he succeeded in both.

As he followed in silence through the gloomy passage, his doubts were, however, not so wholly vanquished, but that he was prepared for attack, and while he supported Ellena with one hand, he held his sword in the other.

The avenue was of considerable length, and before they reached its extremity, they heard music from a distance, winding along the rocks. "Hark!" cried Ellena, "Whence come those founds? Listen!"

"From the cave we have left," replied Jeronimo, "and it is midnight by that; it is the last chaunt of the pilgrims at the shrine of our Lady. Make haste, Signor, I shall be called for."

The fugitives now perceived, that all retreat was cut off, and that, if they had lingered only a few moments longer in the cave, they should have been surprized by those devotees, some one of whom, however, it appeared possible might wander into this avenue, and still interrupt their escape. When Vivaldi told his apprehensions, Jeronimo, with an arch sneer, affirmed there was no danger of that, "for the passage," he added, "is known only to the brothers of the convent."

Vivaldi's doubts vanished when he further understood, that the avenue led only from the cliffs without to the cave, and was used for the purpose of conveying secretly to the shrine, such articles as were judged necessary to excite the superstitious wonder of the devotees.

While he proceeded in thoughtful silence, a distant chime sounded hollowly through the chambers of the rock. "The mattin-bell strikes!" said Jeronimo, in seeming alarm, "I am summoned. Signora quicken your steps;" an unnecessary request, for Ellena already passed with her utmost speed; and she now rejoiced on perceiving a door in the remote winding of the passage, which she believed would emancipate her from the convent. But, as she advanced, the avenue appeared extending beyond it; and the

door, which stood a little open allowed her a glimpse of a chamber in the cliff, duskily lighted.

Vivaldi, alarmed by the light, enquired, when he had passed, whether any person was in the chamber, and received an equivocal answer from Jeronimo, who, however, soon after pointed to an arched gate that terminated the avenue. They proceeded with lighter steps, for hope now cheared their hearts, and, on reaching the gate, all apprehension vanished. Jeronimo gave the lamp to Vivaldi, while he began to unbar and unlock the door, and Vivaldi had prepared to reward the brother for his fidelity, before they perceived that the door refused to yield. A dreadful imagination seized on Vivaldi. Jeronimo turning round, coolly said, “I fear we are betrayed; the second lock is shot! I have only the key of the first.”

“We are betrayed,” said Vivaldi, in a resolute tone, “but do not suppose, that your dissimulation conceals you. I understand by whom we are betrayed. Recollect my late assertion, and consider once more, whether it is your interest to intercept us.”

“My Signor,” replied Jeronimo, “I do not deceive you when I protest by our holy Saint, that I have not caused this gate to be fastened, and that I would open it if I could. The lock, which holds it, was not shot an hour ago. I am the more surprized at what has happened, because this place is seldom passed, even by the holiest footstep; and I fear, whoever has passed now, has been led hither by suspicion, and comes to intercept your flight.”

“Your wily explanation, brother, may serve you for an inferior occasion, but not on this,” replied Vivaldi, “either, therefore, unclose the gate, or prepare for the worst. You are not now to learn, that, however flightly I may estimate my own life, I will never abandon this lady to the horrors, which your community have already prepared for her.”

Ellena, summoning her fleeting spirits, endeavoured to calm the indignation of Vivaldi, and to prevent the consequence of his suspicions, as well as to prevail with Jeronimo, to unfasten the gate. Her efforts were, however, followed by a long altereation; but, at length, the art or the innocence of the brother, appeased Vivaldi, who now endeavoured to force the gate, while Jeronimo in vain represented its strength, and the certain ruin, that must fall upon himself, if it should be discovered he had concurred in destroying it.

The gate was immoveable; but, as no other chance of escaping appeared, Vivaldi was not easily prevailed with to desist; all possibility of retreating too was gone, since the church and the cave were now crowded with devotees, attending the mattin service.

Jeronimo, however, seemingly did not despair of effecting their release, but he acknowledged that they would probably be compelled to remain concealed in this gloomy avenue all night, and perhaps the next day. At length, it was agreed, that he should return to the church, to examine whether a possibility remained of the fugitives passing unobserved to the great portal; and, having conducted them back to the chamber, of which they had taken a passing glimpse, he proceeded to the shrine.

For a considerable time after his departure, they were not without hope; but, their confidence diminishing as his delay encreased, their uncertainty at length became terrible; and it was only for the sake of Vivaldi, from whom she scrupulously concealed all knowledge of the particular fate, which she was aware must await her in the convent, that Ellena appeared to endure it with calmness. Notwithstanding the plausibility of Jeronimo, suspicion of his treachery returned upon her mind. The cold and earthy air of this chamber was like that of a sepulchre; and when she looked round, it appeared exactly to correspond with the description given by Olivia of the prison where the nun had languished and expired. It was walled and vaulted with the rock, had only one small grated aperture in the roof to admit air, and contained no furniture, except one table, a bench, and the lamp, which dimly shewed the apartment. That a lamp should be found burning in a place so remote and solitary, amazed her still more when she recollected the assertion of Jeronimo, — that even holy steps seldom passed this way; and when she considered also, that he had expressed no surprize at a circumstance, according to his own assertion, so unusual. Again it appeared, that she had been betrayed into the very prison, designed for her by the Abbess; and the horror, occasioned by this supposition, was so great, that she was on the point of disclosing it to Vivaldi, but an apprehension of the distraction, into which his desperate courage might precipitate him, restrained her.

While these considerations occupied Ellena, and it appeared that any certainty would be less painful than this suspense, she frequently looked round the chamber in search of some object, which might contradict or

confirm her suspicion, that this was the death-room of the unfortunate nun. No such circumstance appeared, but as her eyes glanced, with almost phrenzied eagerness, she perceived something shadowy in a remote corner of the floor; and on approaching, discovered what seemed a dreadful hieroglyphic, a mattrass of straw, in which she thought she beheld the deathbed of the miserable recluse; nay more, that the impression it still retained, was that which her form had left there.

While Vivaldi was yet entreating her to explain the occasion of the horror she betrayed, the attention of each was withdrawn by a hollow sigh, that rose near them. Ellena caught unconsciously the arm of Vivaldi, and listened, aghast, for a return of the found, but all remained still.

“It surely was not fancied!” said Vivaldi, after a long pause, “you heard it also?”

“I did!” replied Ellena.

“It was a sigh, was it not?” he added.

“O yes, and such a sigh!”

“Some person is concealed near us,” observed Vivaldi, looking round; “but be not alarmed, Ellena, I have a sword.”

“A sword! alas! you know not — But hark! there, again!”

“That was very near us!” said Vivaldi. “This lamp burns so sickly!” — and he held it high, endeavouring to penetrate the furthest gloom of the chamber. “Hah! who goes there?” he cried, and stepped suddenly forward; but no person appeared, and a silence as of the tomb, returned.

“If you are in sorrow, speak!” Vivaldi, at length, said; “from fellow-sufferers you will meet with sympathy. If your designs are evil — tremble, for you shall find I am desperate.”

Still no answer was returned, and he carried forward the lamp to the opposite end of the chamber, where he perceived a small door in the rock. At the same instant he heard from within, a low tremulous sound, as of a person in prayer, or in agony. He pressed against the door, which, to his surprize, yielded immediately, and discovered a figure kneeling before a crucifix, with an attention so wholly engaged, as not to observe the presence of a stranger, till Vivaldi spoke. The person then rose from his knees, and turning, shewed the silvered temples and pale features of an aged monk. The mild and sorrowful character of the countenance, and the

lambent lustre of eyes, which seemed still to retain somewhat of the fire of genius, interested Vivaldi, and encouraged Ellena, who had followed him.

An unaffected surprize appeared in the air of the monk; but Vivaldi, notwithstanding the interesting benignity of his countenance, feared to answer his enquiries, till the father hinted to him, that an explanation was necessary, even to his own safety. Encouraged by his manner, rather than intimidated by this hint, and perceiving, that his situation was desperate, Vivaldi consided to the friar some partial knowledge of his embarrassment.

While he spoke, the father listened with deep attention, looked with compassion alternately upon him and Ellena; and some harassing objection seemed to contend with the pity, which urged him to assist the strangers. He enquired how long Jeronimo had been absent, and shook his head significantly when he learned that the gate of the avenue was fastened by a double lock. “You are betrayed, my children,” said he, “you have trusted with the simplicity of youth, and the cunning of age has deceived you.”

The terrible conviction affected Ellena to tears; and Vivaldi, scarcely able to command the indignation which a view of such treachery excited, was unable to offer her any consolation.

“You, my daughter, I remember to have seen in the church this morning,” observed the friar; “I remember too, that you protested against the vows you were brought thither to seal. Alas! my child, was you aware of the consequence of such a proceeding?”

“I had only a choice of evils,” Ellena replied.

“Holy father,” said Vivaldi, “I will not believe, that you are one of those who either assisted in or approved the persecution of innocence. If you were acquainted with the misfortunes of this lady, you would pity, and save her; but there is now no time for detail; and I can only conjure you, by every sacred consideration; to assist her to leave the convent! If there were leisure to inform you of the unjustifiable means, which have been employed to bring her within these walls — if you knew that she was taken, an orphan, from her home at midnight — that armed ruffians brought her hither — and at the command of strangers — that she has not a single relation surviving to assert her right of independence; or reclaim

her of her persecutors, — O! holy father, if you knew all this!" — Vivaldi was unable to proceed.

The friar again regarded Ellena with compassion, but still in thoughtful silence. "All this may be very true," at length he said, "but" — and he hesitated.

"I understand you, father," said Vivaldi— "you require proof; but how can proof be adduced here? You must rely upon the honour of my word. And, if you are inclined to assist us, it must be immediately!

— while you hesitate, we are lost. Even now I think I hear the footsteps of Jeronimo."

He stepped softly to the door of the chamber, but all was yet still. The friar, too, listened, but he also deliberated; while Ellena, with clasped hands and a look of eager supplication and terror, awaited his decision.

"No one is approaching," said Vivaldi, "it is not yet too late! — Good father! if you would serve us, dispatch."

"Poor innocent!" said the friar, half to himself, "in this chamber — in this fatal place!" —

"In this chamber!" exclaimed Ellena, anticipating his meaning. "It was in this chamber, then, that a nun was suffered to perish! and I, no doubt, am conducted hither to undergo a similar fate!"

"In this chamber!" re-echoed Vivaldi, in a voice of desperation. "Holy father, if you are indeed disposed to assist us, let us act this instant; the next, perhaps, may render your best intentions unavailing!"

The friar, who had regarded Ellena while she mentioned the nun, with the utmost surprize, now withdrew his attention; a few tears fell on his cheek, but he hastily dried them, and seemed struggling to overcome some grief, that was deep in his heart.

Vivaldi, finding that entreaty had no power to hasten his decision, and expecting every moment to hear the approach of Jeronimo, paced the chamber in agonizing perturbation, now pausing at the door to listen, and then calling, though almost hopelessly, upon the humanity of the friar. While Ellena, looking round the room in shuddering horror, repeatedly exclaimed, "On this very spot! in this very chamber! O what sufferings have these walls witnessed! what are they yet to witness!"

Vivaldi now endeavoured to soothe the spirits of Ellena, and again urged the friar to employ this critical moment in saving her; “O heaven!” said he, “if she is now discovered, her fate is certain!”

“I dare not say what that fate would be,” interrupted the father, “or what my own, should I consent to assist you; but, though I am old, I have not quite forgotten to feel for others! They may oppress the few remaining years of my age, but the blooming days of youth should flourish; and they shall flourish, my children, if my power can aid you. Follow me to the gate; we will see whether my key cannot unfasten all the locks that hold it.”

Vivaldi and Ellena immediately followed the feeble steps of the old man, who frequently stopped to listen whether Jeronimo, or any of the brothers, to whom the latter might have betrayed Ellena’s situation, were approaching; but not an echo wandered along the lonely avenue, till they reached the gate, when distant footsteps beat upon the ground.

“They are approaching, father!” whispered Ellena. “O, if the key should not open these locks instantly, we are lost! Hark! now I hear their voices — they call upon my name! Already they have discovered we have left the chamber.”

While the friar, with trembling hands, applied the key, Vivaldi endeavoured at once to assist him, and to encourage Ellena.

The locks gave way, and the gate opened at once upon the moonlight mountains. Ellena heard once more, with the joy of liberty, the midnight breeze passing among the pensile branches of the palms, that loftily overshadowed a rude platform before the gate, and rustling with fainter sound among the pendent shrubs of the surrounding cliffs.

“There is no leisure for thanks, my children,” said the friar, observing they were about to speak. “I will fasten the gate, and endeavour to delay your pursuers, that you may have time to escape. My blessing go with you!”

Ellena and Vivaldi had scarcely a moment to bid him “farewel!” before he closed the door, and Vivaldi, taking her arm, was hastening towards the place where he had ordered Paulo to wait with the horses, when, on turning an angle of the convent wall, they perceived a long train of pilgrims issuing forth from the portal, at a little distance.

Vivaldi drew back; yet dreading every moment, that he lingered near the monastery, to hear the voice of Jeronimo, or other persons, from the avenue, he was sometimes inclined to proceed at any hazard. The only practicable path leading to the base of the mountain, however, was now occupied by these devotees, and to mingle with them was little less than certain destruction. A bright moonlight shewed distinctly every figure, that moved in the scene, and the fugitives kept within the shadow of the walls, till, warned by an approaching footstep, they crossed to the feet of the cliffs that rose beyond some palmy hillocks on the right, whose dusky recesses promised a temporary shelter. As they passed with silent steps along the winding rocks, the tranquillity of the landscape below afforded an affecting contrast with the tumult and alarm of their minds.

Being now at some distance from the monastery, they rested under the shade of the cliffs, till the procession of devotees, which were traced descending among the thickets and hollows of the mountain, should be sufficiently remote. Often they looked back to the convent, expecting to see lights issue from the avenue, or the portal; and attended in mute anxiety for the sullen murmurs of pursuit; but none came on the breeze; nor did any gleaming lamp betray the steps of a spy.

Released, at length, from immediate apprehension, Ellena listened to the mattin-hymn of the pilgrims, as it came upon the still air and ascended towards the cloudless heavens. Not a sound mingled with the holy strain, and even in the measured pause of voices only the trembling of the foliage above was distinguished. The responses, as they softened away in distance, and swelled again on the wasting breeze, appeared like the music of spirits, watching by night upon the summits of the mountains, and answering each other in celestial airs, as they walk their high boundary, and overlook the sleeping world.

“How often, Ellena, at this hour,” said Vivaldi, “have I lingered round your dwelling, consoled by the consciousness of being near you! Within those walls, I have said, she reposes; they enclose my world, all without is to me a desart. Now, I am in your presence! O Ellena! now that you are once more restored to me, suffer not the caprice of possibility again to separate us! Let me lead you to the first altar that will confirm our vows.”

Vivaldi forgot, in the anxiety of a stronger interest, the delicate silence he had resolved to impose upon himself, till Ellena should be in a place of

safety.

“This is not a moment,” she replied, with hesitation, “for conversation; our situation is yet perilous, we tremble on the very brink of danger.”

Vivaldi immediately rose; “Into what imminent danger,” said he, “had my selfish folly nearly precipitated you! We are lingering in this alarming neighbourhood, when that feeble strain indicates the pilgrims to be sufficiently remote to permit us to proceed!”

As he spoke, they descended cautiously among the cliffs, often looking back to the convent, where, however, no light appeared, except what the moon shed over the spires and tall windows of its cathedral. For a moment, Ellena fancied she saw a taper in her favourite turret, and a belief, that the nuns, perhaps the Abbess herself, were searching for her there, renewed her terror and her speed. But the rays were only those of the moon, striking through opposite casements of the chamber; and the fugitives reached the base of the mountain without further alarm, where Paulo appeared with horses. “Ah! Signormio,” said the servant, “I am glad to see you alive and merry; I began to fear, by the length of your stay, that the monks had clapped you up to do penance for life. How glad I am to see you Maestro!”

“Not more so than I am to see you, good Paulo. But where is the pilgrim’s cloak I bade you provide?”

Paulo displayed it, and Vivaldi, having wrapt it round Ellena, and placed her on horseback, they took the road towards Naples, Ellena designing to take refuge in the convent della Pieta. Vivaldi, however, apprehending that their enemies would seek them on this road, proposed leaving it as soon as practicable, and reaching the neighbourhood of Villa Altieri by a circuitous way.

They soon after arrived at the tremendous pass, through which Ellena had approached the monastery, and whose horrors were considerably heightened at this dusky hour, for the moonlight fell only partially upon the deep barriers of the gorge, and frequently the precipice, with the road on its brow, was entirely shadowed by other cliffs and woody points that rose above it. But Paulo, whose spirits seldom owned the influence of local scenery, jogged merrily along, frequently congratulating himself and his master on their escape, and carolling briskly to the echoes of the rocks,

till Vivaldi, apprehensive for the consequence of this loud gaiety, desired him to desist.

“Ah Signormio! I must obey you,” said he, “but my heart was never so full in my life; and I would fain sing, to unburden it of some of this joy. That scrape we got into in the dungeon there, at what’s the name of the place? was bad enough, but it was nothing to this, because here I was left out of it; and you, Maestro, might have been murdered again and again, while I, thinking of nothing at all, was quietly airing myself on the mountain by moonlight.

But what is that yonder in the sky, Signor? It looks for all the world like a bridge; only it is perched so high, that nobody would think of building one in such an out-of-the-way place, unless to cross from cloud to cloud, much less would take the trouble of clambering up after it, for the pleasure of going over.

Vivaldi looked forward, and Ellena perceived the Alpine bridge, she had formerly crossed with so much alarm, in the moonlight perspective, airily suspended between tremendous cliffs, with the river far below, tumbling down the rocky chasm. One of the supporting cliffs, with part of the bridge, was in deep shade, but the other, feathered with foliage, and the rising surges at its foot, were strongly illumined; and many a thicket wet with the spray, sparkled in contrast to the dark rock it overhung. Beyond the arch, the long-drawn prospect faded into misty light.

“Well, to be sure!” exclaimed Paulo, “to see what curiosity will do! If there are not some people have found their way up to the bridge already.”

Vivaldi now perceived figures upon the slender arch, and, as their indistinct forms glided in the moonshine, other emotions than those of wonder disturbed him, lest these might be pilgrims going to the shrine of our Lady, and who would give information of his route. No possibility, however, appeared of avoiding them, for the precipices that rose immediately above, and fell below, forbade all excursion, and the road itself was so narrow, as scarcely to admit of two horses passing each other.

“They are all off the bridge now, and without having broken their necks, perhaps!” said Paulo, “where, I wonder, will they go next! Why surely, Signor, this road does not lead to the bridge yonder; we are not going to pick our way in the air too? The roar of those waters has made my head dizzy already; and the rocks here are as dark as midnight, and seem ready

to tumble upon one; they are enough to make one despair to look at them; you need not have checked my mirth, Signor."

"I would fain check your loquacity," replied Vivaldi. "Do, good Paulo, be silent and circumspect, those people may be near us, though we do not yet see them."

"The road does lead to the bridge, then Signor!" said Paulo dolourously. "And see! there they are again; winding round that rock, and coming towards us."

"Hush! they are pilgrims," whispered Vivaldi," we will linger under the shade of these rocks, while they pass. Remember, Paulo, that a single indiscreet word may be fatal; and that if they hail us, I alone am to answer."

"You are obeyed, Signor."

The fugitives drew up close under the cliffs, and proceeded slowly, while the words of the devotees, as they advanced, became audible.

"It gives one some comfort," said Paulo, to hear cheerful voices, in such a place as this. Bless their merry hearts! theirs seems a pilgrimage of pleasure; but they will be demure enough, I warrant, by and bye. I wish I" —

"Paulo! have you so soon forgot?" said Vivaldi sharply.

The devotees, on perceiving the travellers, became suddenly silent; till he who appeared to be the Father-director, as they passed, said "Hail! in the name of Our Lady of Mount Carmel!" and they repeated the salutation in chorus.

"Hail!" replied Vivaldi, "the first mass is over," and he passed on.

"But if you make haste, you may come in for the second," said Paulo, jogging after.

"You have just left the shrine, then?" said one of the party, "and can tell us" —

"Poor pilgrims, like yourselves," replied Paulo, "and can tell as little. Good morrow, fathers, yonder peeps the dawn!"

He came up with his master, who had hurried forward with Ellena, and who now severely reproved his indiscretion; while the voices of the Carmelites, singing the mattin-hymn, sunk away among the rocks, and the quietness of solitude returned.

"Thank heaven! we are quit of this adventure," said Vivaldi.

“And now we have only the bridge to get over,” rejoined Paulo, “and, I hope, we shall all be safe.”

They were now at the entrance of it; as they passed the trembling planks, and looked up the glen, a party of people appeared advancing on the road the sugitives had left, and a chorus of other voices than those of the Carmelites, were heard mingling with the hollow sound of the waters.

Ellena, again alarmed, hastened forward, and Vivaldi, though he endeavoured to appease her apprehension of pursuit, encouraged her speed.

“These are nothing but more pilgrims Signora,” said Paulo, “or they would not send such loud shouts before them; they must needs think we can hear.”

The travellers proceeded as fast as the broken road would permit; and were soon beyond the reach of the voices; but as Paulo turned to look whether the party was within sight, he perceived two persons, wrapt in cloaks, advancing under the brow of the cliffs, and within a few paces of his horse’s heels. Before he could give notice to his master, they were at his side.

“Are you returning from the shrine of our Lady?” said one of them.

Vivaldi, startled by the voice, looked round, and demanded who asked the question?

“A brother pilgrim,” replied the man, “one who has toiIed up these steep rocks, till his limbs will scarcely bear him further. Would that you would take compassion on him, and give him a ride.”

However compassionate Vivaldi might be to the sufferings of others, this was not a moment when he could indulge his disposition, without endangering the safety of Ellena; and he even fancied the stranger spoke in a voice of dissimulation. His suspicions strengthened when the traveller, not repulsed by a refusal, enquired the way he was going, and proposed to join his party; “For these mountains, they say, are infested with banditti,” he added, “and a large company is less likely to be attacked than a small one.”

“If you are so very weary, my friend,” said Vivaldi, “how is it possible you can keep pace with our horses?” though I acknowledge you have done wonders in overtaking them.”

“The fear of these banditti,” replied the stranger, “urged us on.”

“You have nothing to apprehend from robbers,” said Vivaldi, “if you will only moderate your pace; for a large company of pilgrims are on the road, who will soon overtake you.”

He then put an end to the conversation, by clapping spurs to his horse, and the strangers were soon left far behind. The inconsistency of their complaints with their ability, and the whole of their manner, were serious subjects of alarm to the fugitives; but when they had lost sight of them, they lost also their apprehensions; and having, at length, emerged from the pass, they quitted the high road to Naples, and struck into a solitary one that led westward towards Aquila.

Chapter 1 2

“Thus sang th’ unletter’d Swain to th’ oaks and rills,
While the still morn went forth with sandals gray,
And now the sun had stretch’d out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.” —
Milton.

From the summit of a mountain, the morning light shewed the travellers the distant lake of Celano, gleaming at the feet of other lofty mountains of the Appennine, far in the south. Thither Vivaldi judged it prudent to direct his course, for the lake lay so remote from the immediate way to Naples, and from the neighbourhood of San Stefano, that it’s banks promised a secure retreat. He considered, also, that among the convents scattered along those delightful banks, might easily be found a priest, who would solemnize their nuptials, should Ellena consent to an immediate marriage.

The travellers descended among olive woods, and soon after were directed by some peasants at work, into a road that leads from Aquila to the town of Celano, one of the very few roads which intrudes among the wild mountains, that on every side sequester the lake. As they approached the low grounds, the scent of orange blossoms breathed upon the morning air, and the spicy myrtle sent forth all its fragrance from among the cliffs, which it thickly tusted. Bowers of lemon and orange spread along the valley; and among the cabins of the peasants, who cultivated them, Vivaldi hoped to obtain repose and refreshment for Ellena.

The cottages, however, at which Paulo enquired were unoccupied, the owners being all gone forth to their labour: and the travellers, again ascending, found themselves soon after among mountains inhabited by the flocks, where the scent of the orange was exchanged for the aromatic perfume of the pasturage.

“My Signor!” said Paulo, “is not that a shepherd’s horn sounding at a distance? If so, the Signora may yet obtain some refreshment.”

While Vivaldi listened, a hautboy and a pastoral drum were heard considerably nearer.

They followed the sound over the turf, and came within view of a cabin, sheltered from the sun by a tust of almond trees. It was a dairy-cabin belonging to some shepherds, who at a short distance were watching their flocks, and, stretched beneath the shade of chestnuts, were amusing themselves by playing upon these rural instruments; a scene of Arcadian manners frequent at this day, upon the mountains of Abruzzo. The simplicity of their appearance, approaching to wildness, was tempered by a hospitable spirit. A venerable man, the chief shepherd, advanced to meet the strangers; and, learning their wants, conducted them into his cool cabin, where cream, cheese made of goat's milk, honey extracted from the delicious herbage of the mountains, and dried figs were quickly placed before them.

Ellena, overcome with the fatigue of anxiety, rather than that of travelling, retired, when she had taken breakfast, for an hour's repose; while Vivaldi rested on the bench before the cottage, and Paulo, keeping watch, discussed his breakfast, together with the circumstances of the late alarm, under the shade of the almond trees.

When Ellena again appeared, Vivaldi proposed, that they should rest here during the intense heat of the day; and, since he now considered her to be in a place of temporary safety, he ventured to renew the subject nearest his heart; to represent the evils, that might overtake them, and to urge an immediate solemnization of their marriage.

Thoughtful and dejected, Ellena attended for some time in silence to the arguments and pleadings of Vivaldi. She secretly acknowledged the justness of his representations, but she shrunk, more than ever, from the indelicacy, the degradation of intruding herself into his family; a family, too, from whom she had not only received proofs of strong dislike, but had suffered terrible injustice, and been menaced with still severer cruelty. These latter circumstances, however, released her from all obligations of delicacy or generosity, so far as concerned only the authors of her suffering; and she had now but to consider the happiness of Vivaldi and herself. Yet she could not decide thus precipitately on a subject, which so solemnly involved the fortune of her whole life; nor forbear reminding Vivaldi, affectionately, gratefully, as she loved him, of the circumstances which withheld her decision.

“Tell me yourself,” said she, “whether I ought to give my hand, while your family — your mother” — She paused, and blushed, and burst into tears.

“Spare me the view of those tears,” said Vivaldi, “and a recollection of the circumstances that excite them. O, let me not think of my mother, while I see you weep! Let me not remember, that her injustice and cruelty destined you to perpetual sorrow!”

Vivaldi’s features became slightly convulsed, while he spoke; he rose, paced the room with quick steps, and then quitted it, and walked under the shade of the trees in front of the cabin.

In a few moments, however, he commanded his emotion and returned. Again he placed himself on the bench beside Ellena, and taking her hand, said solemnly, and in a voice of extreme sensibility, “Ellena, you have long witnessed how dear you are to me; you cannot doubt my love; you have long since promised — solemnly promised, in the presence of her who is now no more, but whose spirit may even at this moment look down upon us, — of her, who bequeathed you to my tenderest care, to be mine for ever. By these sacred truths, by these affecting recollections! I conjure you, abandon me not to despair, nor in the energy of a just resentment, sacrifice the son to the cruel and mistaken policy of the mother! You, nor I, can conjecture the machinations, which may be spread for us, when it shall be known that you have left San Stefano. If we delay to exchange our vows, I know, and I feel — that you are lost to me for ever!”

Ellena was affected, and for some moments unable to reply. At length, drying her tears, she said tenderly, “Resentment can have no influence on my conduct towards you; I think I feel none towards the Marchesa — for she is your mother. But pride, insulted pride, has a right to dictate, and ought to be obeyed; and the time is now, perhaps, arrived when, if I would respect myself, I must renounce you.” —

“Renounce me!” interrupted Vivaldi, “renounce me! And is it, then, possible you could renounce me?” he repeated, his eyes still fixed upon her face with eagerness and consternation. “Tell me at once, Ellena, is it possible?”

“I fear it is not,” she replied.

“You fear! alas! if you fear, it is too possible, and I have lost you already! Say, O! say but, that you hope it is not, and I, too, will hope

again.”

The anguish, with which he uttered this, awakened all her tenderness, and, forgetting the reserve she had imposed upon herself, and every half-formed resolution, she said, with a smile of ineffable sweetness, “I will neither fear nor hope in this instance; I will obey the dictates of gratitude, of affection, and will believe that I never can renounce you, while you are unchanged.”

“Believe!” repeated Vivaldi, “only believe! And why that mention of gratitude; and why that unnecessary reservation? Yet even this assurance, feebly as it sustains my hopes, is extorted; you see my misery, and from pity, from gratitude, not affection, would assuage it. Besides, you will neither fear, nor hope! Ah, Ellena! did love ever yet exist without fear — and without hope? O! never, never! I fear and hope with such rapid transition; every assurance, every look of yours gives such force either to the one, or to the other, that I suffer unceasing anxiety. Why, too, that cold, that heart-breaking mention of gratitude? No, Ellena! it is too certain that you do not love me! — My mother’s cruelty has estranged your heart from me!”

“How much you mistake!” said Ellena. “You have already received sacred testimonies of my regard; if you doubt their sincerity, pardon me, if I so far respect myself as to forbear entreating you will believe them.”

“How calm, how indifferent, how circumspect, how prudent!” exclaimed Vivaldi in tones of mournful reproach. “But I will not distress you; forgive me for renewing this subject at this time. It was my intention to be silent till you should have reached a place of more permanent security than this; but how was it possible, with such anxiety pressing upon my heart, to persevere in that design. And what have I gained by departing from it? — increase of anxiety — of doubt — of fear!”

“Why will you persist in such self-in-flictions?” said Ellena. “I cannot endure that you should doubt my affection, even for a moment. And how can you suppose it possible, that I ever can become insensible of your’s; that I can ever forget the imminent danger you have voluntarily incurred for my release, or, remembering it, can cease to feel the warmest gratitude?”

“That is the very word which tortures me beyond all others!” said Vivaldi; “is it then, only a sense of obligation you own for me? O! rather

say you hate me, than suffer me to deceive my hopes with assurances of a sentiment so cold, so circumscribed, so dutiful as that of gratitude!”

“With me the word has a very different acceptation,” replied Ellena smiling. “I understand it to imply all that is tender and generous in affection; and the sense of duty which you say it includes, is one of the sweetest and most sacred feelings of the human heart.”

“Ah Ellena! I am too willing to be deceived, to examine your definition rigorously; yet I believe it is your smile, rather than the accuracy of your explanation, that persuades me to a confidence in your affection; and I will trust, that the gratitude you feel is thus tender and comprehensive. But, I beseech you, name the word no more! Its sound is like the touch of the Torpedo, I perceive my confidence chilled even while I listen to my own pronunciation of it.”

The entrance of Paulo interrupted the conversation, who advancing with an air of mystery and alarm, said in a low voice,

“Signor! as I kept watch under the almond trees, who should I see mounting up the road from the valley yonder, but the two barefooted Carmelites, that overtook us in the pass of Chiari! I lost them again behind the woods, but I dare say they are coming this way, for the moment they spy out this dairy-hut, they will guess something good is to be had here; and the shepherds would believe their flocks would all die, if”— “I see them at this moment emerging from the woods,” said Vivaldi, “and now, they are leaving the road and crossing this way. Where is our host, Paulo!

“He is without, at a little distance, Signor. Shall I call him?”

“Yes,” replied Vivaldi, “or, stay; I will call him myself. Yet, if they see me”— “Aye, Signor; or, for that matter, if they see me. But we cannot help ourselves now; for if we call the host, we shall betray ourselves, and, if we do not call him, he will betray us; so they must find us out, be it as it may.”

“Peace! peace! let me think a moment,” said Vivaldi. While Vivaldi undertook to think, Paulo was peeping about for a hiding place, if occasion should require one.

“Call our host immediately,” said Vivaldi, “I must speak with him.”

“He passes the lattice at this instant,” said Ellena.

Paulo obeyed, and the shepherd entered the cabin.

“My good friend,” said Vivaldi, “I must entreat that you will not admit those friars, whom you see coming this way, nor suffer them to know what guests you have. They have been very troublesome to us already, on the road; I will reward you for any loss their sudden departure may occasion you.”

“Nay for that matter, friend,” said Paulo, “it is their visit only that can occasion you loss, begging the Signor’s pardon; their departure never occasioned loss to any body. And to tell you the truth, for my master will not speak out, we were obliged to look pretty sharply about us, while they bore us company, or we have reason to think our pockets would have been the lighter. They are designing people, friend, take my word for it; banditti, perhaps, in disguise. The dress of a Carmelite would suit their purpose, at this time of the pilgrimage. So be pretty blunt with them, if they want to come in here; and you will do well, when they go, to send somebody to watch which way they take, and see them clear off, or you may lose a stray lamb, perhaps.”

The old shepherd lifted up his eyes and hands, “To see how the world goes!” said he. “But thank you, Maestro, for your warning; they shall not come within my threshold, for all their holy seeming, and its the first time in my life I ever said nay to one of their garb, and mine has been a pretty long one, as you may guess, perhaps, by my face. How old, Signor, should you take me to be? I warrant you will guess short of the matter tho’; for on these high mountains”— “I will guess when you have dismissed the travellers,” said Vivaldi, “after having given them some hasty refreshment without; they must be almost at the door, by this time. Dispatch, friend.”

“If they should fall foul upon me, for refusing them entrance,” said the shepherd, “you will come out to help me, Signor? for my lads are at some distance.”

Vivaldi assured him that they would, and he left the cabin.

Paulo ventured to peep at the lattice, on what might be going forward without. “They are gone round to the door, Signor, I fancy,” said he, “for I see nothing of them this way; if there was but another window! What foolish people to build a cottage with no window near the door! But I must listen.”

He stepped on tip-toe to the door, and bent his head in attention.

“They are certainly spies from the monastery,” said Ellena to Vivaldi, “they follow us so closely! If they were pilgrims, it is improbable, too, that their way should be through this unfrequented region, and still more so, that they should not travel in a larger party. When my absence was discovered, these people were sent, no doubt, in pursuit of me, and having met the devotees whom we passed, they were enabled to follow our route.”

“We shall do well to act upon this supposition,” replied Vivaldi, “but, though I am inclined to believe them emissaries from San Stefano, it is not improbable that they are only Carmelites returning to some convent on the lake of Celano.”

“I cannot hear a syllable, Signor,” said Paulo. “Pray do listen yourself! and there is not a single chink in this door to afford one consolation. Well! if ever I build a cottage, there shall be a window near— “ “Listen!” said Vivaldi.

“Not a single word, Signor!” cried Paulo, after a pause, “I do not even hear a voice! — But now I hear steps, and they are coming to the door, too; they shall find it no easy matter to open it, though;” he added, placing himself against it. “Ay, ay, you may knock, friend, till your arm aches, and kick and lay about you — no matter for that.”

“Silence! let us know who it is,” said Vivaldi; and the old shepherd’s voice was heard without. “They are gone, Signors,” said he, “you may open the door.”

“Which way did they go?” asked Vivaldi, when the man entered. “I cannot say, as to that, Signor, because I did not happen to see them at all; and I have been looking all about, too.”

“Why, I saw them myself, crossing this way from the wood yonder,” said Paulo.

“And there is nothing to shelter them from our view between the wood, and this cottage, friend,” added Vivaldi; “What can they have done with themselves?”

“For that matter, gone into the wood again, perhaps,” said the shepherd.

Paulo gave his master a significant look, and added, “It is likely enough, friend; and you may depend upon it they are lurking there for no good purpose, You will do well to send somebody to look after them; your flocks will suffer for it, else. Depend upon it, they design no good.”

“We are not used to such sort of folks in these parts,” replied the shepherd, “but if they mean any harm, they shall find we can help ourselves.” As he concluded, he took down a horn from the roof, and blew a shrill blast that made the mountains echo; when immediately the younger shepherds were seen running from various quarters towards the cottage.

“Do not be alarmed, friend,” said Vivaldi, “these travellers mean you no harm, I dare say, whatever they may design against us. But, as I think them suspicious persons, and should not like to overtake them on the road, I will reward one of your lads if you will let him go a little ways towards Celano, and examine whether they are lurking on that route.”

The old man consented, and, when the shepherds came up, one of them received directions from Vivaldi.

“And be sure you do not return, till you have found them,” added Paulo.

“No master,” replied the lad, “and I will bring them safe here, you may trust me.”

“If you do, friend, you will get your head broke for your trouble. You are only to discover where they are, and to watch where they go,” said Paulo.

Vivaldi, at length, made the lad comprehend what was required of him, and he departed; while the old shepherd went out to keep guard.

The time of his absence was passed in various conjectures by the party in the cabin, concerning the Carmelites. Vivaldi still inclined to believe they were honest people returning from a pilgrimage, but Paulo was decidedly against this opinion. “They are waiting for us on the road, you may depend upon it, Signor,” said the latter. “You may be certain they have some great design in hand, or they would never have turned their steps from this dairy-house when once they had spied it, and that they did spy it, we are sure.”

“But if they have in hand the great design you speak of, Paulo,” said Vivaldi, “it is probable that they have spied us also, by their taking this obscure road. Now it must have occurred to them when they saw a dairy-hut, in so solitary a region, that we might probably be found within — yet they have not examined. It appears, therefore, they have no design against us. What can you answer to this Paulo? I trust the apprehensions of Signora di Rosalba are unfounded.

“Why! do you suppose, Signor, they would attack us when we were safe housed, and had these good shepherds to lend us a helping hand? No, Signor, they would not even have shewn themselves, if they could have helped it; and being once sure we were here, they would skulk back to the woods, and lurk for us in the road they knew we must go, since, as it happens, there is only one.”

“How is it possible,” said Ellena, “that they can have discovered us here, since they did not approach the cabin to enquire.”

“They came near enough for their purpose, Signora, I dare say; and, if the truth were known, they spied my face looking at them through the lattice.”

“Come, come,” said Vivaldi, “you are an ingenious tormentor, indeed, Paulo. Do you suppose they saw enough of thy face last night by moonlight, in that dusky glen, to enable them to recollect it again at a distance of forty yards? Revive, my Ellena, I think every appearance is in our favour.”

“Would I could think so too!” said she, with a sigh.

“O! for that matter, Signora,” rejoined “Paulo, there is nothing to be afraid of; they should find tough work of it, if they thought proper to attack us, lady.”

“It is not an open attack that we have to fear,” replied Ellena, “but they may surround us with their snares, and defy resistance.”

However Vivaldi might accede to the truth of this remark, he would not appear to do so; but tried to laugh away her apprehensions; and Paulo was silenced for a while, by a significant look from his master.

The shepherd’s boy returned much sooner than they had expected, and he probably saved his time, that he might spare his labour, for he brought no intelligence of the Carmelites. “I looked for them among the woods along the road side in the hollow, yonder, too,” said the lad, “and then I mounted the hill further on, but I could see nothing of them far or near, nor of a single soul, except our goats, and some of them do stray wide enough, sometimes; they lead me a fine dance often. They sometimes, Signor, have wandered as far as Monte Nuvola, yonder, and got to the top of it, up among the clouds, and the crags, where I should break my neck if I climbed; and the rogues seemed to know it, too, for when they have seen me coming, scrambling up, pussing and blowing, they have ceased their

capering, and stood peeping over a crag so fly, and so quiet, it seemed as if they were laughing at me; as much as to say, “Catch us if you can.”

Vivaldi, who during the latter part of this speech had been consulting with Ellena, whether they should proceed on their way immediately, asked the boy some further questions concerning the Carmelites; and becoming convinced that they had either not taken the road to Celano, or, having taken it, were at a considerable distance, he proposed setting out, and proceeding leisurely, “For I have now little apprehension of these people,” he added, “and a great deal lest night should overtake us before we reach the place of our destination, since the road is mountainous and wild, and, further, we are not perfectly acquainted with it.”

Ellena approving the plan, they took leave of the good shepherd, who could with difficulty be prevailed with to accept any recompence for his trouble, and who gave them some further directions as to the road; and their way was long cheered by the sound of the tabor and the sweetness of the hautboy, wafted over the wild.

When they descended into the woody hollow mentioned by the boy, Ellena sent forth many an anxious look beneath the deep shade; while Paulo, sometimes silent, and at others whistling and singing loudly, as if to overcome his fears, peeped under every bough that crossed the road, expecting to discover his friends the Carmelites lurking within its gloom.

Having emerged from this valley, the road lay over mountains covered with flocks, for it was now the season when they had quitted the plains of Apulia, to feed upon the herbage for which this region is celebrated; and it was near sun-set, when, from a summit to which the travellers had long been ascending, the whole lake of Celano, with its vast circle of mountains, burst at once upon their view.

“Ah Signor!” exclaimed Paulo, “what a prospect is here! It reminds me of home; it is almost as pleasant as the bay of Naples! I should never love it like that though, if it were an hundred times finer.

The travellers stopped to admire the scene, and to give their horses rest, after the labour of the ascent. The evening sun, shooting athwart a clear expanse of water, between eighteen and twenty leagues in circumference, lighted up all the towns and villages, and towered castles, and spiry convents, that enriched the rising shores; brought out all the various tints of cultivation, and coloured with beamy purple the mountains which on

every side formed the majestic background of the landscape. Vivaldi pointed out to Ellena the gigantic Velino in the north, a barrier mountain, between the territories of Rome and Naples. Its peaked head towered far above every neighbouring summit, and its white precipices were opposed to the verdant points of the Majella, snow crowned, and next in altitude, loved by the socks. Westward, near woody hills, and rising immediately from the lake, appeared Monte Salviano, covered with wild sage, as its name imports, and once pompous with forests of chestnuts, a branch from the Appemine extended to meet it. “See,” said Vivaldi, “where Monte Corno stands like a ruffian, huge, feared, threatening, and horrid! — and in the south, where the sullen mountain of San Nicolo shoots up, barren and rocky! From inhence, mark how other overtopping ridges of the mighty Aperinine darken the horizon far along the east, and to circle approach the Vehinon the north!” “Mark too,” said Ellena, “how sweetly the banks and undulating plains repose at the feet of the mountains, what an image of beauty and elegance they oppose to the awful grandeur that overlooks and guards them! Observe, too, how many a delightful valley, opening from the lake, spreads its rice and corn fields, shaded with groves of the almond, far among the winding hills; how gaily vineyards and olives alternately chequer the anclivities, and how gracefully the lofty palms bend over the higher cliffs.”

“Ay, Signora!” exclaimed Paulo, “and have the goodness to observe how like are the fishing boats, that sail towards the hamlet below, to those one sees upon the bay of Naples. They are worth all the rest of the prospect, except indeed this fine sheet of water, which is almost as good as the bay, and that mountain, with its sharp head, which is almost as good as Vesuvius — if it would but throw out fire!”

“We must despair of finding a mountain in this neighbourhood, so good as to do that, Paulo,” said Vivaldi, smiling at this stroke of nationality; “though, perhaps, many that we now see, have once been volcanic.”

“I honour them for that, Signor; and look at them with double satisfaction; but our mountain is the only mountain in the world. O! to see it of a dark night! what a blazing it makes! and what a height it will shoot to! and what a light it throws over the sea! No other mountain can do so. It seems as if the waves were all on fire. I have seen the reflection as far off as Capri, trembling all across the gulf, and shewing every vessel as plain

as at noon day; ay, and every sailor on the deck. You never saw such a sight, Signor."

"Why you do, indeed, seem to have forgotten that I ever did, Paulo, and also that a volcano can do any mischief. But let us return, Ellena, to the scene before us. Yonder, a mile or two within the shore, is the town of Celano, whither we are going."

The clearness of an Italian atmosphere permitted him to discriminate the minute through very distant features of the landscape; and on an eminence rising from the plains of a valley opening to the west, he pointed out the modern Alba, crowned with the ruins of its ancient castle, still visible upon the splendor of the horizon, the prison and tomb of many a Prince, who, "fallen from his high estate," was sent from Imperial Rome to finish here the sad reverse of his days; to gaze from the bars of his tower upon solitudes where beauty or grandeur administered no assuaging feelings to him, whose life had passed amidst the intrigues of the world, and the feverish contentions of disappointed ambition; to him, with whom reflection brought only remorse, and anticipation despair; whom "no horizontal beam enlivened in the crimson evening of life's dusty day."

"And to such a scene as this," said Vivaldi, "a Roman Emperor came, only for the purpose of witnessing the most barbarous exhibition; to indulge the most savage delights! Here, Claudius celebrated the accomplishment of his arduous work, an aqueduct to carry the overflowing waters of the Celano to Rome, by a naval fight, in which hundreds of wretched slaves perished for his amusement! Its pure and polished surface was stained with human blood, and roughened by the plunging bodies of the slain, while the gilded gallies of the Emperor floated gaily around, and these beautiful shores were made to echo with applauding yells, worthy of the furies!"

"We scarcely dare to trust the truth of history, in some of its traits of human nature," said Ellena.

"Signor," cried Paulo, "I have been thinking that while we are taking the air, so much at our ease, here, those Carmelites may be spying at us from some hole or corner that we know nothing of, and may swoop upon us, all of a sudden, before we can help ourselves. Had we not better go on, Signor?"

“Our horses are, perhaps, sufficiently rested,” replied Vivaldi, “but, if I had not long since dismissed all suspicion of the evil intention of those strangers, I should not willingly have stopped for a moment.”

“But pray let us proceed,” said Ellena.

“Ay, Signora, it is best to be of the safe side,” observed Paulo. “Yonder, below, is Celano, and I hope we shall get safe housed there, before it is quite dark, for here we have no mountain, that will light us on our way! Ah! if we were but within twenty miles of Naples, now, — and it was an illumination night!” —

As they descended the mountain, Ellena, silent and dejected, abandoned herself to reflection. She was too sensible of the difficulties of her present situation, and too apprehensive of the influence, which her determination must have on all her future life, to be happy, though escaped from the prison of San Stefano, and in the presence of Vivaldi, her beloved deliverer and protector. He observed her dejection with grief, and, not understanding all the finer scruples that distressed her, interpreted her reserve into indifference towards himself. But he forbore to disturb her again with a mention of his doubts, or fears; and he determined not to urge the subject of his late entreaties, till he should have placed her in some secure asylum, where she might feel herself at perfect liberty to accept or to reject his proposal. By acting with an honour so delicate, he unconsciously adopted a certain means of increasing her esteem and gratitude, and deserved them the more, since he had to endure the apprehension of losing her by the delay thus occasioned to their nuptials.

They reached the town of Celano before the evening closed; when Vivaldi was requested by Ellena to enquire for a convent, where she might be lodged for the night. He left her at the inn, with Paulo for her guard, and proceeded on his search. The first gate he knocked upon belonged to a convent of Carmelites. It appeared probable, that the pilgrims of that order, who had occasioned him so much disquietude, were honest brothers of this house; but as it was probable also, that if they were emissaries of the Abbess of San Stefano, and came to Celano, they would take up their lodging with a society of their own class, in preference to that of any other, Vivaldi thought it prudent to retire from their gates without making himself known. He passed on, therefore, and soon after arrived at a convent of Dominicans, where he learned, that there were only two houses

of nuns in Celano, and that these admitted no other boarders than permanent ones.

Vivaldi returned with this intelligence to Ellena, who endeavoured to reconcile herself to the necessity of remaining where she was; but Paulo, ever active and zealous, brought intelligence, that at a little fishing town, at some distance, on the bank of the lake, was a convent of Ursalines, remarkable for their hospitality to strangers. The obscurity of so remote a place, was another reason for preferring it to Celano, and Vivaldi proposing to remove thither, if Ellena was not too weary to proceed, she readily assented and they immediately set off.

“It happens to be a fine night,” said Paulo, as they left Celano, “and so, Signor, we cannot well lose our way; besides, they say, there is but one. The town we are going to lies yonder on the edge of the lake, about a mile and a half off. I think I can see a gray steeple or two, a little to the right of that wood where the water gleams so.”

“No, Paulo,” replied Vivaldi, after looking attentively. “I perceive what you mean; but those are not the points of steeples, they are only the tops of some tall cypresses.”

“Pardon me, Signor, they are too tapering for trees; that must surely be the town. This road, however, will lead us right, for there is no other to puzzle us, as they say,”

“This cool and balmy air revives me,” said Ellena; “and what a soothing shade prevails over the scene! How softened, yet how distinct, is every near object; how sweetly dubious the more removed ones; while the mountains beyond character themselves sublimely upon the still glowing horizon.”

“Observe, too,” said Vivaldi, “how their broken summits, tipt with the beams that have set to our lower region, exhibit the portraiture of towers and castles, and embattled ramparts, which seemed designed to guard them against the enemies, that may come by the clouds.”

“Yes,” replied Ellena, “the mountains themselves display a sublimity, that seems to belong to a higher world; their besiegers ought not to be of this earth; they can be only spirits of the air.”

“They can be nothing else, Signora,” said Paulo, “for nothing of this earth can reach them. See! lady, they have some of the qualities of your spirits, too; see! how they change their shapes and colours, as the

sunbeams sink. And now, how gray and dim they grow! See but how fast they vanish!”

“Every thing reposes,” said Vivaldi. “who would willingly travel in the day, when Italy has such nights as this!”

“Signor, that is the town before us,” said Paulo, “for now I can discern, plain enough, the spires of convents; and there goes a light! Hah, hah! and there is a bell, too, chiming from one of the spires! The monks are going to mass; would we were going to supper, Signor!”

“That chime is nearer than the place you point to, Paulo, and I doubt whether it comes from the same quarter.”

“Hark! Signor, the air wafts the sound! and now it is gone again.”

“Yes, I believe you are right, Paulo, and that we have not far to go.”

The travellers descended the gradual slopes, towards the shore; and Paulo, some time after, exclaimed, “See, Signor, where another light glides along! See! it is reflected on the lake.”

“I hear the faint dashing of waves, now,” said Ellena, “and the sound of oars, too. But observe, Paulo, the light is not in the town, it is in the boat that moves yonder.”

“Now it retreats, and trembles in a lengthening line upon the waters,” said Vivaldi. “We have been too ready to believe what we wish and have yet far to go.”

The shore they were approaching formed a spacious bay for the lake, immediately below. Dark woods seemed to spread along the banks, and ascend among the cultivated slopes towards the mountains; except where, here and there, cliffs, bending over the water, were distinguished through the twilight by the whiteness of their limestone precipices. Within the bay, the town became gradually visible; lights twinkled between the trees, appearing and vanishing; like the stars of a cloudy night; and, at length was heard the melancholy song of boatmen, who were fishing near the shore.

Other sounds soon after struck the ear. “O, what merry notes!” exclaimed Paulo, “they make my heart dance. See! Signora, there is a group, footing it away so gaily on the bank of the lake, yonder, by those trees. O, what a merry set! Would I were among them! that is, I mean, if you, Maestro, and the Signora were not here.”

“Well corrected, Paulo.”

“It is a festival, I fancy,” observed Vivaldi. “These peasants of the lake can make the moments sly as gaily as the voluptuaries of the city, it seems.”

“O! what merry music!” repeated Paulo. “Ah! how often I have footed it as joyously on the beach at Naples, after sun-set, of a fine night, like this; with such a pleasant fresh breeze to cool one! Ah! there are none like the fishermen of Naples for a dance by moonlight; how lightly they do trip it! O! if I was but there now! That is, I mean, if you, Maestro, and the Signora were there too. O! what merry notes!”

“We thank you, good Signor Paulo,” said Vivaldi, “and I trust we shall all be there soon; when you shall trip it away, with as joyous an heart as the best of them.”

The travellers now entered the town, which consisted of one street, straggling along the margin of the lake; and having enquired for the Ursaline convent, were directed to its gates! The portress appeared immediately upon the ringing of the bell, and carried a message to the Abbess, who as quickly returned an invitation to Ellena. She alighted, and followed the portress to the parlour, while Vivaldi remained at the gate, till he should know whether she approved of her new lodging. A second invitation induced him, also, to alight; he was admitted to the grate, and offered refreshment, which, however, he declined staying to accept, as he had yet a lodging to seek for the night. The Abbess, on learning this circumstance, courteously recommended him to a neighbouring society of Benedictines, and desired him to mention her name to the Abbot.

Vivaldi then took leave of Ellena, and, though it was only for a few hours, he left her with dejection, and with some degree of apprehension for her safety, which, though circumstances could not justify him in admitting, he could not entirely subdue. She shared his dejection, but not his fears, when the door closed after him, and she found herself once more among strangers. The forlornness of her feelings could not be entirely overcome by the attentions of the Abbess; and there was a degree of curiosity, and even of scrutiny, expressed in the looks of some of the sisters, which seemed more than was due to a stranger. From such examination she eagerly escaped to the apartment allotted for her, and to the repose from which she had so long been withheld.

Vivaldi, meanwhile, had found an hospitable reception with the Benedictines, whose sequestered situation made the visit of a stranger a pleasurable novelty to them. In the eagerness of conversation, and, yielding to the satisfaction which the mind receives from exercising ideas that have long slept in dusky indolence, and to the pleasure of admitting new ones, the Abbot and a few of the brothers sat with Vivaldi to a late hour. When, at length, the traveller was suffered to retire, other subjects than those, which had interested his host, engaged his thoughts; and he revolved the means of preventing the misery that threatened him, in a serious separation from Ellena. Now, that she was received into a respectable asylum, every motive for silence upon this topic was done away. He determined, therefore, that on the following morning, he would urge all his reasons and entreaties for an immediate marriage; and among the brothers of the Benedictine, he had little doubt of prevailing with one to solemnize the nuptials, which he believed would place his happiness and Ellena’s peace, beyond the influence of malignant possibilities.

Chapter 1 3

“I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares.”
Milton.

While Vivaldi and Ellena were on the way from San Stefano, the Marchese Vivaldi was suffering the utmost vexation, respecting his son; and the Marchesa felt not less apprehension, that the abode of Ellena might be discovered; yet this fear did not withhold her from mingling in all the gaieties of Naples. Her assemblies were, as usual, among the most brilliant of that voluptuous city, and she patronized, as zealously as before, the strains of her favourite composer. But, notwithstanding this perpetual dissipation, her thoughts frequently withdrew themselves from the scene, and dwelt on gloomy forebodings of disappointed pride.

A circumstance, which rendered her particularly susceptible to such disappointment at this time, was, that overtures of alliance had been lately made to the Marchese, by the father of a lady, who was held suitable, in every consideration, to become his daughter; and whose wealth rendered the union particularly desirable at a time, when the expences of such an establishment as was necessary to the vanity of the Marchesa, considerably exceeded his income, large as it was.

The Marchesa’s temper had been thus irritated by the contemplation of her son’s conduct in an affair, which so materially affected the fortune, and, as she believed, the honour of his family; when a courier from the Abbess of San Stefano brought intelligence of the flight of Ellena with Vivaldi. She was in a disposition, which heightened disappointment into fury; and she forfeited, by the transports to which she yielded, the degree of pity that otherwise was due to a mother, who believed her only son to have sacrificed his family and himself to an unworthy passion. She believed, that he was now married, and irrecoverably lost. Scarcely able to

endure the agony of this conviction, she sent for her ancient adviser Schedoni, that she might, at least, have the relief of expressing her emotions; and of examining whether there remained a possibility of dissolving these long-dreaded nuptials. The phrenzy of passion, however, did not so far overcome her circumspection as to compel her to acquaint the Marchese with the contents of the Abbess's letter, before she had consulted with her Confessor. She knew that the principles of her husband were too just, upon the grand points of morality, to suffer him to adopt the measures she might judge necessary; and she avoided informing him of the marriage of his son, until the means of counteracting it should have been suggested and accomplished, however desperate such means might be.

Schedoni was not to be found. Trifling circumstances encrease the irritation of a mind in such a state as was her's. The delay of an opportunity for unburthening her heart to Schedoni, was hardly to be endured; another and another messenger were dispatched to her Confessor.

"My mistress has committed some great sin, truely!" said the servant, who had been twice to the convent within the last half hour. "It must lie heavy on her conscience, in good truth, since she cannot support it for one half hour. Well! the rich have this comfort, however, that, let them be ever so guilty, they can buy themselves innocent again, in the twinkling of a ducat. Now a poor man might be a month before he recovered his innocence, and that, too, not till after many about of hard flogging."

In the evening Schedoni came, but it was only to confirm her worst fear. He, too, had heard of the escape of Ellena, as well as that she was on the lake of Celano, and was married to Vivaldi. How he had obtained this information he did not chuse to disclose, but he mentioned so many minute circumstances in confirmation of it's truth, and appeared to be so perfectly convinced of the facts he related, that the Marchesa believed them, as implicitly as himself; and her passion and despair transgressed all bounds of decorum.

Schedoni observed, with dark and silent pleasure, the turbulent excess of her feelings; and perceived that the moment was now arrived, when he might command them to his purpose, so as to render his assistance indispensable to her repose; and probably so as to accomplish the revenge he had long meditated against Vivaldi, without hazarding the favour of the

Marchesa. So far was he from attempting to sooth her sufferings, that he continued to irritate her resentment, and exasperate her pride; effecting this, at the same time, with such imperceptible art, that he appeared only to be palliating the conduct of Vivaldi, and endeavouring to console his distracted mother.

“This is a rash step, certainly,” said the Confessor; but he is young, very young, and, therefore, does not foresee the consequence to which it leads. He does not perceive how seriously it will affect the dignity of his house; — how much it will depreciate his consequence with the court, with the nobles of his own rank, and even with the plebeians, with whom he has condescended to connect himself. Intoxicated with the passions of youth, he does not weigh the value of those blessings, which wisdom and the experience of maturer age know how to estimate. He neglects them only because he does not perceive their influence in society, and that lightly to resign them, is to degrade himself in the view of almost every mind. Unhappy young man! he is to be pitied fully as much as blamed.”

“Your excuses, reverend father,” said the tortured Marchesa, “prove the goodness of your heart; but they illustrate, also, the degeneracy of his mind, and detail the full extent of the effects which he has brought upon his family. It affords me no consolation to know, that this degradation proceeds from his head, rather than his heart; it is sufficient that he has incurred it, and that no possibility remains of throwing off the misfortune.”

“Perhaps that is affirming too much,” observed Schedoni.

“How, father!” said the Marchesa.

“Perhaps a possibility does remain,” said he.

“Point it out to me, good father! I do not perceive it.”

“Nay, my lady,” replied the subtle Schedoni, correcting himself, “I am by no means assured, that such possibility does exist. My solicitude for your tranquillity, and for the honour of your house, makes me so unwilling to relinquish hope, that, perhaps, I only imagine a possibility in your favour. Let me consider. — Alas! the misfortune, severe as it is, must be endured; — there remain no means of escaping from it.”

“It was cruel of you, father, to suggest a hope which you could not justify,” observed the Marchesa.

“You must excuse my extreme solicitude, then,” replied the Confessor. “But how is it possible for me to see a family of your ancient estimation brought into such circumstances; its honours blighted by the folly of a thoughtless boy, without feeling sorrow and indignation, and looking round for even some desperate means of delivering it from disgrace.” He paused.

“Disgrace!” exclaimed the Marchesa, “father, you — you — Disgrace! — The word is a strong one, but — it is, alas! just. And shall we submit to this? — Is it possible we can submit to it?”

“There is no remedy,” said Schedoni, coolly.

“Good God!” exclaimed the Marchesa, “that there should be no law to prevent, or, at least, to punish such criminal marriages!”

“It is much to be lamented,” replied Schedoni.

“The woman who obtrudes herself upon a family, to dishonour it,” continued the Marchesa, “deserves a punishment nearly equal to that of a state criminal, since she injures those who best support the state. She ought to suffer” — .

“Not nearly, but quite equal,” interrupted the Confessor, “she deserves — death!”

He paused, and there was a moment of profound silence, till he added— “for death only can obliviate the degradation she has occasioned; her death alone can restore the original splendor of the line she would have sullied.”

He paused again, but the Marchesa still remaining silent, he added, “I have often marvelled that our lawgivers should have failed to perceive the justness, nay the necessity, of such punishment!”

“It is astonishing,” said the Marchesa, thoughtfully, “that a regard for their own honour did not suggest it.”

“Justice does not the less exist, because her laws are neglected,” observed Schedoni. A sense of what she commands lives in our breasts; and when we fail to obey that sense, it is to weakness, not to virtue, that we yield.”

“Certainly,” replied the Marchesa, “that truth never yet was doubted.”

“Pardon me, I am not so certain as to that,” said the Confessor, “when justice happens to oppose prejudice, we are apt to believe it virtuous to disobey her. For instance, though the law of justice demands the death of this girl, yet because the law of the land forbears to enforce it, you, my

daughter, even you! though possessed of a man's spirit, and his clear perceptions, would think that virtue bade her live, when it was only fear!"

"Hah!" exclaimed the Marchesa, in a low voice, "What is that you mean? You shall find I have a man's courage also."

"I speak without disguise," replied Schedoni, "my meaning requires none."

The Marchesa mused, and remained silent.

"I have done my duty," resumed Schedoni, at length. "I have pointed out the only way that remains for you to escape dishonour. If my zeal is displeasing — but I have done."

"No, good father, no," said the Marchesa; you mistake the cause of my emotion. New ideas, new prospects, open! — they confuse, they distract me! My mind has not yet attained sufficient strength to encounter them; some woman's weakness still lingers at my heart."

"Pardon my inconfiderate zeal," said Schedoni, with affected humility, "I have been to blame. If your's is a weakness, it is, at least, an amiable one, and, perhaps, deserves to be encouraged, rather than conquered."

"How, father! If it deserves encouragement, it is not a weakness, but a virtue."

"Be it so," said Schedoni, coolly, "the interest I have felt on this subject, has, perhaps, misled my judgment, and has made me unjust. Think no more of it, or, if you do, let it be only to pardon the zeal I have testified."

"It does not deserve pardon, but thanks," replied the Marchesa, "not thanks only, but reward. Good father, I hope it will some time be in my power to prove the sincerity of my words."

The Confessor bowed his head.

"I trust that the services you have rendered me, shall be gratefully repaid — rewarded, I dare not hope, for what benefit could possibly reward a service so vast, as it may, perhaps, be in your power to confer upon my family! What recompence could be balanced against the benefit of having rescued the honour of an ancient house!"

"Your goodness is beyond my thanks, or my desert," said Schedoni, and he was again silent.

The Marchesa wished him to lead her back to the point, from which she herself had deviated, and he seemed determined, that she should lead him thither. She mused, and hesitated. Her mind was not yet familiar with

atrocious guilt; and the crime which Schedoni had suggested, somewhat alarmed her. She feared to think, and still more to name it; yet, so acutely susceptible was her pride, so stern her indignation, and so profound her desire of vengeance, that her mind was tossed as on a tempestuous ocean, and these terrible feelings threatened to overwhelm all the residue of humanity in her heart. Schedoni observed all its progressive movements, and, like a gaunt tyger, lurked in silence, ready to spring forward at the moment of opportunity.

"It is your advice, then, father," resumed the Marchesa, after a long pause,— "it is your opinion — that Ellena." — She hesitated, desirous that Schedoni should anticipate her meaning; but he chose to spare his own delicacy rather than that of the Marchesa.

"You think, then, that this insidious girl deserves" — She paused again, but the Confessor, still silent, seemed to wait with submission for what the Marchesa should deliver.

"I repeat, father, that it is your opinion this girl deserves severe punishment." —

"Undoubtedly," replied Schedoni, "Is it not also your own?"

"That not any punishment can be too severe?" continued the Marchesa. "That justice, equally with necessity, demands — her life? Is not this your opinion too?"

"O! pardon me," said Schedoni, "I may have erred; that only was my opinion; and when I formed it, I was probably too much under the influence of zeal to be just. When the heart is warm, how is it possible that the judgment can be cool."

"It is not then, your opinion, holy father," said the Marchesa with displeasure.

"I do not absolutely say that," replied the Confessor. — But I leave it to your better judgment to decide upon its justness."

As he said this, he rose to depart. The Marchesa was agitated and perplexed, and requested he would stay; but he excused himself by alledging, that it was the hour when he must attend a particular mass.

"Well then, holy father, I will occupy no more of your valuable moments at present; but you know how highly I estimate your advice, and will not refuse, when I shall at some future time request it.

“I cannot refuse to accept an honour,” replied the Confessor, with an air of meekness, “but the subject you allude to is delicate” — .

“And therefore I must value, and require your opinion upon it,” rejoined the Marchesa.

“I would wish you to value your own,” replied Schedoni; “you cannot have a better director.”

“You flatter, father.”

“I only reply, my daughter.”

“On the evening of tomorrow,” said the Marchesa, gravely, “I shall be at vespers in the church of San Nicolo; if you should happen to be there, you will probably see me, when the service is over, and the congregation is departed, in the north cloister. We can there converse on the subject nearest my heart, and without observation.

— Farewell!”

“Peace be with you, daughter! and wisdom council your thoughts!” said Schedoni, “I will not fail to visit San Nicolo.”

He folded his hands upon his breast, bowed his head, and left the apartment with the silent footstep, that indicates weariness and conscious duplicity.

The Marchesa remained in her closet, shaken by ever-varying passions, and everfluctuating opinions; meditating misery for others, and inflicting it only upon herself.

Chapter 1 4

Along the roofs sounds the low peal of Death,
And Conscience trembles to the boding note;
She views his dim form floating o’er the aisles,
She hears mysterious murmurs in the air,
And voices, strange and potent, hint the crime
That dwells in thought, within her secret soul.

The Marchesa repaired, according to her appointment, to the church of San Nicolo, and, ordering her servants to remain with the carriage at a side-door, entered the choir, attended only by her woman.

When vespers had concluded, she lingered till nearly every person had quitted the choir, and then walked through the solitary aisles to the north cloister. Her heart was as heavy as her step; for when is it that peace and evil passions dwell together? As she slowly paced the cloisters, she perceived a monk passing between the pillars, who, as he approached, listed his cowl, and she knew him to be Schedoni.

He instantly observed the agitation of her spirits, and that her purpose was not yet determined, according to his hope. But, though his mind became clouded, his countenance remained unaltered; it was grave and thoughtful. The sternness of his vulture-eye was, however, somewhat softened, and its lids were contracted by subtlety.

The Marchesa bade her woman walk apart, while she conferred with her Confessor.

“This unhappy boy,” said she, when the attendant was at some distance, “How much suffering does his folly inflict upon his family! My good father, I have need of all your advice and consolation. My mind is perpetually haunted by a sense of my misfortune; it has no respite; awake or in my dream, this ungrateful son alike pursues me! The only relief my heart receives is when conversing with you — my only counsellor, my only disinterested friend.”

The Confessor bowed. “The Marchese is, no doubt, equally afflicted with yourself,” said he; “but he is, notwithstanding, much more competent

to advise you on this delicate subject than I am.”

“The Marchese has prejudices, father, as you well know; he is a sensible man, but he is sometimes mistaken, and he is incorrigible in error. He has the faults of a mind that is merely well disposed; he is destitute of the discernment and the energy which would make it great. If it is necessary to adopt a conduct, that departs in the smallest degree from those common rules of morality which he has cherished, without examining them, from his infancy, he is shocked, and shrinks from action. He cannot discriminate the circumstances, that render the same action virtuous or vicious. How then, father, are we to suppose he would approve of the bold inflictions we meditate?”

“Most true!” said the artful Schedoni, with an air of admiration.

“We, therefore, must not consult him,” continued the Marchesa,” left he should now, as formerly, advance and maintain objections, to which we cannot yield. What passes in conversation with you, father, is sacred, it goes no farther.”

“Sacred as a confession!” said Schedoni, crossing himself.

“I know not,” — resumed the Marchesa, and hesitated; “I know not” — she repeated in a yet lower voice, “how this girl may be disposed of; and this it is which distracts my mind.”

“I marvel much at that,” said Schedoni. “With opinions so singularly just, with a mind so accurate, yet so bold as you have displayed, is it possible that you can hesitate as to what is to be done! You, my daughter, will not prove yourself one of those ineffectual declaimers, who can think vigorously, but cannot act so! One way, only, remains for you to pursue, in the present instance; it is the same which your superior sagacity pointed out, and taught me to approve. Is it necessary for me to persuade her, by whom I am convinced! There is only one way.”

“And on that I have been long meditating,” replied the Marchesa, “and, shall I own my weakness? I cannot yet decide.”

“My daughter! can it be possible that you should want courage to soar above vulgar prejudice, in action, though not in opinion?” said Schedoni, who, perceiving that his assistance was necessary to fix her fluctuating mind, gradually began to steal forth from the prudent reserve, in which he had taken shelter.

“If this person was condemned by the law,” he continued, “you would pronounce her sentence to be just; yet you dare not, I am humbled while I repeat it, you dare not dispense justice yourself!”

The Marchesa, after some hesitation, said, “I have not the shield of the law to protect me, father: and the boldest virtue may pause, when it reaches the utmost verge of safety.”

“Never!” replied the Confessor, warmly; “virtue never trembles; it is her glory, and sublimest attribute to be superior to danger; to despise it. The best principle is not virtue till it reaches this elevation.”

A philosopher might, perhaps, have been surprized to hear two persons seriously defining the limits of virtue, at the very moment in which they mediated the most atrocious crime; a man of the world would have considered it to be mere hypocrisy; a supposition which might have disclosed his general knowledge of manners, but would certainly have betrayed his ignorance of the human heart.

The Marchesa was for some time silent and thoughtful, and then repeated deliberately, “I have not the shield of the law to protect me.”

“But you have the shield of the church,” replied Schedoni; “you should not only have protection, but absolution.”

“Absolution! — Does virtue — justice, require absolution, father?”

“When I mentioned absolution for the action which you perceive to be so just and necessary,” replied Schedoni, “I accommodated my speech to vulgar prejudice, and to vulgar weakness. And, forgive me, that since you, my daughter, descended from the loftiness of your spirit to regret the shield of the law, I endeavoured to console you, by offering a shield to conscience. But enough of this; let us return to argument. This girl is put out of the way of committing more mischief, of injuring the peace and dignity of a distinguished family; she is sent to an eternal sleep, before her time. — Where is the crime, where is the evil of this? On the contrary, you perceive, and you have convinced me, that it is only strict justice, only selfdefence.”

The Marchesa was attentive, and the Confessor added, “She is not immortal; and the few years more, that might have been allotted her, she deserves to forfeit, since she would have employed them in cankering the honour of an illustrious house.”

“Speak low, father,” said the Marchesa, though he spoke almost in a whisper; “the cloister appears solitary, yet some person may lurk behind those pillars. Advise me how this business may be managed; I am ignorant of the particular means.”

“There is some hazard in the accomplishment of it, I grant,” replied Schedoni; “I know not whom you may confide in. — The men who make a trade of blood”— “Hush!” said the Marchesa, looking round through the twilight— “a step!”

“It is the Friar’s, yonder, who crosses to the choir,” replied Schedoni.

They were watchful for a few moments, and then he resumed the subject. “Mercenaries ought not to be trusted,” —

“Yet who but mercenaries” — interrupted the Marchesa, and instantly checked herself. But the question thus implied, did not escape the Confessor.

“Pardon my astonishment,” said he, “at the inconsistency, or, what shall I venture to call it? of your opinions! After the acuteness you have displayed on some points, is it possible you can doubt, that principle may both prompt and perform the deed? Why should we hesitate to do what we judge to be right?”

“Ah! reverend father,” said the Marchesa, with emotion, “but where shall we find another like yourself — another, who not only can perceive with justness, but will act with energy.”

Schedoni was silent.

“Such a friend is above all estimation; but where shall we seek him?”

“Daughter!” said the Monk, emphatically, “my zeal for your family is also above all calculation.”

“Good father,” replied the Marchesa, comprehending his full meaning, “I know not how to thank you.”

“Silence is sometimes eloquence,” said Schedoni, significantly.

The Marchesa mused; for her conscience also was eloquent. She tried to overcome its voice, but it would be heard; and sometimes such starts of horrible conviction came over her mind, that she felt as one who, awaking from a dream, opens his eyes only to measure the depth of the precipice on which he totters. In such moments she was astonished, that she had paused for an instant upon a subject so terrible as that of murder. The sophistry of the Confessor, together with the inconsistencies which he had betrayed,

and which had not escaped the notice of the Marchesa, even at the time they were uttered, though she had been unconscious of her own, then became more strongly apparent, and she almost determined to suffer the poor Ellena to live. But returning passion, like a wave that has recoiled from the shore, afterwards came with recollected energy, and swept from her feeble mind the barriers, which reason and conscience had begun to rear.

“This confidence with which you have thought proper to honour me,” said Schedoni, at length, and paused; “This affair, so momentous”— “Ay, this affair,” interrupted the Marchesa, in a hurried manner,— “but when, and where, good father? Being once convinced, I am anxious to have it settled.”

“That must be as occasion offers,” replied the Monk, thoughtfully.— “On the shore of the Adriatic, in the province of Apulia, not far from Manfredonia, is a house that might suit the purpose. It is a lone dwelling on the beach, and concealed from travellers, among the forests, which spread for many miles along the coast.”

“And the people?” said the Marchesa.

“Ay, daughter, or why travel so far as Apulia? It is inhabited by one poor man, who sustains a miserable existence by fishing. I know him, and could unfold the reasons of his solitary life; — but no matter, it is sufficient that I know him.”

“And would trust him, father?”

“Ay, lady, with the life of this girl — though scarcely with my own.”

“How! If he is such a villain he may not be trusted! think further. But now, you objected to a mercenary, yet this man is one!”

“Daughter, he may be trusted, when it is in such a case; he is safe and sure. I have reason to know him.”

“Name your reasons, father.”

The Confessor was silent, and his countenance assumed a very peculiar character; it was more terrible than usual, and overspread with a dark, cadaverous hue of mingled anger and guilt. The Marchesa started involuntarily as, passing by a window, the evening gleam that fell there, discovered it; and for the first time she wished, that she had not committed herself so wholly to his power. But the die was now cast; it was too late to be prudent; and she again demanded his reasons.

“No matter,” said Schedoni, in a stifled voice— “she dies!”

“By his hands?” asked the Marchesa, with strong emotion. “Think, once more, father.”

They were both again silent and thoughtful. The Marchesa, at length, said, “Father, I rely upon your integrity and prudence;” and she laid a very flattering emphasis upon the word integrity. “But I conjure you to let this business be finished quickly, suspense is to me the purgatory of this world, and not to trust the accomplishment of it to a second person.” She paused, and then added, “I would not willingly owe so vast a debt of obligation to any other than yourself.”

“Your request, daughter, that I would not confide this business to a second person,” said Schedoni, with displeasure, “cannot be accorded to. Can you suppose, that I, myself”— “Can I doubt that principle may both prompt and perform the deed,” interrupted the Marchesa with quickness, and anticipating his meaning, while she retorted upon him his former words. “Why should we hesitate to do what we judge to be right?”

The silence of Schedoni alone indicated his displeasure, which the Marchesa immediately understood.

“Consider, good father,” she added significantly, “how painful it must be to me, to owe to infinite an obligation to a stranger, or to any other than so highly valued a friend as yourself.”

Schedoni, while he detected her meaning, and persuaded himself that he despised the flattery, with which she so thinly veiled it, unconsciously suffered his self-love to be soothed by the compliment. He bowed his head, in signal of consent to her wish.

“Avoid violence, if that be possible,” she added, immediately comprehending him, “but let her die quickly! The punishment is due to the crime.”

The Marchesa happened, as she said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over a Confessional, where appeared, in black letters, these awful words, “God hears thee!” It appeared an awful warning. Her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. Schedoni was too much engaged by his own thoughts to observe, or understand her silence. She soon recovered herself; and considering that this was a common inscription for Confessionals, disregarded what she had at first considered

as a peculiar admonition; yet some moments elapsed, before she could renew the subject.

“You was speaking of a place, father,” resumed the Marchesa— “you mentioned a”— “Ay,” muttered the Confessor, still musing,— “in a chamber of that house there is”— “What noise is that?” said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again.

“What mournful music is that?” said the Marchesa in a faultering voice, “It was touched by a fearful hand! Vespers were over long ago!”

“Daughter,” said Schedoni, somewhat sternly, “you said you had a man’s courage. Alas! you have a woman’s heart.”

“Excuse me, father; I know not why I feel this agitation, but I will command it. That chamber?” —

“In that chamber,” resumed the Confessor, “is a secret door, constructed long ago.” —

“And for what purpose constructed?” said the fearful Marchesa.

“Pardon me, daughter; ‘tis sufficient that it is there; we will make a good use of it. Through that door — in the night — when she sleeps”— “I comprehend you,” said the Marchesa, “I comprehend you. But why, you have your reasons, no doubt, but why the necessity of a secret door in a house which you say is so lonely — inhabited by only one person?”

“A passage leads to the sea,” continued Schedoni, without replying to the question. “There, on the shore, when darkness covers it; there, plunged amidst the waves, no stain shall hint of”— “Hark!” interrupted the Marchesa, starting, “that note again!”

The organ sounded saintly from the choir, and paused, as before. In the next moment, a slow chaunting of voices was heard, mingling with the rising peal, in a strain particularly melancholy and solemn.

“Who is dead? said the Marchesa, changing countenance; “it is a requiem!”

“Peace be with the departed!” exclaimed Schedoni, and crossed himself; “Peace rest with his soul!”

“Hark! to that chaunt!” said the Marchesa, in a trembling voice; “it is a first requiem; the soul has but just quitted the body!”

They listened in silence. The Marchesa was much affected; her complexion varied at every instant; her breathings were short and

interrupted, and she even shed a few tears, but they were those of despair, rather than of sorrow. “That body is now cold,” said she to herself, “which but an hour ago was warm and animated! Those fine senses are closed in death! And to this condition would I reduce a being like myself! Oh, wretched, wretched mother! to what has the folly of a son reduced thee!”

She turned from the Confessor, and walked alone in the cloister. Her agitation encreased; she wept without restraint, for her veil and the evening gloom concealed her, and her sighs were lost amidst the music of the choir.

Schedoni was scarcely less disturbed, but his were emotions of apprehension and contempt. “Behold, what is woman!” said he— “The slave of her passions, the dupe of her senses! When pride and revenge speak in her breast, she defies obstacles, and laughs at crimes! Assail but her senses, let music, for instance, touch some feeble chord of her heart, and echo to her fancy, and lo! all her perceptions change: — she shrinks from the act she had but an instant before believed meritorious, yields to some new emotion, and sinks — the victim of a sound! O, weak and contemptible being!”

The Marchesa, at least, seemed to justify his observations. The desperate passions, which had resisted every remonstrance of reason and humanity, were vanquished only by other passions; and, her senses touched by the mournful melody of music, and her superstitious fears awakened by the occurrence of a requiem for the dead, at the very moment when she was planning murder, she yielded, for a while, to the united influence of pity and terror. Her agitation did not subside; but she returned to the Confessor.

“We will converse on this business at some future time,” said she; “at present, my spirits are disordered. Good night, father! Remember me in your orisons.”

“Peace be with you, lady!” said the Confessor, bowing gravely, “You shall not be forgotten. Be resolute, and yourself.”

The Marchesa beckoned her woman to approach, when, drawing her veil closer, and leaning upon the attendant’s arm, she left the cloister. Schedoni remained for a moment on the spot, looking after her, till her figure was lost in the gloom of the long perspective; he then, with thoughtful steps,

quitted the cloister by another door. He was disappointed, but he did not despair.

Chapter 1 5

“The lonely mountains o’er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament!
From haunted spring, and dale,
Edg’d with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thicket mourn.”
Milton.

While the Marchesa and the Monk were thus meditating conspiracies against Ellena, she was still in the Ursaline convent on the lake of Celano. In this obscure sanctuary, indisposition, the consequence of the long and severe anxiety she had suffered, compelled her to remain. A fever was on her spirits, and an universal lassitude prevailed over her frame; which became the more effectual, from her very solicitude to conquer it. Every approaching day she hoped she should be able to pursue her journey homeward, yet everyday found her as incapable of travelling as the last, and the second week was already gone, before the fine air of Celano, and the tranquillity of her asylum, began to revive her. Vivaldi, who was her daily visitor at the grate of the convent; and who, watching over her with intense solicitude, had hitherto forbore to renew a subject, which, by agitating her spirits, might affect her health, now, that her health strengthened, ventured gradually to mention his fears lest the place of her retreat should be discovered, and left he yet might irrecoverably lose her, unless she would approve of their speedy marriage. At every visit he now urged the subject, represented the dangers that surrounded them, and repeated his arguments and entreaties; for now, when he believed that time was pressing forward fatal evils, he could no longer attend to the delicate scruples, that bade him be sparing in entreaty. Ellena, had she obeyed the dictates of her heart, would have rewarded his attachment and his services, by a frank approbation of his proposal; but the objections which reason

exhibited against such a concession, she could neither overcome or disregard.

Vivaldi, after he had again represented their present dangers, and claimed the promise of her hand, received in the presence of her deceased relative, Signora Bianchi, gently ventured to remind her, that an event as sudden as lamentable, had first deferred their nuptials, and that if Bianchi had lived, Ellena would have bestowed, long since, the vows he now solicited. Again he intreated her, by every sacred and tender recollection, to conclude the fearful uncertainty of their fate, and to bestow upon him the right to protect her, before they ventured forth from this temporary asylum.

Ellena immediately admitted the sacredness of the promise, which she had formerly given, and assured Vivaldi that she considered herself as indissolubly bound to wed him as if it had been given at the altar; but she objected to a confirmation of it, till his family should seem willing to receive her for their daughter; when, forgetting the injuries she had received from them, she would no longer refuse their alliance. She added, that Vivaldi ought to be more jealous of the dignity of the woman, whom he honoured with his esteem, than to permit her making a greater concession.

Vivaldi felt the full force of this appeal; he recollected, with anguish, circumstances of which she was happily ignorant, but which served to strengthen with him the justness of her reproof. And, as the aspersions which the Marchese had thrown upon her name, crowded to his memory, pride and indignation swelled his heart, and so far overcame apprehension of hazard, that he formed a momentary resolution to abandon every other consideration, to that of asserting the respect which was due to Ellena, and to forbear claiming her for his wife, till his family should make acknowledgment of their error, and willingly admit her in the rank of their child. But this resolution was as transient as plausible; other considerations, and former fears pressed upon him. He perceived the strong improbability, that they would ever make a voluntary sacrifice of their pride to his love; or yield mistakes, nurtured by prejudice and by willing indulgence, to truth and a sense of justice. In the mean time, the plans, which would be formed for separating him from Ellena, might succeed, and he should lose her for ever. Above all, it appeared, that the

best, the only method, which remained for confuting the daring aspersions that had affected her name, was, by proving the high respect he himself felt for her, and presenting her to the world in the sacred character of his wife. These considerations quickly determined him to persevere in his suit; but it was impossible to urge them to Ellena, since the circumstances they must unfold, would not only shock her delicacy and afflict her heart, but would furnish the proper pride she cherished with new arguments against approaching a family, who had thus grossly insulted her.

While these considerations occupied him, the emotion they occasioned did not escape Ellena's observation; it encreased, as he reflected on the impossibility of urging them to her, and on the hopelessness of prevailing with her, unless he could produce new arguments in his favour. His unaffected distress awakened all her tenderness and gratitude; she asked herself whether she ought any longer to assert her own rights, when by doing so, she sacrificed the peace of him, who had incurred so much danger for her sake, who had rescued her from severe oppression, and had so long and so well proved the strength of his affection.

As she applied these questions, she appeared to herself an unjust and selfish being, unwilling to make any sacrifice for the tranquillity of him, who had given her liberty, even at the risk of his life. Her very virtues, now that they were carried to excess, seemed to her to border upon vices; her sense of dignity, appeared to be narrow pride; her delicacy weakness; her moderated affection cold ingratitude; and her circumspection, little less than prudence degenerated into meanness.

Vivaldi, as apt in admitting hope as fear, immediately perceived her resolution beginning to yield, and he urged again every argument which was likely to prevail over it. But the subject was too important for Ellena, to be immediately decided upon; he departed with only a saint assurance of encouragement; and she forbade him to return till the following day, when she would acquaint him with her final determination.

This interval was, perhaps, the most painful he had ever experienced. Alone, and on the banks of the lake, he passed many hours in alternate hope and fear, in endeavouring to anticipate the decision, on which seemed suspended all his future peace, and abruptly recoiling from it, as often as imagination represented it to be adverse.

Of the walls, that enclosed her, he scarcely ever lost sight; the view of them seemed to cherish his hopes, and, while he gazed upon their rugged surface, Ellena alone was pictured on his fancy; till his anxiety to learn her disposition towards him arose to agony, and he would abruptly leave the spot. But an invisible spell still seemed to attract him back again, and evening found him pacing flowly beneath the shade of those melancholy boundaries that concealed his Ellena.

Her day was not more tranquil. Whenever prudence and decorous pride forbade her to become a member of the Vivaldi family, as constantly did gratitude, affection, irresistible tenderness plead the cause of Vivaldi. The memory of past times returned; and the very accents of the deceased seemed to murmur from the grave, and command her to fulfil the engagement, which had foothed the dying moments of Bianchi.

On the following morning, Vivaldi was at the gates of the convent, long before the appointed hour, and he lingered in dreadful impatience, till the clock struck the signal for his entrance.

Ellena was already in the parlour; she was alone, and rose in disorder on his approach. His steps faultered, his voice was lost, and his eyes only, which he fixed with a wild earnestness on her’s, had power to enquire her resolution. She observed the paleness of his countenance, and his emotion, with a mixture of concern and approbation. At that moment, he perceived her smile, and hold out her hand to him; and fear, care, and doubt vanished at once from his mind. He was incapable of thanking her, but sighed deeply as he pressed her hand, and, overcome with joy, supported himself against the grate that separated them.

“You are, then, indeed my own!” said Vivaldi, at length recovering his voice— “We shall be no more parted — you are mine for ever! But your countenance changes! O heaven! surely I have not mistaken! Speak! I conjure you, Ellena; relieve me from these terrible doubts!”

“I am yours, Vivaldi,” replied Ellena faintly, “oppression can part us no more.”

She wept, and drew her veil over her eyes.

“What mean those tears?” said Vivaldi, with alarm. “Ah! Ellena,” he added in a softened voice, “should tears mingle with such moments as these! Should your tears fall upon my heart now! They tell me, that your

consent is given with reluctance — with grief; that your love is feeble, your heart — yes Ellena! that your whole heart is no longer mine!”

“They ought rather to tell you,” replied Ellena, “that it is all your own; that my affection never was more powerful than now, when it can overcome every consideration with respect to your family, and urge me to a step which must degrade me in their eyes, — and, I fear, in my own.”

“O retract that cruel assertion!” interrupted Vivaldi, “Degrade you in your own! — degrade you in their eyes!” He was much agitated; his countenance was flushed, and an air of more than usual dignity dilated his figure.

“The time shall come, my Ellena,” he added with energy, “when they shall understand your worth, and acknowledge your excellence. O! that I were an Emperor, that I might shew to all the world how much I love and honour you!”

Ellena gave him her hand, and, withdrawing her veil, smiled on him through her tears, with gratitude and reviving courage.

Before Vivaldi retired to the convent, he obtained her consent to consult with an aged Benedictine, whom he had engaged in his interest, as to the hour at which the marriage might be solemnized with least observation. The priest informed him, that at the conclusion of the vesper-service, he should be disengaged for several hours; and that, as the first hour after sun-set was more solitary than almost any other, the brotherhood being then assembled in the refectory, he would meet Vivaldi and Ellena at that time, in a chapel on the edge of the lake, a short distance from the Benedictine convent, to which it belonged, and celebrate their nuptials.

With this proposal, Vivaldi immediately returned to Ellena; when it was agreed that the party should assemble at the hour mentioned by the priest. Ellena, who had thought it proper to mention her intention to the Abbess of the Urfalines, was, by her permission, to be attended by a lay-sister; and Vivaldi was to meet her without the walls, and conduct her to the altar. When the ceremony was over, the fugitives were to embark in a vessel, hired for the purpose, and, crossing the lake, proceed towards Naples. Vivaldi again withdrew to engage a boat, and Ellena to prepare for the continuance of her journey.

As the appointed hour drew near, her spirits sunk, and she watched with melancholy foreboding, the sun retiring amidst stormy clouds, and his rays

fading from the highest points of the mountains, till the gloom of twilight prevailed over the scene. She then left her apartment, took a grateful leave of the hospitable Abbess, and, attended by the lay-sister, quitted the convent.

Immediately without the gate she was met by Vivaldi, whose look, as he put her arm within his, gently reproached her for the dejection of her air.

They walked in silence towards the chapel of San Sebastian. The scene appeared to sympathize with the spirits of Ellena. It was a gloomy evening, and the lake, which broke in dark waves upon the shore, mingled its hollow sounds with those of the wind, that bowed the lofty pines, and swept in gusts among the rocks. She observed with alarm the heavy thunder clouds, that rolled along the sides of the mountains, and the birds circling swiftly over the waters, and scudding away to their nests among the cliffs; and she noticed to Vivaldi, that, as a storm seemed approaching, she wished to avoid crossing the lake. He immediately ordered Paulo to dismiss the boat, and to be in waiting with a carriage, that, if the weather should become clear, they might not be detained longer than was otherwise necessary.

As they approached the chapel, Ellena fixed her eyes on the mournful cypresses which waved over it, and sighed. “Those,” she said, “are funereal mementos — not such as should grace the altar of marriage! Vivaldi, I could be superstitious. — Think you not they are portentous of future misfortune? But forgive me; my spirits are weak.”

Vivaldi endeavoured to soothe her mind, and tenderly reproached her for the sadness she indulged. Thus they entered the chapel. Silence, and a kind of gloomy sepulchral light, prevailed within. The venerable Benedictine, with a brother, who was to serve as guardian to the bride, were already there, but they were kneeling, and engaged in prayer.

Vivaldi led the trembling Ellena to the altar, where they waited till the Benedictines should have finished, and these were moments of great emotion. She often looked round the dusky chapel, in fearful expectation of discovering some lurking observer; and, though she knew it to be very improbable, that any person in this neighbourhood could be interested in interrupting the ceremony, her mind involuntarily admitted the possibility of it. Once, indeed, as her eyes glanced over a casement, Ellena fancied she distinguished a human face laid close to the glass, as if to watch what

was passing within; but when she looked again, the apparition was gone. Not withstanding this, she listened with anxiety to the uncertain sounds without, and sometimes started as the surges of the lake dashed over the rock below, almost believing she heard the steps and whispering voices of men in the avenues of the chapel. She tried, however, to subdue apprehension, by considering, that if this were true, an harmless curiosity might have attracted some inhabitants of the convent hither, and her spirits became more composed, till she observed a door open a little way, and a dark countenance looking from behind it. In the next instant it retreated, and the door was closed.

Vivaldi, who perceived Ellena's complexion change, as she laid her hand on his arm, followed her eyes to the door, but, no person appearing, he enquired the cause of her alarm.

"We are observed," said Ellena, "some person appeared at that door!"

"And if we are observed, my love," replied Vivaldi, "who is there in this neighbourhood whose observation we can have reason to fear? Good father, dispatch," he added, turning to the priest, "you forget that we are waiting."

The officiating priest made a signal that he had nearly concluded his orison; but the other brother rose immediately, and spoke with Vivaldi, who desired that the doors of the chapel might be fastened to prevent intrusion.

"We dare not bar the gates of this holy temple," replied the Benedictine, "it is a sanctuary, and never may be closed."

"But you will allow me to repress idle curiosity," said Vivaldi, "and to enquire who watches beyond that door? The tranquillity of this lady demands thus much."

The brother assented, and Vivaldi stepped to the door; but perceiving no person in the obscure passage beyond it, he returned with lighter steps to the altar, from which the officiating priest now rose.

"My children," said he, "I have made you wait, — but an old man's prayers are not less important than a young man's vows, though this is not a moment when you will admit that truth."

"I will allow whatever you please, good father," replied Vivaldi, "if you will administer those vows, without further delay; — time presses."

The venerable priest took his station at the altar, and opened the book. Vivaldi placed himself on his right hand, and with looks of anxious love, endeavoured to encourage Ellena, who, with a dejected countenance, which her veil but ill concealed, and eyes fixed on the ground, leaned on her attendant sister. The figure and homely features of this sister; the tall stature and harsh visage of the brother, clothed in the gray habit of his order; the silvered head and placid physiognomy of the officiating priest, enlightened by a gleam from the lamp above, opposed to the youthful grace and spirit of Vivaldi, and the milder beauty and sweetness of Ellena, formed altogether a group worthy of the pencil.

The priest had begun the ceremony, when a noise from without again alarmed Ellena, who observed the door once more cautiously opened, and a man bend forward his gigantic figure from behind it. He carried a torch, and its glare, as the door gradually unclosed, discovered other persons in the passage beyond, looking forward over his shoulder into the chapel. The fierceness of their air, and the strange peculiarity of their dress, instantly convinced Ellena that they were not inhabitants of the Benedictine convent, but some terrible messengers of evil, Her half-stifled shriek alarmed Vivaldi, who caught her before she fell to the ground; but, as he had not faced the door, he did not understand the occasion of her terror, till the sudden rush of footsteps made him turn, when he observed several men armed, and very singularly habited, advancing towards the altar.

“Who is he that intrudes upon this sanctuary?” he demanded sternly, while he half rose from the ground where Ellena had sunk.

“What sacrilegious footsteps,” cried the priest, “thus rudely violate this holy place?”

Ellena was now insensible; and the men continuing to advance, Vivaldi drew his sword to protect her.

The priest and Vivaldi now spoke together, but the words of neither could be distinguished, when a voice, tremendous from its loudness, like bursting thunder, dissipated the cloud of mystery.

“You Vincentio di Vivaldi, and of Naples,” it said, “and you Ellena di Rosalba, of Villa Altieri, we summon you to surrender, in the name of the most holy Inquisition!”

“The Inquisition!” exclaimed Vivaldi, scarcely believing what he heard. “Here is some mistake!”

The official repeated the summons, without deighing to reply.

Vivaldi, yet more astonished, added, “Do not imagine you can so far impose upon my credulity, as that I can believe myself to have fallen within the cognizance of the Inquisition.”

“You may believe what you please, Signor,” replied the chief officer, “but you and that lady are our prisoners.”

“Begone, impostor!” said Vivaldi, springing from the ground, where he had supported Ellena, “or my sword shall teach you to repent your audacity!”

“Do you insult an officer of the Inquisition!” exclaimed the ruffian. “That holy Community will inform you what you incur by resisting it’s mandate.”

The priest interrupted Vivaldi’s retort, “If you are really officers of that tremendous tribunal,” he said, “produce some proof of your office. Remember this place is sanctified, and tremble for the consequence of imposition. You do wrong to believe, that I will deliver up to you persons who have taken refuge here, without an unequivocal demand from that dread power.”

“Produce your form of summons,” demanded Vivaldi, with haughty impatience.

“It is here,” replied the official, drawing forth a black scroll, which he delivered to the priest, “Read, and be satisfied!”

The Benedictine started the instant he beheld the scroll, but he received and deliberately examined it. The kind of parchment, the impression of the seal, the particular form of words, the private signals, understood only by the initiated — all announced this to be a true instrument of arrestation from the Holy Office. The scroll dropped from his hand, and he fixed his eyes, with surprize and unutterable compassion, upon Vivaldi, who stooped to reach the parchment, when it was snatched by the official.

“Unhappy young man!” said the priest, “it is too true; you are summoned by that awful power, to answer to your crime, and I am spared from the commission of a terrible offence!”

Vivaldi appeared thunderstruck. “For what crime, holy father, am I called upon to answer? This is some bold and artful imposture, since it can delude even you! What crime — what offence?”

“I did not think you had been thus hardened in guilt!” replied the priest, “Forbear! add not the audacity of falsehood, to the headlong passions of youth. You understand too well your crime.”

“Falsehood!” retorted Vivaldi, “But your years, old man, and those sacred vestments, protect you. For these ruffians, who have dared to implicate that innocent victim,” pointing to Ellena, “in the charge, they shall have justice from my vengeance.”

“Forbear! forbear!” said the priest, seizing his arm, “have pity on yourself and on her. Know you not the punishment you incur from resistance?”

“I know nor care not,” replied Vivaldi, “but I will desend Ellena di Rosalba to the last moment. Let them approach if they dare.”

“It is on her, on her who lies senseless at your feet,” said the priest, “that they will wreck their vengeance for these insults; on her — the partner of your guilt.”

“The partner of my guilt!” exclaimed Vivaldi, with mingled astonishment and indignation— “of my guilt!”

“Rash young man! does not the very veil she wears betray it? I marvel how it could pass my observation!”

“You have stolen a nun from her convent,” said the chief officer, “and must answer for the crime. When you have wearied yourself with these heroics, Signor, you must go with us; our patience is wearied already.”

Vivaldi observed, for the first time, that Ellena was shrouded in a nun’s veil; it was the one which Olivia had lent, to conceal her from the notice of the Abbess, on the night of her departure from San Stefano, and which, in the hurry of that departure, she had forgotten to leave with the nun. During this interval, her mind had been too entirely occupied by cares and apprehension to allow her once to notice, that the veil she wore was other than her usual one; but it had been too well observed by some of the Ursaline sisters.

Though he knew not how to account for the circumstance of the veil, Vivaldi began to perceive others which gave colour to the charge brought against him, and to ascertain the wide circumference of the share that was spread around him. He fancied, too, that he perceived the hand of Schedoni employed upon it, and that his dark spirit was now avenging itself for the exposure he had suffered in the church of the Spirito Santo, and for all the

consequent mortifications. As Vivaldi was ignorant of the ambitious hopes which the Marchesa had encouraged in father Schedoni, he did not see the improbability, that the Confessor would have dared to hazard her favour by this arrest of her son; much less could he suspect, that Schedoni, having done so, had secrets in his possession, which enabled him safely to defy her resentment, and bind her in silence to his decree.

With the conviction, that Schedoni's was the master-hand that directed the present manoeuvre, Vivaldi stood aghast, and gazing in silent unutterable anguish on Ellena, who, as she began to revive, stretched forth her helpless hands, and called upon him to save her, "Do not leave me," said she in accents the most supplicating, "I am safe while you are with me."

At the sound of her voice, he started from his trance, and turning fiercely upon the ruffians, who stood in sullen watchfulness around, bade them depart, or prepare for his fury. At the same instant they all drew their swords, and the shrieks of Ellena, and the supplications of the officiating priest, were lost amidst the tumult of the combatants.

Vivaldi, most unwilling to shed blood, stood merely on the defensive, till the violence of his antagonists compelled him to exert all his skill and strength. He then disabled one of the ruffians; but his skill was insufficient to repel the other two, and he was nearly overcome, when steps were heard approaching, and Paulo rushed into the chapel. Perceiving his master beset, he drew his sword, and came furiously to his aid. He fought with unconquerable audacity and fierceness, till nearly at the moment when his adversary fell, other ruffians entered the chapel, and Vivaldi with his faithful servant was wounded, and, at length, disarmed.

Ellena, who had been withheld from throwing herself between the combatants, now, on observing that Vivaldi was wounded, renewed her efforts for liberty, accompanied by such agony of supplication and complaint, as almost moved to pity the hearts of the surrounding ruffians.

Disabled by his wounds, and also held by his enemies, Vivaldi was compelled to witness her distress and danger, without a hope of rescuing her. In frantic accents he called upon the old priest to protect her.

"I dare not oppose the orders of the Inquisition," replied the Benedictine, "even if I had sufficient strength to defy it's officials. Know you not, unhappy young man, that it is death to resist them?"

“Death!” exclaimed Ellena, “death!”

“Ay lady, too surely so!”

“Signor, it would have been well for you,” said one of the officers, “if you had taken my advice; you will pay dearly for what you have done,” pointing to the ruffian, who lay severely wounded on the ground.

“My master will not have that to pay for, friend,” said Paulo, “for if you must know, that is a piece of my work; and, if my arms were now at liberty, I would try if I could not match it among one of you, though I am so slashed.”

“Peace, good Paulo! the deed was mine,” said Vivaldi; then addressing the official, “For myself I care not, I have done my duty — but for her! — Can you look upon her, innocent and helpless as she is, and not relent! Can you, will you, barbarians! drag her, also, to destruction, upon a charge too so daringly false?”

“Our relenting would be of no service to her,” replied the official, “we must do our duty. Whether the charge is true or false, she must answer to it before her judges.”

“What charge?” demanded Ellena.

“The charge of having broken your nun’s vows,” replied the priest.

Ellena raised her eyes to heaven; “Is it even so!” she exclaimed.

“You hear she acknowledges the crime,” said one of the ruffians.

“She acknowledges no crime,” replied Vivaldi; “she only perceives the extent of the malice that persecutes her. O! Ellena, must I then abandon you to their power! leave you for ever!”

The agony of this thought reanimated him with momentary strength; he burst from the grasp of the officials, and once more clasped Ellena to his bosom, who, unable to speak, wept, with the anguish of a breaking heart, as her head sunk upon his shoulder. The ruffians around them so far respected their grief, that, for a moment, they did not interrupt it.

Vivaldi’s exertion was transient; faint from sorrow, and from loss of blood, he became unable to support himself, and was compelled again to relinquish Ellena.

“Is there no help?” said she, with agony; “will you suffer him to expire on the ground?”

The priest directed, that he should be conveyed to the Benedictine convent, where his wounds might be examined, and medical aid

administered. The disabled ruffians were already carried thither; but Vivaldi refused to go, unless Ellena might accompany him. It was contrary to the rules of the place, that a woman should enter it, and before the priest could reply, his Benedictine brother eagerly said, that they dared not transgress the law of the convent.

Ellena's fears for Vivaldi entirely overcame those for herself, and she entreated, that he would suffer himself to be conveyed to the Benedictines; but he could not be prevailed with to leave her. The officials, however, prepared to separate them; Vivaldi in vain urged the useless cruelty of dividing him from Ellena, if, as they had hinted, she also was to be carried to the Inquisition; and as ineffectually demanded, whither they really designed to take her.

"We shall take good care of her, Signor," said an officer, "that is sufficient for you. It signifies nothing whether you are going the same way, you must not go together."

"Why, did you ever hear, Signor, of arrested persons being suffered to remain in company?" said another ruffian, "Fine plots they would lay; I warrant they would not contradict each other's evidence a tittle."

"You shall not separate me from my master, though," vociferated Paulo; "I demand to be sent to the Inquisition with him, or to the devil, but all is one for that."

"Fair and softly," replied the officer; "you shall be sent to the Inquisition first, and to the devil afterwards; you must be tried before you are condemned."

"But waste no more time," he added to his followers, and pointing to Ellena, "away with her."

As he said this, they listed Ellena in their arms. "Let me loose!" cried Paulo, when he saw they were carrying her from the place, "let me loose, I say!" and the violence of his struggles burst asunder the cords which held him; a vain release, for he was instantly seized again.

Vivaldi, already exhausted by the loss of blood and the anguish of his mind, made, however, a last effort to save her; he tried to raise himself from the ground, but a sudden film came over his sight, and his senses forsook him, while yet the name of Ellena faultered on his lips.

As they bore her from the chapel, she continued to call upon Vivaldi, and alternately to supplicate that she might once more behold him, and

take one last adieu. The ruffians were inexorable, and she heard his voice no more, for he no longer heard — no longer was able to reply to her's.

"O! once again!" she cried in agony, "One word, Vivaldi! Let me hear the sound of your voice yet once again!" But it was silent.

As she quitted the chapel, with eyes still bent towards the spot where he lay, she exclaimed, in the piercing accents of despair, "Farewel, Vivaldi! — O! for ever — ever, farewel!"

The tone, in which she pronounced the last "farewel!" was so touching, that even the cold heart of the priest could not resist it; but he impatiently wiped away the few tears, that rushed into his eyes, before they were observed. Vivaldi heard it — it seemed to arouse him from death! — he heard her mournful voice for the last time, and, turning his eyes, saw her veil floating away through the portal of the chapel. All suffering, all effort, all resistance were vain; the ruffians bound him, bleeding as he was, and conveyed him to the Benedictine convent, together with the wounded Paulo, who unceasingly vociferated on the way thither, "I demand to be sent to the Inquision! I demand to be sent to the Inquision!"

Chapter 1 6

“In earliest Greece to thee, with partial choice,
The grief full Muse address’d her infant tongue;
The maids and matrons on her awful voice,
Silent and pale, in wild amazement hung.”
Collins’s Ode to Fear.

The wounds of Vivaldi, and of his servant, were pronounced, by the Benedictine who had examined and dressed them, to be not dangerous, but those of one of the ruffians were declared doubtful. Some few of the brothers displayed much compassion and kindness towards the prisoners; but the greater part seemed fearful of expressing any degree of sympathy for persons who had fallen within the cognizance of the Holy Office, and even kept aloof from the chamber, in which they were confined. To this self-restriction, however, they were not long subjected; for Vivaldi and Paulo were compelled to begin their journey as soon as some short rest had sufficiently revived them. They were placed in the same carriage, but the presence of two officers prevented all interchange of conjecture as to the destination of Ellena, and with respect to the immediate occasion of their misfortune. Paulo, indeed, now and then hazarded a surmise, and did not scruple to affirm, that the Abbess of San Stesano was their chief enemy; that the Carmelite friars, who had overtaken them on the road, were her agents; and that, having traced their route, they had given intelligence where Vivaldi and Ellena might be found.

“I guessed we never should escape the Abbess,” said Paulo, “though I would not disturb you, Signor mio, nor the poor lady Ellena, by saying so. But your Abbesses are as cunning as Inquisitors, and are so fond of governing, that they had rather, like them, send a man to the devil, than send him no where.”

Vivaldi gave Paulo a significant look, which was meant to repress his imprudent loquacity, and then sunk again into silence and the abstractions of deep grief. The officers, mean while, never spoke, but were observant of all that Paulo said, who perceived their watchfulness, but because he

despised them as spies, he thoughtlessly despised them also as enemies, and was so far from concealing opinions, which they might repeat to his prejudice, that he had a pride in exaggerating them, and in daring the worst, which the exasperated tempers of these men, shut up in the same carriage with him, and compelled to hear whatever he chose to say against the institution to which they belonged, could effect. Whenever Vivaldi, recalled from his abstractions by some bold assertion, endeavoured to check his imprudence, Paulo was contented to solace his conscience, instead of protecting himself, by saying, “It is their own fault; they would thrust themselves into my company; let them have enough of it; and, if ever they take me before their reverences, the Inquisitors, they shall have enough for it too. I will play up such a tune in the Inquisition as is not heard there every day. I will jingle all the bells on their fool’s caps, and tell them a little honest truth, if they make me smart for it ever so.”

Vivaldi, aroused once more, and seriously alarmed for the consequences which honest Paulo might be drawing upon himself, now insisted on his silence, and was obeyed.

They travelled during the whole night, stopping only to change horses. At every post house, Vivaldi looked for a carriage that might inclose Ellena, but none appeared, nor any found of wheels told him that she followed.

With the morning light he perceived the dome of St. Peter, appearing faintly over the plains that surrounded Rome, and he understood, for the first time, that he was going to the prisons of the Inquisition in that city. The travellers descended upon the Campania, and then rested for a few hours at a small town on its borders.

When they again set forward, Vivaldi perceived that the guard was changed, the officer who had remained with him in the apartment of the inn only appearing among the new faces which surrounded him. The dress and manners of these men differed considerably from those of the other. Their conduct was more temperate, but their countenances expressed a darker cruelty, mingled with a sly demureness, and a solemn self-importance, that announced them at once as belonging to the Inquisition. They were almost invariably silent; and when they did speak, it was only in a few sententious words. To the abounding questions of Paulo, and the few earnest entreaties of his master, to be informed of the place of Ellena’s

destination, they made not the least reply; and listened to all the flourishing speeches of the servant against Inquisitors and the Holy Office with the most profound gravity.

Vivaldi was struck with the circumstance of the guard being changed, and still more with the appearance of the party, who now composed it. When he compared the manners of the late, with those of the present guard, he thought he discovered in the first the mere ferocity of ruffians; but in the latter, the principles of cunning and cruelty, which seemed particularly to characterize Inquisitors; he was inclined to believe, that a stratagem had enthralled him, and that now, for the first time, he was in the custody of the Holy Office.

It was near midnight when the prisoners entered the Porto del Popolo, and found themselves in the midst of the Carnival at Rome. The Corso, through which they were obliged to pass, was crowded with gay carriages and marks, with processions of musicians, monks, and mountebanks, was lighted up with innumerable flambeaux, and resounded with the heterogeneous ratthing of wheels, the music of serenaders, and the jokes and laughter of the revellers, as they sportively threw about their sugar-plumbs. The heat of the weather made it necessary to have the windows of the coach open; and the prisoners, therefore, saw all that passed without. It was a scene, which contrasted cruelly with the feelings and circumstances of Vivaldi; torn as he was from her he most loved, in dreadful uncertainty as to her fate, and himself about to be brought before a tribunal, whose mysterious and terrible proceedings appalled even the bravest spirits. Altogether, this was one of the most striking examples, which the chequer-work of human life could shew, or human feelings endure, Vivaldi sickened as he looked upon the splendid crowd, while the carriage made its way slowly with it; but Paulo, as he gazed, was reminded of the Corso of Naples, such as it appeared at the time of Carnival, and, comparing the present scene with his native one, he found fault with every thing he beheld. The dresses were tasteless, the equipages without splendor, the people without spirit; yet, such was the propensity of his heart to sympathize with whatever was gay, that, for some moments, he forgot that he was a prisoner on his way to the Inqusition; almost forgot that he was a Neapolitan; and, while he exclaimed against the dullness of a Roman carnival, would have sprung through the carriage window to partake of its

spirit, if his fetters and his wouries had not withheld him. A deep sigh from Vivaldi recalled his wandering imagination; and, when he noticed again the sorrow in his master’s look, all his lightly joyous spirits fled.

“My maestro, my dear maestro!” — he said, and knew not how to finish what he wished to express.

At that moment they passed the theatre of San Carlo, the doors of which were thronged with equipages, where Roman ladies, in their gala habits, courtiers in their fantastic dresses, and makes of all descriptions, were hastening to the opera. In the midst of this gay bustle, where the carriage was unable to proceed, the officials of the Inquisition looked on in solemn silence, not a muscle of their features relaxing in sympathy, or yielding a single wrinkle of the self-importance that lifted their brows; and, while they regarded with secret contempt those, who could be thus lightly pleased, the people, in return, more wisely, perhaps, regarded with contempt the proud moroseness, that refused to partake of innocent pleasures, because they were trifling, and shrunk from countenances furrowed with the sternness of cruelty. But, when their office was distinguished, part of the crowd pressed back from the carriage in affright, while another part advanced with curiosity; though, as the majority retreated, space was left for the carriage to move on. After quitting the Corso, it proceeded for some miles through dark and deserted streets, where only here and there a lamp, hung on high before the image of a saint, shed it’s glimmering light, and where a melancholy and universal silence prevailed. At intervals, indeed, the moon, as the clouds passed away, shewed, for a moment, some of those mighty monuments of Rome’s eternal name, those sacred ruins, those gigantic skeletons, which once enclosed a soul, whose energies governed a world! Even Vivaldi could not behold with indifference the grandeur of these reliques, as the rays fell upon the hoary walls and columns, or pass among these scenes of ancient story, without feeling a melancholy awe, a sacred enthusiasm, that withdrew him from himself. But the illusion was transient; his own missortunes pressed too heavily upon him to be long unfelt, and his enthusiasm vanished like the moonlight.

A returning gleam lighted up, soon after, the rude and extensive area, which the carriage was crossing. It appeared, from it’s desolation, and the ruins scattered distantly along its skirts, to be a part of the city entirely

abandoned by the modern inhabitants to the reliques of its former grandeur. Not even the shadow of a human being crossed the waste, nor any building appeared, which might be supposed to shelter one. The deep tone of a bell, however, rolling on the silence of the night, announced the haunts of man to be not far off; and Vivaldi perceived in the distance, to which he was approaching, an extent of losty walls and towers, that, as far as the gloom would permit his eye to penetrate, bounded the horizon. He judged these to be the prisons of the Inquisition. Paulo pointed them out at the same moment. “Ah, Signor!” said he despondingly, “that is the place! what strength! If, my Lord, the Marchese were but to see where we are going! Ah!” —

He concluded with a deep sigh, and sunk again into the state of apprehension and mute expectation, which he had suffered from the moment that he quitted the Gorso.

The carriage having reached the walls, followed their bendings to a considerable extent. These walls, of immense height, and strengthened by innumerable massy bulwarks, exhibited neither window or grate, but a vast and dreary blank; a small round tower only, perched here and there upon the summit, breaking their inonotony.

The prisoners passed what seemed to be the principal entrance, from the grandeur of its portal, and the gigantic loftiness of the towers that rose over it; and soon after the carriage stopped at an archway in the walls, strongly barricadoed. One of the escort alighted, and, having struck upon the bars, a folding door within was immediately opened, and a man bearing a torch appeared behind the barricado, whose countenance, as he looked through it, might have been copied for the

“Grim-visaged comfortless Despair” of the Poet.

No words were exchanged between him and the guard; but on perceiving who were without, he opened the iron gate, and the prisoners, having alighted, passed with the two officials beneath the arch, the guard following with a torch. They descended a flight of broad steps, at the foot of which another iron gate admitted them to a kind of hall; such, however, it at first appeared to Vivaldi, as his eyes glanced through its gloomy extent, imperfectly ascertaining it by the lamp, which hung from the centre of the roof. No person appeared, and a deathlike silence prevailed; for neither the officials nor the guard yet spoke; nor did any distant sound

contradict the notion, that they were traversing the chambers of the dead. To Vivaldi it occurred, that this was one of the burial vaults of the victims, who suffered in the Inquisition, and his whole frame thrilled with horror. Several avenues, opening from the apartment, seemed to lead to distant quarters of this immense fabric, but still no footstep whispering along the pavement, or voice murmuring through the arched roofs, indicated it to be the residence of the living.

Having entered one of the passages, Vivaldi perceived a person clothed in black, and who bore a lighted taper, crossing silently in the remote perspective; and he understood too well from his habit, that he was a member of this dreadful tribunal.

The found of footsteps seemed to reach the stranger, for he turned, and then paused, while the officers advanced. They then made signs to each other, and exchanged a few words, which neither Vivaldi or his servant could understand, when the stranger, pointing with his taper along another avenue, passed away. Vivaldi followed him with his eyes, till a door at the extremity of the passage opened, and he saw the Inquisitor enter an apartment, whence a great light proceeded, and where several other figures, habited like himself, appeared waiting to receive him. The door immediately closed; and, whether the imagination of Vivaldi was affected, or that the founds were real, he thought, as it closed, he distinguished half-stifled groans, as of a person in agony.

The avenue, through which the prisoners passed, opened, at length, into an apartment gloomy like the first they had entered, but more extensive. The roof was supported by arches, and long arcades branched off from every side of the chamber, as from a central point, and were lost in the gloom, which the rays of the small lamps, suspended in each, but feebly penetrated.

They rested here, and a person soon after advanced, who appeared to be the jailor, into whose hands Vivaldi and Paulo were delivered. A few mysterious words having been exchanged, one of the officials crossed the hall, and ascended a wide staircase, while the other, with the jailor and the guard, remained below, as if awaiting his return.

A long interval elapsed, during which the stillness of the place was sometimes interrupted by a closing door, and, at others, by indistinct founds, which yet appeared to Vivaldi like lamentations and extorted

groans. Inquisitors, in their long black robes, issued, from time, to time from the passages, and crossed the hall to other avenues. They eyed the prisoners with curiosity, but without pity. Their visages, with few exceptions, seemed stamped with the characters of demons. Vivaldi could not look upon the grave cruelty, or the serocious impatience, their countenances severally expressed, without reading in them the fate of some fellow creature, the fate, which these men seemed going, even at this moment, to confirm; and, as they passed with soundless steps, he shrunk from observation, as if their very looks possessed some supernatural power, and could have struck death. But he followed their fleeting figures, as they proceeded on their work of horror, to where the last glimmering ray faded into darkness, expecting to see other doors of other chambers open to receive them. While meditating upon these horrors, Vivaldi lost every selfish consideration in astonishment and indignation of the sufferings, which the frenzied wickedness of man prepares for man, who, even at the moment of infliction, insults his victim with assertions of the justice and necessity of such procedure. “Is this possible!” said Vivaldi internally, “Can this be in human nature! — Can such horrible perversion of right be permitted! Can man, who calls himself endowed with reason, and immeasurably superior to every other created being, argue himself into the commission of such horrible folly, such inveterate cruelty, as exceeds all the acts of the most irrational and ferocious brute. Brutes do not deliberately slaughter their species; it remains for man only, man, proud of his prerogative of reason, and boasting of his sense of justice, to unite the most terrible extremes of folly and wickedness!”

Vivaldi had been no stranger to the existence of this tribunal; he had long understood the nature of the establishment, and had often received particular accounts of its customs and laws; but, though he had believed before, it was now only that conviction appeared to impress his understanding. A new view of human nature seemed to burst, at once, upon his mind, and he could not have experienced greater astonishment, if this had been the first moment, in which he had heard of the institution. But, when he thought of Ellena, considered that she was in the power of this tribunal, and that it was probable she was at this moment within the same dreadful walls, grief, indignation, and despair irritated him almost to frenzy. He seemed suddenly animated with supernatural strength, and

ready to attempt impossibilities for her deliverance. It was by a strong effort for self command, that he forbore bursting the bonds, which held him, and making a desperate attempt to seek her through the vast extent of these prisons. Reflection, however, had not so entirely forsaken him, but that he saw the impossibility of succeeding in such an effort, the moment he had conceived it, and he forbore to rush upon the certain destruction, to which it must have led. His passions, thus restrained, seemed to become virtues, and to display themselves in the energy of his courage and his fortitude. His soul became stern and vigorous in despair, and his manner and countenance assumed a calm dignity, which seemed to awe, in some degree, even his guards. The pain of his wounds was no longer felt; it appeared as if the strength of his intellectual self had subdued the infirmities of the body, and, perhaps, in these moments of elevation, he could have endured the torture without shrinking.

Paulo, meanwhile, mute and grave, was watchful of all that passed; he observed the revolutions in his master's mind, with grief first, and then with surprize, but he could not imitate the noble fortitude, which now gave weight and steadiness to Vivaldi's

thoughts. And when he looked on the power and gloom around him, and on the visages of the passing Inquisitors, he began to repent, that he had so freely delivered his opinion of this tribunal, in the presence of its agents, and to perceive, that if he played up the kind of tune he had threatened, it would probably be the last he should ever be permitted to perform in this world.

At length, the chief officer descended the staircase, and immediately bade Vivaldi follow him. Paulo was accompanying his master, but was withheld by the guard, and told he was to be disposed of in a different way. This was the moment of his severest trial; he declared he would not be separated from his master.

"What did I demand to be brought here for," he cried, "if it was not that I might go shares with the Signor in all his troubles? This is not a place to come to for pleasure, I warrant; and I can promise ye, gentlemen, I would not have come within an hundred miles of you, if it had not been for my master's sake."

The guards roughly interrupted him, and were carrying him away, when Vivaldi's commanding voice arrested them. He returned to speak a few

words of consolation to his faithful servant, and, since they were to be separated, to take leave of him.

Paulo embraced his knees, and, while he wept, and his words were almost stifled by sobs, declared no force should drag him from his master, while he had life; and repeatedly appealed to the guards, with— “What did I demand to be brought here for? Did ever any body come here to seek pleasure? What right have you to prevent my going shares with my master in his troubles?”

“We do not intend to deny you that pleasure, friend,” replied one of the guards!

“Don’t you? Then heaven bless you!” cried Paulo, springing from his knees, and shaking the man by the hand with a violence, that would nearly have dislocated the shoulder of a person less robust.

“So come with us,” added the guard, drawing him away from Vivaldi. Paulo now became outrageous, and, struggling with the guards, burst from them, and again fell at the feet of his master, who raised and embraced him, endeavouring to prevail with him to submit quietly to what was inevitable, and to encourage him with hope.

“I trust that our separation will be short,” said Vivaldi, “and that we shall meet in happier circumstances. My innocence must soon appear.”

“We shall never, never meet again, Signormio, in this world,” said Paulo, sobbing violently, “so don’t make me hope so. That old Abbess knows what she is about too well to let us escape; or she would not have catched us up so cunningly as she did; so what signifies innocence! O! if my old lord, the Marchese, did but know where we are!”

Vivaldi interrupted him, and turning to the guards said, “I recommend my faithful servant to your compassion; he is innocent. It will some time, perhaps, be in my power to recompence you for any indulgence you may allow him, and I shall value it a thousand times more highly, than any you could shew to myself! Farewell, Paulo, — farewel! Officer, I am ready.”

“O stay! Signor, for one moment — stay!” said Paulo.

“We can wait no longer,” said the guard, and again drew Paulo away, who looking piteously after Vivaldi, alternately repeated, Farewel, dear maestro! farewel dear, dear maestro!” and “What did I demand to be brought here for? What did I demand to be brought here for? — what was

it for, if not to go shares with my maestro?” till Vivaldi was beyond the reach of sight and of hearing.

Vivaldi, having followed the officer up the staircase, passed through a gallery to an anti-chamber, where, being delivered into the custody of some persons in waiting, his conductor disappeared beyond a folding door, that led to an inner apartments. Over this door was an inscription in Hebrew characters, traced in blood-colour. Dante’s inscription on the entrance of the infernal regions, would have been suitable to a place, where every circumstance and feature seemed to say, “Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!”

Vivaldi conjectured, that in this chamber they were preparing for him the instruments, which were to extort a confession; and though he knew little of the regular proceedings of this tribunal, he had always understood, that the torture was inflicted upon the accused person, till he made confession of the crime, of which he was suspected. By such a mode of proceeding, the innocent were certain of suffering longer than the guilty; for, as they had nothing to confess, the Inquisitor, mistaking innocence for obstinacy, persevered in his inflictions, and it frequently happened that he compelled the innocent to become criminal, and assert a falsehood, that they might be released from anguish, which they could no longer sustain. Vivaldi considered this circumstance undauntedly; every faculty of his soul was bent up to firmness and endurance. He believed that he understood the extent of the charge, which would be brought against him, a charge as false, as a specious confirmation of it, would be terrible in it’s consequence both to Ellena and himself. Yet every art would be practised to bring him to an acknowledgment of having carried off a nun, and he knew also, that, since the prosecutor and the witnesses are never confronted with the prisoner in cases of severe accusation, and since their very names are concealed from him, it would be scarcely possible for him to prove his innocence. But he did not hesitate an instant whether to sacrifice himself for Ellena, determining rather to expire beneath the merciless inflictions of the Inquisitors, than to assert a falsehood, which must involve her in destruction.

The officer, at length, appeared, and, having beckoned Vivaldi to advance, uncovered his head, and bared his arms. He then led him forward through the folding door into the chamber; having done which, he

immediately withdrew, and the door, which shut out Hope, closed after him.

Vivaldi found himself in a spacious apartment, where only two persons were visible, who were seated at a large table, that occupied the centre of the room. They were both habited in black; the one, who seemed by his piercing eye, and extraordinary physiognomy, to be an Inquisitor, wore on his head a kind of black turban, which heightened the natural ferocity of his visage; the other was uncovered, and his arms bared to the elbows. A book, with some instruments of singular appearance, lay before him. Round the table were several unoccupied chairs, on the backs of which appeared figurative signs, at the upper end of the apartment, a gigantic crucifix stretched nearly to the vaulted roof; and, at the lower end, suspended from an arch in the wall, was a dark curtain, but whether it veiled a window, or shrowded some object or person, necessary to the designs of the Inquisitor, there were little means of judging. It was, however, suspended from an arch such as sometimes contains a casement, or leads to a deep recess.

The Inquisitor called on Vivaldi to advance, and, when he had reached the table, put a book into his hands, and bade him swear to reveal the truth, and keep for ever secret whatever he might see or hear in the apartment.

Vivaldi hesitated to obey so unqualified a command. The Inquisitor reminded him, by a look, not to be mistaken, that he was absolute here; but Vivaldi still hesitated. “Shall I consent to my own condemnation?” said he to himself, “The malice of demons like these may convert the most innocent circumstances into matter of accusation, for my destruction, and I must answer whatever questions they choose to ask. And shall I swear, also, to conceal whatever I may witness in this chamber, when I know that the most diabolical cruelties are hourly practised here?”

The Inquisitor, in a voice which would have made a heart less fortified than was Vivaldi’s tremble, again commanded him to swear; at the same time, he made a signal to the person, who sat at the opposite end of the table, and who appeared to be an inferior officer.

Vivaldi was still silent, but he began to consider that, unconscious as he was of crime, it was scarcely possible for his words to be tortured into a self-accusation; and that, whatever he might witness, no retribution would be prevented, no evil withheld by the oath, which bound him to secresy,

since his most severe denunciation could avail nothing against the supreme power of this tribunal. As he did not perceive any good, which could arise from refusing the oath; and saw much immediate evil from resistance, he consented to receive it. Notwithstanding this, when he put the book to his lips, and uttered the tremendous vow prescribed to him, hesitation and reluctance returned upon his mind, and an icy coldness struck to his heart. He was so much affected, that circumstances, apparently the most trivial, had at this moment influence upon his imagination. As he accidentally threw his eyes upon the curtain, which he had observed before without emotion, and now thought it moved, he almost started in expectation of seeing some person, an Inquisitor perhaps, as terrific as the one before him, or an Accuser as malicious as Schedoni, steal from behind it.

The Inquisitor having administered the oath, and the attendant having noted it in his book, the examination began. After demanding, as is usual, the names and titles of Vivaldi and his family, and his place of residence, to which he fully replied, the Inquisitor asked, whether he understood the nature of the accusation on which he had been arrested.

“The order for my arrestation informed me.” replied Vivaldi.

“Look to your words!” said the Inquisitor, “and remember your oath. What was the ground of accusation?”

“I understood;” said Vivaldi, “that I was accused of having stolen a nun from her sanctuary.”

A faint degree of surprise appeared on the brow of the Inquisitor. “You confess it, then?” he said, after the pause of a moment, and making a signal to the Secretary, who immediately noted Vivaldi’s words.

“I solemnly deny it,” replied Vivaldi, “the accusation is false and malicious.”

“Remember the oath you have taken!” repeated the Inquisitor, “learn also, that mercy is shewn to such as make full confession; but that the torture is applied to those, who have the folly and the obstinacy to withhold the truth.”

“If you torture me till I acknowledge the justness of this accusation,” said Vivaldi, “I must expire under your inflictions, for suffering never shall compel me to assert a falsehood. It is not the truth, which you seek; it is not the guilty, whom you punish; the innocent, having no crimes to

confess, are the victims of your cruelty, or, to escape from it, become criminal, and proclam a lie."

"Recollect yourself," said the Inquisitor, sternly. "You are not brought hither to accuse, but to answer accusation. You say you are innocent; yet acknowledge yourself to be acquainted with the subject of the charge which is to be urged against you! How could you know this, but from the voice of conscience?"

"From the words of your own summons," replied Vivaldi, "and from those of your officials who arrested me."

"How!" exclaimed the Inquisitor, note that," pointing to the Secretary; he says by the words of our summons; now we know, that you never read that summons. He says also by the words of our officials; — it appears, then, he is ignorant, that death would follow such a breach of confidence."

"It is true, I never did read the summons," replied Vivaldi, "and as true, that I never asserted I did; the friar, who read it, told of what it accused me, and your officials confirmed the testimony."

"No more of this equivocation!" said the Inquisitor, "Speak only to the question."

"I will not suffer my assertions to be misrepresented," replied Vivaldi, "or my words to be perverted against myself. I have sworn to speak the truth only; since you believe I violate my oath, and doubt my direct and simple words, I will speak no more."

The Inquisitor half rose from his chair, and his countenance grew paler. "Audacious heretic!" he said, "will you dispute, insult, and disobey, the commands of our most holy tribunal! You will be taught the consequence of your desperate impiety. — To the torture with him!"

A stern smile was on the features of Vivaldi, his eyes were calmly fixed on the Inquisitor, and his attitude was undaunted and firm. His courage, and the cool contempt, which his looks expressed, seemed to touch his examiner, who perceived that he had not a common mind to operate upon. He abandoned, therefore, for the present, terrific measures, and, resuming his usual manner, proceeded in the examination.

"Where were you arrested?"

"At the chapel of San Sebastian, on the lake of Celano."

"You are certain as to this?" asked the Inquisitor, "you are sure it was not at the village of Legano, on the high road between Celano and Rome?"

Vivaldi, while he confirmed his assertion, recollected with some surprize that Legano was the place where the guard had been changed, and he mentioned the circumstance. The Inquisitor, however, proceeded in his questions, without appearing to notice it. “Was any person arrested with you?”

“You cannot be ignorant,” replied Vivaldi, “that Signora di Rosalba, was seized at the same time, upon the false charge of being a nun, who had broken her vows, and eloped from her convent; nor that Paulo Mendrico, my faithful servant! was also made a prisoner, though upon what pretence he was arrested I am utterly ignorant.”

The Inquisitor remained for some moments in thoughtful silence, and then enquired slightly concerning the family of Ellena, and her usual place of residence. Vivaldi, fearful of making some assertion that might be prejudicial to her, referred him to herself; but the inquiry was repeated.

“She is now within these walls,” replied Vivaldi, hoping to learn from the manner of his examiner, whether his fears were just, “and can answer these questions better than myself.”

The Inquisitor merely bade the Notary write down her name, and then remained for a few moments meditating. At length, he said, “Do you know where you now are?”

Vivaldi, smiling at the question, replied, “I understand that I am in the prisons of the Inquisition, at Rome.”

“Do you know what are the crimes that subject persons to the cognizance of the Holy Office?”

Vivaldi was silent.

“Your conscience informs you, and your silence confirms me. Let me admonish you, once more, to make a full confession of your guilt; remember that this is a merciful tribunal, and shews favour to such as acknowledge their crimes?”

Vivaldi smiled; but the Inquisitor proceeded.

“It does not resemble some severe, yet just courts, where immediate execution follows the confession of a criminal. No! it is merciful, and though it punishes guilt, it never applies the torture but in cases of necessity, when the obstinate silence of the prisoner requires such a measure. You see, therefore, what you may avoid, and what expect.”

“But if the prisoner has nothing to confess?” said Vivaldi,— “Can your tortures make him guilty? They may force a weak mind to be guilty of falsehood; to escape present anguish, a man may unwarily condemn himself to the death! You will find that I am not such an one.”

“Young man,” replied the Inquisitor, “you will understand too soon, that we never act, but upon sure authority; and will wish, too late, that you had made an honest confession. Your silence cannot keep from us a knowledge of your offences; we are in possession of facts; and your obstinacy can neither wrest from us the truth, or pervert it. Your most secret offences are already written on the tablets of the Holy Office; your conscience cannot reflect them more justly. — Tremble, therefore, and revere. But understand, that, though we have sufficient proof of your guilt, we require you to confess; and that the punishment of obstinacy is as certain, as that of any other offence.”

Vivaldi made no reply, and the Inquisitor, after a momentary silence, added, “Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?”

“Before I answer the question,” said Vivaldi, “I require the name of my accuser.”

“You are to recollect that you have no right to demand any thing in this place,” observed the Inquisitor, “nor can you be ignorant that the name of the Informer is always kept sacred from the knowledge of the Accused. Who would venture to do his duty, if his name was arbitrarily to be exposed to the vengeance of the criminal against whom he informs? It is only in a particular process that the Accuser is brought forward,” “The names of the Witnesses?” demanded Vivaldi. The same justice conceals them also from the knowledge of the Accused, replied the Inquisitor.

“And is no justice left for the Accused?” said Vivaldi. “Is he to be tried and condemned without being confronted with either his Prosecutor, or the Witnesses!”

“Your questions are too many,” said the Inquisitor, and your answers too few. The Informer is not also the Prosecutor; the Holy Office, before which the information is laid, is the Prosecutor, and the dispenser of justice; its Public Accuser lays the circumstances, and the testimonies of the Witnesses, before the Court. But too much of this.”

“How!” exclaimed Vivaldi, “is the tribunal at once the Prosecutor, Witness, and Judge! What can private malice wish for more, than such a

court of justice, at which to arraign it’s enemy? The stiletto of the Assassin is not so sure, or so fatal to innocence. I now perceive, that it avails me nothing to be guiltless; a single enemy is sufficient to accomplish my destruction.”

“You have an enemy then?” observed the Inquisitor.

Vivaldi was too well convinced that he had one, but there was not sufficient proof, as to the person of this enemy, to justify him in asserting that it was Schedoni. The circumstance of Ellena having been arrested, would have compelled him to suspect another person as being at least accessary to the designs of the Confessor, had not credulity started in horror from the supposition, that a mother’s resentment could possibly betray her son into the prisons of the Inquisition, though this mother had exhibited a temper of remorseless cruelty towards a stranger, who had interrupted her views for that son.

“You have an enemy then?” repeated the Inquisitor.

“That I am here sufficiently proves it,” replied Vivaldi. “But I am so little any man’s enemy, that I know not who to call mine.”

“It is evident, then, that you have no enemy,” observed the subtle Inquisitor, “and that this accusation is brought against you by a respecter of truth, and a faithful servant of the Roman interest.”

Vivaldi was shocked to perceive the insidious art, by which he had been betrayed into a declaration apparently so harmless, and the cruel dexterity with which it had been turned against him. A lofty and contemptuous silence was all that he opposed to the treachery of his examiner, on whose countenance appeared a smile of triumph and self-congratulation, the life of a fellow creature being, in his estimation, of no comparative importance with the self-applauses of successful art, the art, too, upon which he most valued himself — that of his profession.

The Inquisitor proceeded, “You persist, then, in withholding the truth?” He paused, but Vivaldi making no reply, he resumed.

“Since it is evident, from your own declaration, that you have no enemy, whom private resentment might have instigated to accuse you; and, from other circumstances which have occurred in your conduct, that you are conscious of more than you have confessed, — it appears, that the accusation which has been urged against you, is not a malicious slander. I exhort you, therefore, and once more conjure you, by our holy faith, to

make an ingenuous confession of your offences, and to save yourself from the means, which must of necessity be enforced to obtain a confession before your trial commences. I adjure you, also, to consider, that by such open conduct only, can mercy be won to soften the justice of this most righteous tribunal!”

Vivaldi, perceiving that it was now necessary for him to reply, once more solemnly asserted his innocence of the crime alledged against him in the summons, and of the consciousness of any act, which might lawfully subject him to the notice of the Holy Office.

The Inquisitor again demanded what was the crime alledged, and, Vivaldi having repeated the accusation, he again bade the Secretary note it, as he did which, Vivaldi thought he perceived upon his features something of a malignant satisfaction, for which he knew not how to account. When the Secretary had finished, Vivaldi was ordered to subscribe his name and quality to the depositions, and he obeyed.

The Inquisitor then bade him consider of the admonition he had received, and prepare either to confess on the morrow, or to undergo the question. As he concluded, he gave a signal, and the officer, who had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, immediately appeared.

“You know your orders,” said the Inquisitor, “receive your prisoner, and see that they are obeyed.”

The official bowed, and Vivaldi followed him from the apartment in melancholy silence.

Chapter 1 7

Call up the Spirit of the ocean, bid
Him raise the storm! The waves begin to heave,
To curl, to foam; the white surges run far
Upon the dark’ning waters, and mighty
Sounds of strise are heard. Wrapt in the midnight
Of the clouds, sits Terror, meditating
Woe. Her doubtful form appears and sades,
Like the shadow of Death, when he mingles
With the gloom of the sepulchre, and broods
In lonely silence. Her spirits are abroad!
They do her bidding! Hark, to that shriek!
The echoes of the shore have heard!

Ellena, meanwhile, when she had been carried from the chapel of San Sebastian, was placed upon a horse in waiting, and, guarded by the two men who had seized her, commenced a journey, which continued with little interruption during two nights and days. She had no means of judging whither she was going, and listened in vain expectation, for the feet of horses, and the voice of Vivaldi, who, she had been told, was following on the same road.

The steps of travellers seldom broke upon the silence of these regions, and, during the journey, she was met only by some market-people passing to a neighbouring town, or now and then by the vine-dressers or labourers in the olive grounds; and she descended upon the vast plains of Apulia, still ignorant of her situation. An encampment, not of warriors, but of shepherds, who were leading their flocks to the mountains of Abruzzo, enlivened a small tract of these levels, which were shadowed on the north and east by the mountainous ridge of the Garganus, stretching from the Apennine far into the Adriatic.

The appearance of the shepherds was nearly as wild and savage as that of the men, who conducted Ellena; but their pastoral instruments of flageolets and tabors spoke of more civilized feelings, as they sounded

sweetly over the desert. Her guards rested, and refreshed themselves with goats milk, barley cakes, and almonds, and the manners of these shepherds, like those she had formerly met with on the mountains, proved to be more hospitable than their air had indicated.

After Ellena had quitted this pastoral camp, no vestige of a human residence appeared for several leagues, except here and there the towers of a decayed fortress, perched upon the lofty acclivities she was approaching, and half concealed in the woods. The evening of the second day was drawing on, when her guards drew near the forest, which she had long observed in the distance, spreading over the many-rising steeps of the Garganus. They entered by a track, a road it could not be called, which led among oaks and gigantic chestnuts, apparently the growth of centuries, and so thickly interwoven, that their branches formed a canopy which seldom admitted the sky. The gloom which they threw around, and the thickets of cystus, juniper, and lenticus, which flourished beneath the shade, gave a character of fearful wildness to the scene.

Having reached an eminence, where the trees were more thinly scattered, Ellena perceived the forests spreading on all sides among hills and vallies, and descending towards the Adriatic, which bounded the distance in front. The coast, bending into a bay, was rocky and bold. Lofty pinnacles, wooded to their summits, rose over the shores, and cliffs of naked marble of such gigantic proportions, that they were awful even at a distance, obtruded themselves far into the waves, breasting their eternal fury. Beyond the margin of the coast, as far as the eye could reach, appeared pointed mountains, darkened with forests, rising ridge over ridge in many successions. Ellena, as she surveyed this wild scenery, felt as if she was going into eternal banishment from society. She was tranquil, but it was with the quietness of exhausted grief, not of resignation; and she looked back upon the past, and awaited the future, with a kind of out-breathed despair.

She had travelled for some miles through the forest, her guards only now and then uttering to each other a question, or an observation concerning the changes which had taken place in the bordering scenery, since they last passed it, when night began to close in upon them.

Ellena perceived her approach to the sea, only by the murmurs of its surge upon the rocky coast, till, having reached an eminence, which was,

however, no more than the base of two woody mountains that towered closely over it, she saw dimly it's gray surface spreading in the bay below. She now ventured to ask how much further she was to go, and whether she was to be taken on board one of the little vessels, apparently fishing smacks, that she could just discern at anchor.

"You have not far to go now," replied one of the guards, surlily; "you will soon be at the end of your journey, and at rest."

They descended to the shore, and presently came to a lonely dwelling, which stood so near the margin of the sea, as almost to be washed by the waves. No light appeared at any of the lattices; and, from the silence that reigned within, it seemed to be uninhabited. The guard had probably reason to know otherwise, for they halted at the door, and shouted with all their strength. No voice, however, answered to their call, and, while they persevered in efforts to rouse the inhabitants, Ellena anxiously examined the building, as exactly as the twilight would permit. It was of an ancient and peculiar structure, and, though scarcely important enough for a mansion, had evidently never been designed for the residence of peasants.

The walls, of unhewn marble, were high, and strengthened by bastions; and the edifice had turretted corners, which, with the porch in front, and the sloping roof, were falling fast into numerous symptoms of decay. The whole building, with it's dark windows and soundless avenues, had an air strikingly forlon and solitary. A high wall surrounded the small court in which it stood, and probably had once served as a defence to the dwelling; but the gates, which should have closed against intruders, could no longer perform their office; one of the folds had dropped from it's fastenings, and lay on the ground almost concealed in a deep bed of weeds, and the other creaked on its hinges to every blast, at each swing seeming ready to follow the fate of it's companion.

The repeated calls of the guard, were, at length, answered by a rough voice from within; when the door of the porch was lazily unbarred, and opened by a man, whose visage was so misery-struck, that Ellena could not look upon it with indifference, though wrapt in misery of her own. The lamp he held threw a gleam athwart it, and shewed the gaunt ferocity of famine, to which the shadow of his hollow eyes added a terrific wildness. Ellena shrunk while she gazed. She had never before seen villainy and suffering so strongly pictured on the same face, and she observed him with

a degree of thrilling curiosity, which for a moment excluded from her mind all consciousness of the evils to be apprehended from him.

It was evident that this house had not been built for his reception; and she conjectured, that he was the servant of some cruel agent of the Marchesa di Vivaldi.

From the porch, she followed into an old hall, ruinous, and destitute of any kind of furniture. It was not extensive but lofty, for it seemed to ascend to the roof of the edifice, and the chambers above opened around it into a corridor.

Some half-sullen salutations were exchanged between the guard and the stranger, whom they called Spalatro, as they passed into a chamber, where, it appeared that he had been sleeping on a mattress laid in a corner. All the other furniture of the place, were two or three broken chairs and a table. He eyed Ellena with a shrewd contracted brow, and then looked significantly at the guard, but was silent, till he desired them all to sit down, adding, that he would dress some fish for supper. Ellena discovered that this man was the master of the place; it appeared also that he was the only inhabitant; and, when the guard soon after informed her their journey concluded here, her worst apprehensions were confirmed. The efforts she made to sustain her spirits, were no longer successful. It seemed that she was brought hither by ruffians to a lonely house on the seashore, inhabited by a man, who had “villain” engraved in every line of his face, to be the victim of inexorable pride and an insatiable desire of revenge. After considering these circumstances, and the words, which had just told her, she was to go no further, conviction struck like lightning upon her heart; and, believing she was brought hither to be assassinated, horror chilled all her frame, and her senses forsook her.

On recovering, she found herself surrounded by the guard and the stranger, and she would have supplicated for their pity, but that she feared to exasperate them by betraying her suspicions. She complained of fatigue, and requested to be shewn to her room. The men looked upon one another, hesitated, and then asked her to partake of the fish that was preparing. But Ellena having declined the invitation with as good a grace as she could assume, they consented that she should withdraw. Spalatro, taking the lamp, lighted her across the hall, to the corridor above, where he opened the door of a chamber, in which he said she was to sleep.

“Where is my bed?” said the afflicted Ellena, fearfully as she looked round.

“It is there — on the floor,” replied Spalatro, pointing to a miserable mattress, over which hung the tattered curtains of what had once been a canopy. “If you want the lamp,” he added, “I will leave it, and come for it in a minute or two.”

“Will you not let me have a lamp for the night,” she said in a supplicating and timid voice.

“For the night!” said the man gruffly; “What! to set fire to the house.”

Ellena still entreated that he would allow her the comfort of a light.

“Ay, ay,” replied Spalatro, with a look she could not comprehend, “it would be a great comfort to you, truly! You do not know what you ask.”

“What is it that you mean?” said Ellena, eagerly; “I conjure you, in the name of our holy church, to tell me!”

Spalatro stepped suddenly back, and looked upon her with surprise, but without speaking.

“Have mercy on me!” said Ellena, greatly alarmed by his manner; “I am friendless, and without help!”

“What do you fear,” said the man, recovering himself; and then, without waiting her reply, added— “Is it such an unmerciful deed to take away a lamp?”

Ellena, who again feared to betray the extent of her suspicions, only replied, that it would be merciful to leave it, for that her spirits were low, and she required light to cheer them in a new abode.

“We do not stand upon such conceits here,” replied Spalatro, “we have other matters to mind. Besides, it’s the only lamp in the house, and the company below are in darkness while I am losing time here. I will leave it for two minutes, and no more.” Ellena made a sign for him to put down the lamp; and, when he left the room, she heard the door barred upon her.

She employed these two minutes in examining the chamber, and the possibility it might afford of an escape. It was a large apartment, unfurnished and unswept of the cobweps of many years. The only door she discovered was the one, by which she had entered, and the only window a lattice, which was grated. Such preparation for preventing escape seemed to hint how much there might be to escape from.

Having examined the chamber, without finding a single circumstance to encourage hope, tried the strength of the bars, which she could not shake, and sought in vain for an inside fastening to her door, she placed the lamp beside it, and awaited the return of Spalatro. In a few moments he came, and offered her a cup of four wine with a slice of bread; which, being somewhat soothed by this attention, she did not think proper to reject.

Spalatro then quitted the room, and the door was again barred. Left once more alone, she tried to overcome apprehension by prayer; and after offering up her vespers with a fervent heart, she became more confiding and composed.

But it was impossible that she could so far forget the dangers of her situation, as to seek sleep, however wearied she might be, while the door of her room remained unsecured against the intrusion of the ruffians below; and, as she had no means of fastening it, she determined to watch during the whole night. Thus left to solitude and darkness, she seated herself upon the mattress to await the return of morning, and was soon lost in sad reflection; every minute occurrence of the past day, and of the conduct of her guards, moved in review before her judgment; and, combining these with the circumstances of her present situation, scarcely a doubt as to the fate designed for her remained. It seemed highly improbable, that the Marchesa di Vivaldi had sent her hither merely for imprisonment, since she might have confined her in a convent, with much less trouble; and still more so, when Ellena considered the character of the Marchesa, such as she had already experienced it. The appearance of this house, and of the man who inhabited it, with the circumstance of no woman being found residing here, each and all of these signified, that she was brought hither, not for long imprisonment, but for death. Her utmost efforts for fortitude or resignation could not overcome the cold tremblings, the sickness of heart, the faintness and universal horror, that assailed her. How often, with tears of mingled terror and grief, did she call upon Vivaldi — Vivaldi, alas! far distant — to save her; how often exclaim in agony, that she should never, never see him more!

She was spared, however, the horror of believing that he was an inhabitant of the Inquisition. Having detected the imposition, which had been practised towards herself, and that she was neither on the way to the Holy Office, nor conducted by persons belonging to it, she concluded, that

the whole affair of Vivaldi's arrest, had been planned by the Marchesa, merely as a pretence for confining him, till she should be placed beyond the reach of his assistance. She hoped, therefore, that he had only been sent to some private residence belonging to his family, and that, when her fate was decided, he would be released, and she be the only victim. This was the sole consideration, that afforded any degree of assuagement to her sufferings.

The people below sat till a late hour. She listened often to their distant voices, as they were distinguishable in the pauses of the surge, that broke loud and hollow on the shore; and every time the creaking hinges of their room door moved, apprehended they were coming to her. At length, it appeared they had left the apartment, or had fallen asleep there, for a profound stilness reigned whenever the murmur of the waves sunk. Doubt did not long deceive her, for, while she yet listened, she distinguished footsteps ascending to the corridor. She heard them approach her chamber, and stop at the door; she heard, also, the low whisperings of their voices, as they seemed consulting on what was to be done, and she scarcely ventured to draw breath, while she intensely attended to them. Not a word, however, distinctly reached her, till, as one of them was departing, another called out in a half-whisper, "It is below on the table, in my girdle; make haste." The man came back, and said something in a lower voice, to which the other replied, "she sleeps," or Ellena was deceived by the hissing consonants of some other words. He then descended the stairs; and in a few minutes she perceived his comrade also pass away from the door; she listened to his retreating steps, till the roaring of the sea was alone heard in their stead.

Ellena's terrors were relieved only for a moment. Considering the import of the words, it appeared that the man who had descended, was gone for the stiletto of the other, such an instrument being usually worn in the girdle, and from the assurance, "she sleeps," he seemed to fear that his words had been overheard; and she listened again for their steps; but they came no more.

Happily for Ellena's peace, she knew not that her chamber had a door, so contrived as to open without sound, by which assassins might enter unsuspectedly at any hour of the night. Believing that the inhabitants of this house had now retired to rest, her hopes and her spirits began to

revive; but she was yet sleepless and watchful. She measured the chamber with unequal steps, often starting as the old boards shook and groaned where she passed; and often pausing to listen whether all was yet still in the corridor. The gleam, which a rising moon threw between the bars of her window, now began to shew many shadowy objects in the chamber, which she did not recollect to have observed while the lamp was there. More than once, she fancied she saw something glide along towards the place where the mattress was laid, and, almost congealed with terror, she stood still to watch it; but the illusion, if such it was, disappeared where the moonlight faded, and even her fears could not give shape to it beyond. Had she not known that her chamber-door remained strongly barred, she would have believed this was an assassin stealing to the bed where it might be supposed she slept. Even now the thought occurred to her, and vague as it was, had power to strike an anguish, almost deadly, through her heart, while she considered that her immediate situation was nearly as perilous as the one she had imaged. Again she listened, and scarcely dared to breathe; but not the lightest sound occurred in the pauses of the waves, and she believed herself convinced that no person except herself was in the room. That she was deceived in this belief, appeared from her unwillingness to approach the mattress, while it was yet involved in shade. Unable to overcome her reluctance, she took her station at the window, till the strengthening rays should allow a clearer view of the chamber, and in some degree restore her confidence; and she watched the scene without as it gradually became visible. The moon, rising over the ocean, shewed it’s restless surface spreading to the wide horizon; and the waves, which broke in foam upon the rocky beach below, retiring in long white lines far upon the waters. She listened to their measured and solemn sound, and, somewhat soothed by the solitary grandeur of the view, remained at the lattice till the moon had risen high into the heavens; and even till morning began to dawn upon the sea, and purple the eastern clouds.

Reassured, by the light that now pervaded her room, she returned to the mattress; where anxiety at length yielded to her weariness, and she obtained a short repose.

Chapter 1 8

And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so.

Alas! why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me."
Shakspeare.

Ellena was awakened from profound sleep, by a loud noise at the door of her chamber; when, starting from her mattress, she looked around her with surprise and dismay, as imperfect recollections or the past began to gather on her mind. She distinguished the undrawing of iron bars, and then the countenance of Spalatro at her door, before she had a clear remembrance of her situation — that she was a prisoner in a house on a lonely shore, and that this man was her jailor. Such sickness of the heart returned with these convictions, such saintness and terror, that unable to support her trembling frame, she sunk again upon the mattress, without demanding the reason of this abrupt intrusion.

"I have brought you some breakfast," said Spalatro, "if you are awake to take it; but you seem to be asleep yet. Surely you have had sleep sufficient for one night; you went to rest soon enough,"

Ellena made no reply, but, deeply affected with a sense of her situation, looked with beseeching eyes at the man, who advanced, holding forth an oaten cake and a bason of milk. "Where shall I set them?" said he, "you must needs be glad of them, since you had no supper."

Ellena thanked him, and desired he would place them on the floor, for there was neither table nor chair in the room. As he did this, she was struck with the expression of his countenance, which exhibited a strange mixture of archness and malignity. He seemed congratulating himself upon his ingenuity, and anticipating some occasion of triumph; and she

was so much interested, that her observation never quitted him while he remained in the room. As his eyes accidentally met her's, he turned them away, with the abruptness of a person who is conscious of evil intentions, and fears lest they should be detected; nor once looked up till he hastily left the chamber, when she heard the door secured as formerly.

The impression, which his look had left on her mind, so wholly engaged her in conjecture, that a considerable time elapsed before she remembered that he had brought the refreshment she so much required; but, as she now listed it to her lips, a horrible suspicion arrested her hand; it was not, however, before she had swallowed a small quantity of the milk. The look of Spalatro, which occasioned her surprise, had accompanied the setting down of the breakfast, and it occurred to her, that poison was infused in this liquid. She was thus compelled to refuse the sustenance, which was become necessary to her, for she feared to taste even of the oaten cake, since Spalatro had offered it, but the little milk she had unwarily taken, was so very small that she had no apprehension concerning it.

The day, however, was passed in terror, and almost in despondency; she could neither doubt the purpose, for which she had been brought hither, nor discover any possibility of escaping from her persecutors; yet that propensity to hope, which buoys up the human heart, even in the severest hours of trial, sustained, in some degree, her fainting spirits.

During these miserable hours of solitude and suspense, the only alleviation to her suffering arose from a belief, that Vivaldi was safe, at least from danger, though not from grief; but she now understood too much of the dexterous contrivances of the Marchesa, his mother, to think it was practicable for him to escape from her designs, and again restore her to liberty.

All day Ellena either leaned against the bars of her window, lost in reverie, while her unconscious eyes were fixed upon the ocean, whose murmurs she no longer heard; or she listened for some sound from within the house, that might assist her conjectures, as to the number of persons below, or what might be passing there. The house, however, was profoundly still, except when now and then a footstep sauntered along a distant passage, or a door was heard to close; but not the hum of a single voice arose from the lower rooms, nor any symptom of there being more than one person, beside herself, in the dwelling. Though she had not heard

her former guards depart, it appeared certain that they were gone, and that she was left alone in this place with Spalatro. What could be the purport of such a proceeding, Ellena could not imagine; if her death was designed, it seemed strange that one person only should be left to the hazard of the deed, when three must have rendered the completion of it certain. But this surprise vanished, when her suspicion of poison returned; for it was probable, that these men had believed their scheme to be already nearly accomplished, and had abandoned her to die alone, in a chamber from whence escape was impracticable, leaving Spalatro to dispose of her remains. All the incongruities she had separately observed in their conduct, seemed now to harmonize and unite in one plan; and her death, designed by poison, and that poison to be conveyed in the disguise of nourishment, appeared to have been the object of it. Whether it was that the strength of this conviction affected her fancy, or that the cause was real, Ellena, remembering at this moment that she had tasted the milk, was seized with an universal shuddering, and thought she felt that the poison had been sufficiently potent to affect her, even in the inconsiderable quantity she might have taken.

While she was thus agitated, she distinguished footsteps loitering near her door, and attentively listening, became convinced, that some person was in the corridor. The steps moved softly, sometimes stopping for an instant, as if to allow time for listening, and soon after passed away.

“It is Spalatro!” said Ellena; “he believes that I have taken the poison, and he comes to listen for my dying groans! Alas! he is only come somewhat too soon, perhaps!”

As this horrible supposition occurred, the shuddering returned with encreased violence, and she sunk, almost fainting, on the mattress; but the fit was not of long continuance. When it gradually left her, and recollection revived, she perceived, however, the prudence of suffering Spalatro to suppose she had taken the beverage he brought her, since such belief would at least procure some delay of further schemes, and every delay afforded some possibility for hope to rest upon. Ellena, therefore, poured through the bars of her window, the milk, which she believed Spalatro had designed should be fatal in its consequence.

It was evening, when she again fancied footsteps were lingering near her door, and the suspicion was confirmed, when, on turning her eyes, she

perceived a shade on the floor, underneath it, as of some person stationed without. Presently the shadow glided away, and at the same time she distinguished departing steps treading cautiously.

“It is he!” said Ellena; “he still listens for my moans!”

This further confirmation of his designs affected her nearly as much as the first; when anxiously turning her looks towards the corridor, the shadow again appeared beneath the door, but she heard no step. Ellena now watched it with intense solicitude and expectation; fearing every instant that Spalatro would conclude her doubts by entering the room. “And O! when he discovers that I live,” thought she, “what may I not expect during the first moments of his disappointment! What less than immediate death!”

The shadow, after remaining a few minutes stationary, moved a little, and then glided away as before. But it quickly returned, and a low sound followed, as of some person endeavouring to unfasten bolts without noise. Ellena heard one bar gently undrawn, and then another; she observed the door begin to move, and then to give way, till it gradually unclosed, and the face of Spalatro presented itself from behind it. Without immediately entering, he threw a glance round the chamber, as if he wished to ascertain some circumstance before he ventured further. His look was more than usually haggard as it rested upon Ellena, who apparently reposed on her mattress.

Having gazed at her for an instant, he ventured towards the bed with quick and unequal steps; his countenance expressed at once impatience, alarm, and the consciousness of guilt. When he was within a few paces, Ellena raised herself, and he started back as if a sudden spectre had crossed him. The more than usual wildness and wanness of his looks, with the whole of his conduct, seemed to confirm all her former terrors; and, when he roughly asked her how she did, Ellena had not sufficient presence of mind to answer that she was ill. For some moments, he regarded her with an earnest and sullen attention, and then a sly glance of scrutiny, which he threw round the chamber, told her that he was enquiring whether she had taken the poison. On perceiving that the bason was empty, he lifted it from the floor, and Ellena fancied a gleam of satisfaction passed over his visage.

“You have had no dinner.” said he, “I forgot you; but supper will soon be ready; and you may walk up the beach till then, if you will.”

Ellena, extremely surprised and perplexed by this offer of a seeming indulgence, knew not whether to accept or reject it. She suspected that some treachery lurked within it. The invitation appeared to be only a stratagem to lure her to destruction, and she determined to decline accepting it; when again she considered, that to accomplish this, it was not necessary to withdraw her from the chamber, where she was already sufficiently in the power of her persecutors. Her situation could not be more desperate than it was at present, and almost any change might make it less so.

As she descended from the corridor, and passed through the lower part of the house, no person appeared but her conductor; and she ventured to enquire, whether the men who had brought her hither were departed. Spalatro did not return an answer, but led the way in silence to the court, and, having passed the gates, he pointed toward the west, and said she might walk that way.

Ellena bent her course towards the “many-sounding waves,” followed at a short distance by Spalatro, and, wrapt in thought, pursued the windings of the shore, scarcely noticing the objects around her; till, on passing the foot of a rock, she lifted her eyes to the scene that unfolded beyond, and observed some huts scattered at a considerable distance, apparently the residence of fishermen. She could just distinguish the dark sails of some skiffs turning the cliffs, and entering the little bay, where the hamlet margined the beach; but, though she saw the sails lowered, as the boats approached the shore, they were too far off to allow the figures of the men to appear. To Ellena, who had believed that no human habitation, except her prison, interrupted the vast solitudes of these forests and shores, the view of the huts, remote as they were, imparted a feeble hope, and even somewhat of joy. She looked back, to observe whether Spalatro was near; he was already within a few paces; and, casting a wistful glance forward to the remote cottages, her heart sunk again.

It was a lowering evening, and the sea was dark and swelling; the screams of the sea-birds too, as they wheeled among the clouds, and sought their high nests in the rocks, seemed to indicate an approaching storm. Ellena was not so wholly engaged by selfish sufferings, but that she

could sympathise with those of others, and she rejoiced that the fishermen, whose boats she had observed, had escaped the threatening tempest, and were safely sheltered in their little homes, where, as they heard the loud waves break along the coast, they could look with keener pleasure upon the social circle, and the warm comforts around them. From such considerations however, she returned again to a sense of her own forlorn and friendless situation.

“Alas!” said she, “I have no longer a home, a circle to smile welcomes upon me! I have no longer even one friend to support, to rescue me! I — a miserable wanderer on a distant shore! tracked, perhaps, by the footsteps of the assassin, who at this instant eyes his victim with silent watchfulness, and awaits the moment of opportunity to sacrifice her!”

Ellena shuddered as she said this, and turned again to observe whether Spalatro was near. He was not within view; and, while she wondered, and congratulated herself on a possibility of escaping, she perceived a Monk walking silently beneath the dark rocks that overbrowed the beach. His black garments were folded round him; his face was inclined towards the ground, and he had the air of a man in deep meditation.

“His, no doubt, are worthy musings!” said Ellena, as she observed him, with mingled hope and surprise. “I may address myself, without fear, to one of his order. It is probably as much his wish, as it is his duty, to succour the unfortunate. Who could have hoped to find on this sequestered shore so sacred a protector! his convent cannot be far off.”

He approached, his face still bent towards the ground, and Ellena advanced slowly, and with trembling steps, to meet him. As he drew near, he viewed her askance, without lifting his head, but she perceived his large eyes looking from under the shade of his cowl, and the upper part of his peculiar countenances. Her confidence in his protection began to fail, and she faulted, unable to speak, and scarcely daring to meet his eyes. The Monk stalked past her in silence, the lower part of his visage still muffled in his drapery, and as he passed her looked neither with curiosity, nor surprise.

Ellena paused, and determined, when he should be at some distance, to endeavour to make her way to the hamlet, and throw herself upon the humanity of it’s inhabitants, rather than solicit the pity of this forbidding stranger. But in the next moment she heard a step behind her, and, on

turning, saw the Monk again approaching. He stalked by as before, surveying her, however, with a sly and scrutinizing glance from the corners of his eyes. His air and countenance were equally repulsive, and still Ellena could not summon courage enough to attempt engaging his compassion; but shrunk as from an enemy. There was something also terrific in the silent stalk of so gigantic a form; it announced both power and treachery. He passed slowly on to some distance, and disappeared among the rocks.

Ellena turned once more with an intention of hastening towards the distant hamlet, before Spalatro should observe her, whose strange absence she had scarcely time to wonder at; but she had not proceeded far, when suddenly she perceived the Monk again at her shoulder. She started, and almost shrieked; while he regarded her with more attention than before. He paused a moment, and seemed to hesitate; after which he again passed on in silence. The distress of Ellena encreased; he was gone the way she had designed to run, and she feared almost equally to follow him, and to return to her prison. Presently he turned, and passed her again, and Ellena hastened forward. But, when fearful of being pursued, she again looked back, she observed him conversing with Spalatro. They appeared to be in consultation, while they slowly advanced, till, probably observing her rapid progress, Spalatro called on her to stop, in a voice that echoed among all the rocks. It was a voice, which would not be disobeyed. She looked hopelessly at the still distant cottages, and slackened her stops. Presently the Monk again passed before her, and Spalatro had again disappeared. The frown, with which the former now regarded Ellena, was so terrific, that she shrunk trembling back, though she knew him not for her persecutor, since she had never consciously seen Schedoni. He was agitated, and his look became darker.

“Whither go you?” said he in a voice that was stifled by emotion.

“Who is it, father, that asks the question?” said Ellena, endeavouring to appear composed.

“Whither go you, and who are you?” repeated the Monk more sternly.

“I am an unhappy orphan,” replied Ellena, sighing deeply, “If you are, as your habit denotes, a friend to the charities, you will regard me with compassion.”

Schedoni was silent, and then said— “Who, and what is it that you fear?”

“I fear — even for my life,” replied Ellena, with hesitation. She observed a darker shade pass over his countenance. “For your life!” said he, with apparent surprise, “who is there that would think it worth the taking.”

Ellena was struck with these words.

“Poor insect!” added Schedoni, “who would crush thee?”

Ellena made no reply; she remained with her eyes fixed in amazement upon his face. There was something in his manner of pronouncing this, yet more extraordinary than in the words themselves. Alarmed by his manner, and awed by the encreasing gloom, and swelling surge, that broke in thunder on the beach, she at length turned away, and again walked towards the hamlet which was yet very remote.

He soon overtook her; when rudely seizing her arm, and gazing earnestly on her face, “Who is it, that you fear?” said he, “say who!”

“That is more than I dare say,” replied Ellena, scarcely able to sustain herself.

“Hah! is it even so!” said the Monk; with encreasing emotion. His visage now became so terrible, that Ellena struggled to liberate her arm, and supplicated that he would not detain her. He was silent, and still gazed upon her, but his eyes, when she had ceased to struggle, assumed the fixt and vacant glare of a man, whose thoughts have retired within themselves, and who is no longer conscious to surrounding objects.

“I beseech you to release me!” repeated Ellena, “it is late, and I am far from home.”

“That is true,” muttered Schedoni, still grasping her arm, and seeming to reply to his own thoughts rather than to her words,— “that is very true.”

“The evening is closing fast,” continued Ellena, “and I shall be overtaken by the storm.”

Schedoni still mused, and then muttered— “The storm, say you? Why ay, let it come.”

As he spoke, he suffered her arm to drop, but still held it, and walked slowly towards the house. Ellena, thus compelled to accompany him, and yet more alarmed both by his looks, his incoherent answers, and his approach to her prison, renewed her supplications and her efforts for

liberty, in a voice of piercing distress, adding, “I am far from home, father; night is coming on. See how the rocks darken! I am far from home, and shall be waited for.”

“That is false!” said Schedoni, with emphasis; “and you know it to be so.”

“Alas! I do,” replied Ellena, with mingled shame and grief, “I have no friends to wait for me!”

“What do those deserve, who deliberately utter falsehoods,” continued the Monk, “who deceive, and slatter young men to their destruction?”

“Father!” exclaimed the astonished Ellena.

“Who disturb the peace of families — who trepan, with wanton arts, the heirs of noble houses — who — hah! what do such deserve?”

Overcome with astonishment and terror, Ellena remained silent. She now understood that Schedoni, so far from being likely to prove a protector, was an agent of her worst, and as she had believed her only enemy; and an apprehension of the immediate and terrible vengeance, which such an agent seemed willing to accomplish, subdued her senses; she tottered, and sunk upon the beach. The weight, which strained the arm Schedoni held, called his attention to her situation.

As he gazed upon her helpless and faded form, he became agitated. He quitted it, and traversed the beach in short turns, and with hasty steps; came back again, and bent over it — his heart seemed sensible to some touch of pity. At one moment, he stepped towards the sea, and taking water in the hollows of his hands, threw it upon her face; at another, seeming to regret that he had done so, he would stamp with sudden fury upon the shore, and walk abruptly to a distance. The conflict between his design and his conscience was strong, or, perhaps, it was only between his passions. He, who had hitherto been insensible to every tender feeling, who, governed by ambition and resentment had contributed, by his artful instigations, to fix the baleful resolution of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, and who was come to execute her purpose, — even he could not now look upon the innocent, the wretched Ellena, without yielding to the momentary weakness, as he termed it, of compassion.

While he was yet unable to baffle the new emotion by evil passions, he despised that which conquered him. “And shall the weakness of a girl,” said he, “subdue the resolution of a man! Shall the view of her transient

sufferings unnerve my firm heart, and compel me to renounce the lofty plans I have so ardently, so laboriously imagined, at the very instant when they are changing into realities! Am I awake! Is one spark of the fire, which has so long smouldered within my bosom, and consumed my peace, alive! Or am I tame and abject as my fortunes? hah! as my fortunes! Shall the spirit of my family yield for ever to circumstances? The question rouses it, and I feel it's energy revive within me."

He stalked with hasty steps towards Ellena, as if he feared to trust his resolution with a second pause. He had a dagger concealed beneath his Monk's habit; as he had also an assassin's heart shrouded by his garments. He had a dagger — but he hesitated to use it, the blood which it might spill, would be observed by the peasants of the neighbouring hamlet, and might lead to a discovery. It would be safer, he considered, and easier, to lay Ellena, senseless as she was, in the waves; their coldness would recal her to life, only at the moment before they would suffocate her.

As he stooped to lift her, his resolution faultered again, on beholding her innocent face, and in that moment she moved. He started back, as if she could have known his purpose, and, knowing it, could have avenged herself. The water, which he had thrown upon her face, had gradually revived her; she unclosed her eyes, and, on perceiving him, shrieked, and attempted to rise. His resolution was subdued, so tremblingly fearful is guilt in the moment when it would execute it's atrocities. Overcome with apprehensions, yet agitated with shame and indignation against himself for being so, he gazed at her for an instant in silence, and then abruptly turned away his eyes and left her. Ellena listened to his departing steps, and, raising herself, observed him retiring among the rocks that led towards the house. Astonished at his conduct, and surprised to find that she was alone, Ellena renewed all her efforts to sustain herself, till she should reach the hamlet so long the object of her hopes; but she had proceeded only a few paces, when Spalatro again appeared swiftly approaching. Her utmost exertion availed her nothing; her feeble steps were soon overtaken, and Ellena perceived herself again his prisoner. The look with which she resigned herself, awakened no pity in Spalatro, who uttered some taunting jest upon the swiftness of her flight, as he led her back to her prison, and proceeded in sullen watchfulness. Once again, then, she entered the gloomy walls of that fatal mansion, never more, she now believed, to quit

them with life, a belief, which was strengthened when she remembered that the Monk, on leaving her, had taken the way hither; for, though she knew not how to account for his late forbearance, she could not suppose that he would long be merciful. He appeared no more, however, as she passed to her chamber, where Spalatro left her again to solitude and terror, and she heard that fateful door again barred upon her. When his retreating steps had ceased to sound, a stilness, as of the grave, prevailed in the house; like the dead calm, which sometimes precedes the horrors of a tempest.

Chapter 1 9

“I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible seat.”
Shakspeare.

Schedoni had returned from the beach to the house, in a state of perturbation, that defied the controul of even his own stern will. On the way thither he met Spalatro, whom, as he dispatched him to Ellena, he strictly commanded not to approach his chamber till he should be summoned.

Having reached his apartment, he secured the door, though not any person, except himself, was in the house, nor any one expected, but those who he knew would not dare to intrude upon him. Had it been possible to have shut out all consciousness of himself, also, how willingly would he have done so! He threw himself into a chair, and remained for a considerable time motionless and lost in thought, yet the emotions of his mind were violent and contradictory. At the very instant when his heart reproached him with the crime he had meditated, he regretted the ambitious views he must relinquish if he failed to perpetrate it, and regarded himself with some degree of contempt for having hitherto hesitated on the subject. He considered the character of his own mind with astonishment, for circumstances had drawn forth traits, of which, till now, he had no suspicion. He knew not by what doctrine to explain the inconsistencies, the contradictions, he experienced, and, perhaps, it was not one of the least that in these moments of direful and conflicting passions, his reason could still look down upon their operations, and lead him to a cool, though brief examination of his own nature. But the subtlety of self-love still eluded his enquiries, and he did not detect that pride was even at this instant of self-examination, and of critical import, the master-spring of his mind. In the earliest dawn of his character this passion had displayed its predominancy, whenever occasion permitted, and it’s influence had led to some of the chief events of his life.

The Count di Marinella, for such had formerly been the title of the Confessor, was the younger son of an ancient family, who resided in the duchy of Milan, and near the feet of the Tyrolean Alps, on such estates of their ancestors, as the Italian wars of a former century had left them. The portion, which he had received at the death of his father, was not large, and Schedoni was not of a disposition to improve his patrimony by slow diligence, or to submit to the restraint and humiliation, which his narrow finances would have imposed. He disdained to acknowledge an inferiority of fortune to those, with whom he considered himself equal in rank; and, as he was destitute of generous feeling, and of sound judgment, he had not that loftiness of soul, which is ambitious of true grandeur. On the contrary, he was satisfied with an ostentatious display of pleasures and of power, and, thoughtless of the consequence of dissipation, was contented with the pleasures of the moment, till his exhausted resources compelled him to pause, and to reflect. He perceived, too late for his advantage, that it was necessary for him to dispose of part of his estate, and to confine himself to the income of the remainder. Incapable of submitting with grace to the reduction, which his folly had rendered expedient, he endeavoured to obtain by cunning, the luxuries that his prudence had failed to keep, and which neither his genius or his integrity could command. He withdrew, however, from the eyes of his neighbours, unwilling to submit his altered circumstances to their observation.

Concerning several years of his life, from this period, nothing was generally known; and, when he was next discovered, it was in the Spirito Santo convent at Naples, in the habit of a Monk, and under the assumed name of Schedoni. His air and countenance were as much altered as his way of life; his looks had become gloomy and severe, and the pride, which had mingled with the gaiety of their former expression, occasionally discovered itself under the disguise of humility, but more frequently in the austerity of silence, and in the barbarity of penance.

The person who discovered Schedoni, would not have recollected him, had not his remarkable eyes first fixed his attention, and then revived remembrance. As he examined his features, he traced the faint resemblance of what Marinella had been, to whom he made himself known.

The Confessor affected to have forgotten his former acquaintance, and assured him, that he was mistaken respecting himself, till the stranger so closely urged some circumstances, that the former was no longer permitted to dissemble. He retired, in some emotion, with the stranger, and, whatever might be the subject of their conference, he drew from him, before he quited the convent, a tremendous vow, to keep secret from the brotherhood his knowledge of Schedoni's family, and never to reveal without those walls, that he had seen him. These requests he had urged in a manner, that at once surprised and awed the stranger, and which at the same time that it manifested the weight of Schedoni's fears, bade the former tremble for the consequence of disobedience; and he shuddered even while he promised to obey. Of the first part of the promise he was probably strictly observant; whether he was equally so of the second, does not appear; it is certain, that after this period, he was never more seen or heard of at Naples.

Schedoni, ever ambitious of distinction, adapted his manners to the views and prejudices of the society with whom he resided, and became one of the most exact observers of their outward forms, and almost a prodigy for self-denial and severe discipline. He was pointed out by the fathers of the convent to the juniors as a great example, who was, however, rather to be looked up to with reverential admiration, than with an hope of emulating his sublime virtues. But with such panegyrics their friendship for Schedoni concluded. They found it convenient to applaud the austerities, which they declined to practise; it procured them a character for sanctity, and saved them the necessity of earning it by mortifications of their own; but they both feared and hated Schedoni for his pride and his gloomy austerities, too much, to gratify his ambition by any thing further than empty praise. He had been several years in the society, without obtaining any considerable advancement, and with the mortification of seeing persons, who had never emulated his severity, raised to high offices in the church. Somewhat too late he discovered, that he was not to expect any substantial favour from the brotherhood, and then it was that his restless and disappointed spirit first sought preferment by other avenues. He had been some years Confessor to the Marchesa di Vivaldi, when the conduct of her son awakened his hopes, by showing him, that he might render himself not only useful but necessary to her, by his councils. It was

his custom to study the characters of those around him, with a view of adapting them to his purposes, and, having ascertained that of the Marchesa, these hopes were encouraged. He perceived that her passions were strong, her judgment weak; and he understood, that, if circumstances should ever enable him to be serviceable in promoting the end at which any one of those passions might aim, his fortune would be established.

At length, he so completely insinuated himself into her confidence, and became so necessary to her views, that he could demand his own terms, and this he had not failed to do, though with all the affected delicacy and finesse that his situation seemed to require. An office of high dignity in the church, which had long vainly excited his ambition, was promised him by the Marchesa, who had sufficient influence to obtain it; her condition was that of his preserving the honour of her family, as she delicately termed it, which she was careful to make him understand could be secured only by the death of Ellena. He acknowledged, with the Marchesa, that the death of this fascinating young woman was the only means of preserving that honour, since, if she lived, they had every evil to expect from the attachment and character of Vivaldi, who would discover and extricate her from any place of confinement, however obscure or difficult of access, to which she might be conveyed. How long and how arduously the Confessor had aimed to oblige the Marchesa, has already appeared. The last scene was now arrived, and he was on the eve of committing that atrocious act, which was to secure the pride of her house, and to satisfy at once his ambition and his desire of vengeance; when an emotion new and surprising to him, had arrested his arm, and compelled his resolution to falter. But this emotion was transient, it disappeared almost with the object that had awakened it; and now, in the silence and retirement of his chamber, he had leisure to recollect his thoughts, to review his schemes, to reanimate his resolution, and to wonder again at the pity, which had almost won him from his purpose. The ruling passion of his nature once more resumed it’s authority, and he determined to earn the honour, which the Marchesa had in store for him.

After some cool, and more of tumultuous, consideration, he resolved that Ellena should be assassinated that night, while she slept, and afterwards conveyed through a passage of the house communicating with the sea, into which the body might be thrown and buried, with her sad

story, beneath the waves. For his own sake, he would have avoided the danger of shedding blood, had this appeared easy; but he had too much reason to know she had suspicions of poison, to trust to a second attempt by such means; and again his indignation rose against himself, since by yielding to a momentary compassion, he had lost the opportunity afforded him of throwing her unresistingly into the surge.

Spalatro, as has already been hinted, was a former confident of the Confessor, who knew too truly, from experience, that he could be trusted, and had, therefore, engaged him to assist on this occasion. To the hands of this man he cosigned the fate of the unhappy Ellena, himself recoiling from the horrible act he had willed; and intending by such a step to involve Spalatro more deeply in the guilt, and thus more effectually to secure his secret.

The night was far advanced before Schedoni's final resolution was taken, when he summoned Spalatro to his chamber to instruct him in his office. He bolted the door, by which the man had entered, forgetting that themselves were the only persons in the house, except the poor Ellena, who, unsuspicious of what was conspiring, and her spirits worn out by the late scene, was sleeping peacefully on her mattress above. Schedoni moved softly from the door he had secured, and, beckoning Spalatro to approach, spoke in a low voice, as if he feared to be overheard. "Have you perceived any sound from her chamber lately?" said he, "Does she sleep, think you?"

"No one has moved there for this hour past, at least," replied Spalatro, "I have been watching in the corridor, till you called, and should have heard if she had stirred, the old floor shakes so with every step."

"Then hear me, Spalatro," said the Confessor. "I have tried, and found thee faithful, or I should not trust thee in a business of confidence like this. Recollect all I said to thee in the morning, and be resolute and dexterous, as I have ever found thee."

Spalatro listened in gloomy attention, and the Monk proceeded, "It is late; go, therefore, to her chamber; be certain that she sleeps. Take this," he added, "and this," giving him a dagger and a large cloak— "You know how you are to use them."

He paused, and fixed his penetrating eyes on Spalatro, who held up the dagger in silence, examined the blade, and continued to gaze upon it, with

a vacant stare, as if he was unconscious of what he did.

“You know your business,” repeated Schedoni, authoritatively, “dispatch! time wears; and I must set off early.”

The man made no reply.

“The morning dawns already,” said the Confessor, still more urgently, “Do you faulter? do you tremble? Do I not know you?”

Spalatro put up the poinard in his bosom without speaking, threw the cloak over his arm, and moved with a loitering step towards the door.

“Dispatch!” repeated the Confessor, “why do you linger?”

“I cannot say I like this business, Signor,” said Spalatro surlily. “I know not why I should always do the most, and be paid the least.”

“Sordid villain!” exclaimed Schedoni, “you are not satisfied then!”

“No more a villain than yourself, Signor,” retorted the man, throwing down the cloak, “I only do your business; and ‘tis you that are sordid, for you would take all the reward, and I would only have a poor man have his dues. Do the work yourself, or give me the greater profit.”

“Peace!” said Schedoni, “dare no more to insult me with the mention of reward. Do you imagine I have sold myself! ‘Tis my will that she dies; this is sufficient; and for you — the price you have asked has been granted.”

“It is too little,” replied Spalatro, and besides, I do not like the work. — What harm has she done me?”

“Since when is it, that you have taken upon you to moralize?” said the Confessor, “and how long are these cowardly scruples to last? This is not the first time you have been employed; what harm

had others done you! You forget that I know you, you forget the past.”

“No, Signor, I remember it too well, I wish I could forget; I remember it too well. — I have never been at peace since. The bloody hand is always before me! and often of a night, when the sea roars, and storms shake the house, they have come, all gashed as I left them, and stood before my bed! I have got up and ran out upon the shore for safety!”

“Peace!” repeated the Confessor, “where is this frenzy of fear to end? To what are these visions, painted in blood, to lead? I thought I was talking with a man, but find I am speaking only to a baby, possessed with his nurse’s dreams! Yet I understand you, — you shall be satisfied.”

Schedoni, however, had for once misunderstood this man, when he could not believe it possible that he was really averse to execute what he had

undertaken. Whether the innocence and beauty of Ellena had softened his heart, or that his conscience did torture him for his past deeds, he persisted in refusing to murder her. His conscience, or his pity, was of a very peculiar kind however; for, though he refused to execute the deed himself, he consented to wait at the foot of a back staircase, that communicated with Ellena's chamber, while Schedoni accomplished it, and afterward to assist in carrying the body to the shore. "This is a compromise between conscience and guilt, worthy of a demon," muttered Schedoni, who appeared to be insensible that he had made the same compromise with himself not an hour before; and whose extreme reluctance at this moment, to perpetrate with his own hand, what he had willingly designed for another, ought to have reminded him of that compromise.

Spalatro, released from the immediate office of an executioner, endured silently the abusive, yet half-stifled, indignation of the Confessor, who also bade him remember, that, though he now shrunk from the most active part of this transaction, he had not always been restrained, in offices of the same nature, by equal compunction; and that not only his means of subsistence, but his very life itself, was at his mercy. Spalatro readily acknowledged that it was so; and Schedoni knew, too well, the truth of what he had urged, to be restrained from his purpose, by any apprehension of the consequence of a discovery from this ruffian.

"Give me the dagger, then," said the Confessor, after a long pause, "take up the cloak, and follow to the staircase. Let me see, whether your valour will carry you thus far."

Spalatro resigned the stiletto, and threw the cloak again over his arm. The Confessor stepped to the door, and, trying to open it, "It is fastened!" said he in alarm, "some person has got into the house, — it is fastened!"

"That well may be, Signor," replied Spalatro, calmly, "for I saw you bolt it yourself, after I came into the room."

"True," said Schedoni, recovering himself; "that is true."

He opened it, and proceeded along the silent passages, towards the private staircase, often pausing to listen, and then stepping more lightly; — the terrific Schedoni, in this moment of meditative guilt, feared even the feeble Ellena. At the foot of the staircase, he again stopped to listen. "Do you hear any thing?" said he in a whisper.

"I hear only the sea," replied the man.

“Hush! it is something more!” said Schedoni; “that is the murmur of voices!”

They were silent. After a pause of some length, “It is, perhaps, the voice of the spectres I told you of, Signor,” said Spalatro, with a sneer. “Give me the dagger,” said Schedoni.

Spalatro, instead of obeying, now grasped the arm of the Confessor, who, looking at him for an explanation of this extraordinary action, was still more surprised to observe the paleness and horror of his countenance. His starting eyes seemed to follow some object along the passage, and Schedoni, who began to partake of his feelings, looked forward to discover what occasioned this dismay, but could not perceive any thing that justified it. “What is it you fear?” said he at length.

Spalatro’s eyes were still moving in horror, “Do you see nothing!” said he pointing. Schedoni looked again, but did not distinguish any object in the remote gloom of the passage, whither Spalatro’s sight was now fixed.

“Come, come,” said he, ashamed of his own weakness, “this is not a moment for such fancies. Awake from this idle dream.”

Spalatro withdrew his eyes, but they retained all their wildness. “It was no dream,” said he, in the voice of a man who is exhausted by pain, and begins to breathe somewhat more freely again. “I saw it as plainly as I now see you.”

“Dotard! what did you see!” enquired the Confessor.

“It came before my eyes in a moment, and shewed itself distinctly and outspread.”

“What shewed itself?” repeated Schedoni.

“And then it beckoned — yes, it beckoned me, with that blood-stained finger! and glided away down the passage, still beckoning — till it was lost in the darkness.”

“This is very frenzy!” said Schedoni, excessively agitated. “Arouse yourself, and be a man!”

“Frenzy! would it were, Signor. I saw that dreadful hand — I see it now — it is there again! — there!”

Schedoni, shocked, embarrassed, and once more infected with the strange emotions of Spalatro, looked forward expecting to discover some terrific object, but still nothing was visible to him, and he soon recovered himself sufficiently to endeavour to appease the fancy of this conscience-

struck ruffian. But Spalatro was insensible to all he could urge, and the Confessor, fearing that his voice, though weak and stifled, would awaken Ellena, tried to withdraw him from the spot, to the apartment they had quitted.

“The wealth of San Loretto should not make me go that way, Signor,” replied he, shuddering— “that was the way it beckoned, it vanished that way!”

Every emotion now yielded with Schedoni, to that of apprehension left Ellena, being awakened, should make his task more horrid by a struggle, and his embarrassment encreased at each instant, for neither command, menace, or entreaty could

prevail with Spalatro to retire, till the Monk luckily remembered a door, which opened beyond the staircase, and would conduct them by another way to the opposite side of the house. The man consented so to depart, when, Schedoni unlocking a suit of rooms, of which he had always kept the keys, they passed in silence through an extent of desolate chambers, till they reached the one, which they had lately left.

Here, relieved from apprehension respecting Ellena, the Confessor expostulated more freely with Spalatro, but neither argument or menace could prevail, and the man persisted in refusing to return to the staircase, though protesting, at the same time, that he would not remain alone in any part of the house; till the wine, with which the Confessor abundantly supplied him, began to overcome the terrors of his imagination. At length, his courage was so much reanimated, that he consented to resume his station, and await at the foot of the stairs the accomplishment of Schedoni’s dreadful errand, with which agreement they returned thither by the way they had lately passed. The wine, with which Schedoni also had found it necessary to strengthen his own resolution, did not secure him from severe emotion, when he found himself again near Ellena; but he made a strenuous effort for self-subjection, as he demanded the dagger of Spalatro.

“You have it already, Signor,” replied the man.

“True,” said the Monk; “ascend softly, or our steps may awaken her.”

“You said I was to wait at the foot of the stairs, Signor, while you” —

“True, true, true!” muttered the Confessor, and had begun to ascend, when his attendant desired him to stop. “You are going in darkness, Signor,

you have forgotten the lamp. I have another here."

Schedoni took it angrily, without speaking, and was again ascending, when he hesitated, and once more paused. "The glare will disturb her," thought he, "it is better to go in darkness. — Yet— ". He considered, that he could not strike with certainty without light to direct his hand, and he kept the lamp, but returned once more to charge Spalatro not to stir from the foot of the stairs till he called, and to ascend to the chamber upon the first signal.

"I will obey, Signor, if you, on your part, will promise not to give the signal till all is over."

"I do promise," replied Schedoni. "No more!"

Again he ascended, nor stopped till he reached Ellena's door, where he listened for a sound; but all was as silent as if death already reigned in the chamber. This door was, from long disuse, difficult to be opened; formerly it would have

yielded without sound, but now Schedoni was fearful of noise from every effort he made to move it. After some difficulty, however, it gave way, and he perceived, by the stilness within the apartment, that he had not disturbed Ellena. He shaded the lamp with the door for a moment, while he threw an enquiring glance forward, and when he did venture farther, held part of his dark drapery before the light, to prevent the rays from spreading through the room.

As he approached the bed, her gentle breathings informed him that she still slept, and the next moment he was at her side. She lay in deep and peaceful slumber, and seemed to have thrown herself upon the mattress, after having been wearied by her griefs; for, though sleep pressed heavily on her eyes, their lids were yet wet with tears.

While Schedoni gazed for a moment upon her innocent countenance, a saint smile stole over it. He stepped back. "She smiles in her murderer's face!" said he, shuddering, "I must be speedy."

He searched for the dagger, and it was some time before his trembling hand could disengage it from the solds of his garment; but, having done so, he again drew near, and prepared to strike. Her dress perplexed him; it would interrupt the blow, and he stooped to examine whether he could turn her robe aside, without waking her. As the light passed over her face, he perceived that the smile had vanished — the visions of her sleep were

changed, for tears stole from beneath her eyelids, and her features suffered a slight convulsion. She spoke! Schedoni, apprehending that the light had disturbed her, suddenly drew back, and, again irresolute, shaded the lamp, and concealed himself behind the curtain, while he listened. But her words were inward and indistinct, and convinced him that she still slumbered.

His agitation and repugnance to strike encreased with every moment of delay, and, as often as he prepared to plunge the poinard in her bosom, a shuddering horror restrained him. Astonished at his own feelings, and indignant at what he termed a dastardly weakness, he found it necessary to argue with himself, and his rapid thoughts said, “Do I not feel the necessity of this act! Does not what is dearer to me than existence — does not my consequence depend on the execution of it? Is she not also beloved by the young Vivaldi? — have I already forgotten the church of the Spirito Santo?” This consideration reanimated him; vengeance nerved his arm, and drawing aside the lawn from her bosom, he once more raised it to strike; when, after gazing for an instant, some new cause of horror seemed to seize all his frame, aud he stood for some moments aghast and motionless like a statue. His respiration was short and laborious, chilly drops stood on his forehead, and all his faculties of mind seemed suspended. When he recovered, he stooped to examine again the miniature, which had occasioned this revolution, and which had lain concealed beneath the lawn that he withdrew. The terrible certainty was almost confirmed, and forgetting, in his impatience to know the truth, the imprudence of suddenly discovering himself to Ellena at this hour of the night, and with a dagger at his feet, he called loudly “Awake! awake! Say, what is your name? Speak! speak quickly!”

Ellena, aroused by a man’s voice, started from her mattress, when, perceiving Schedoni, and by the pale glare of the lamp, his haggard countenance, she shrieked, and sunk back on the pillow. She had not fainted; and believing that he came to murder her, she now exerted herself to plead for mercy. The energy of her feelings enabled her to rise and throw herself at his feet, “Be merciful, O father! be merciful!” said she, in a trembling voice.

“Father!” interrupted Schedoni, with earnestness; and then, seeming to restrain himself, he added, with unaffected surprise, “Why are you thus terrified?” for he had lost, in new interests and emotions, all consciousness

of evil intention, and of the singularity of his situation. “What do you fear?” he repeated.

“Have pity, holy father!” exclaimed Ellena in agony.

“Why do you not say whose portrait that is?” demanded he, forgetting that he had not asked the question before.

“Whose portrait?” repeated the Confessor in a loud voice.

“Whose portrait!” said Ellena, with extreme surprise.

“Ay, how came you by it? Be quick — whose resemblance is it?”

“Why should you wish to know?” said Ellena.

“Answer my question,” repeated Schedoni, with encreasing sternness.

“I cannot part with it, holy father,” replied Ellena, pressing it to her bosom, “you do not wish me to part with it!”

“Is it impossible to make you answer my question!” said he, in extreme perturbation, and turning away from her, “has fear utterly confounded you!” Then, again stepping towards her, and seizing her wrist, he repeated the demand in a tone of desperation.

“Alas! he is dead! or I should not now want a protector,” replied Ellena, shrinking from his grasp, and weeping.

“You trifle,” said Schedoni, with a terrible look, “I once more demand an answer — whose picture?” —

Ellena lifted it, gazed upon it for a moment, and then pressing it to her lips said, “This was my father.”

“Your father!” he repeated in an inward voice, “your father!” and shuddering, turned away.

Ellena looked at him with surprise.

“I never knew a father’s care,” she said, “nor till lately did I perceive the want of it. — But now.” —

“His name?” interrupted the Confessor.

“But now” continued Ellena— “if you are not as a father to me — to whom can I look for protection?”

“His name? “repeated Schedoni, with sterner emphasis.

“It is sacred,” replied Ellena, “for he was unfortunate!”

“His name?” demanded the Confessor, furiously.

“I have promised to conceal it, father.”

“On your life, I charge you tell it; remember, on your life!”

Ellena trembled, was silent, and with supplicating looks implored him to desist from enquiry, but he urged the question

more irresistibly. “His name then,” said she, “was Marinella.”

Schedoni groaned and turned away; but in a few seconds, struggling to command the agitation that shattered his whole frame, he returned to Ellena, and raised her from her knees, on which she had thrown herself to implore mercy.

“The place of his residence?” said the Monk.

“It was far from hence,” she replied; but he demanded an unequivocal answer, and she reluctantly gave one.

Schedoni turned away as before, groaned heavily, and paced the chamber without speaking; while Ellena, in her turn, enquired the motive of his questions, and the occasion of his agitation. But he seemed not to notice any thing she said, and, wholly given up to his feelings, was inflexibly silent, while he stalked, with measured steps, along the room, and his face, half hid by his cowl, was bent towards the ground.

Ellena’s terror began to yield to astonishment, and this emotion encreased, when, Schedoni approaching her, she perceived tears swell in his eyes, which were fixt on her’s, and his countenance soften from the wild disorder that had marked it. Still he could not speak. At length he yielded to the fulness of his heart, and Schedoni, the stern Schedoni, wept and sighed! He seated himself on the mattress beside Ellena, took her hand, which she affrighted attempted to withdraw, and when he could command his voice, said, “Unhappy child! — behold your more unhappy father!” As he concluded, his voice was overcome by groans, and he drew the cowl entirely over his face.

“My father!” exclaimed the astonished and doubting Ellena— “my father!” and fixed her eyes upon him. He gave no reply, but when, a moment after, he lifted his head, “Why do you reproach me with those looks!” said the conscious Schedoni.

“Reproach you! — reproach my father!” repeated Ellena, in accents softening into tenderness, Why should I reproach my father!”

“Why!” exclaimed Schedoni, starting from his seat, “Great God!”

As he moved, he stumbled over the dagger at his foot; at that moment it might be said to strike into his heart. He pushed it hastily from sight. Ellena had not observed it; but she observed his labouring breast, his

distracted looks, and quick steps, as he walked to and fro in the chamber; and she asked, with the most soothing accents of compassion, and looks of anxious gentleness, what made him so unhappy, and tried to assuage his sufferings. They seemed to encrease with every wish she expressed to dispel them; at one moment he would pause to gaze upon her and in the next would quit her with a frenzied start.

“Why do you look so piteously upon me, father?” Ellena said, “why are you so unhappy? Tell me, that I may comfort you.”

This appeal renewed all the violence of remorse and grief, and he pressed her to his bosom, and wetted her cheek with his tears. Ellena wept to see him weep, till her doubts began to take alarm. Whatever might be the proofs, that had convinced Schedoni of the relationship between them, he had not explained these to her, and, however strong was the eloquence of nature which she witnessed, it was not sufficient to justify an entire confidence in the assertion he had made, or to allow her to permit his caresses without trembling. She shrunk, and endeavoured to disengage herself; when, immediately understanding her, he said, “Can you doubt the cause of these emotions? these signs of paternal affection?”

“Have I not reason to doubt,” replied Ellena, timidly, “since I never witnessed them before?”

He withdrew his arms, and, fixing his eyes earnestly on hers, regarded her for some moments in expressive silence. “Poor Innocent!” said he, at length, “you know not how much your words convey! — It is too true, you never have known a father’s tenderness till now!”

His countenance darkened while he spoke, and he rose again from his seat. Ellena, meanwhile, astonished, terrified and oppressed by a variety of emotions, had no power to demand his reasons for the belief that so much agitated him, or any explanation of his conduct; but she appealed to the portrait, and endeavoured, by tracing some resemblance between it and Schedoni, to decide her doubts. The countenance of each was as different in character as in years. The miniature displayed a young man rather handsome, of a gay and smiling countenance; yet the smile expressed triumph, rather than sweetness, and his whole air and features were distinguished by a consciousness of superiority that rose even to haughtiness.

Schedoni, on the contrary, advanced in years, exhibited a severe physiognomy, furrowed by thought, no less than by time, and darkened by the habitual indulgence of morose passions. He looked as if he had never smiled since the portrait was drawn; and it seemed as if the painter, prophetic of Schedoni's future disposition, had arrested and embodied that smile, to prove hereafter that cheerfulness had once played upon his features.

Though the expression was so different between the countenance, which Schedoni formerly owned, and that he now wore, the same character of haughty pride was visible in both; and Ellena did trace a resemblance in the bold outline of the features, but not sufficient to convince her, without farther evidence, that each belonged to the same person, and that the Confessor had ever been the young cavalier in the portrait. In the first tumult of her thoughts, she had not had leisure to dwell upon the singularity of Schedoni's visiting her at this deep hour of the night, or to urge any questions, except vague ones, concerning the truth of her relationship to him. But now, that her mind was somewhat recollected, and that his looks were less terrific, she ventured to ask a fuller explanation of these circumstances, and his reasons for the late extraordinary assertion. "It is past midnight, father," said Ellena, "you may judge then how anxious I am to learn, what motive led you to my chamber at this lonely hour?"

Schedoni made no reply.

"Did you come to warn me of danger?" she continued, "had you discovered the cruel designs of Spalatro? Ah! when I supplicated for your compassion on the shore this evening, you little thought what perils surrounded me! or you would— "

"You say true!" interrupted he, in a hurried manner, "but name the subject no more. Why will you persist in returning to it?"

His words surprized Ellena, who had not even alluded to the subject till now; but the returning wildness of his countenance, made her fearful of dwelling upon the topic, even so far as to point out his error.

Another deep pause succeeded, during which Schedoni continued to pace the room, sometimes stopping for an instant, to fix his eyes on Ellena, and regarding her with an earnestness that seemed to partake of frenzy, and then gloomily withdrawing his regards, and sighing heavily, as he turned away to a distant part of the room. She, meanwhile, agitated with

astonishment at his conduct, as well as at her own circumstances, and with the fear of offending him by further questions, endeavoured to summon courage to solicit the explanation which was so important to her tranquillity. At length she asked, how she might venture to believe a circumstance so surprinsing, as that of which he had just assured her, and to remind him that he had not yet disclosed his reason for admitting the belief.

The Confessor's feelings were eloquent in reply; and, when at length they were sufficiently subdued, to permit him to talk coherently, he mentioned some circumstances concerning Ellena's family, that proved him at least to have been intimately acquainted with it; and others, which she believed were known only to Bianchi and herself, that removed every doubt of his identity.

This, however, was a period of his life too big with remorse, horror, and the first pangs of parental affection, to allow him to converse long; deep solitude was necessary for his soul. He wished to plunge where no eye might restrain his emotions, or observe the overflowing anguish of his heart. Having obtained sufficient proof to convince him that Ellena was indeed his child, and assured her that she should be removed from this house on the following day, and be restored to her home, he abruptly left the chamber.

As he descended the staircase, Spalatro stepped forward to meet him, with the cloak which had been designed to wrap the mangled form of Ellena, when it should be carried to the shore. "Is it done?" said the ruffian, in a stifled voice, "I am ready;" and he spread forth the cloak, and began to ascend.

"Hold! villain, hold!" said Schedoni, lifting up his head for the first time, "Dare to enter that chamber, and your life shall answer for it."

"What!" exclaimed the man, shrinking back astonished— "will not her's satisfy you!"

He trembled for the consequence of what he had said, when he observed the changing countenance of the Confessor. But Schedoni spoke not: the tumult in his breast was too great for utterance, and he pressed hastily forward. Spalatro followed. "Be pleased to tell me what I am to do," said he, again holding forth the cloak.

"Avaunt!" exclaimed the other, turning fiercely upon him; "leave me."

“How!” said the man, whose spirit was now aroused, “has your courage failed too, Signor? If so, I will prove myself no dastard, though you called me one; I’ll do the business myself.”

“Villain! fiend!” cried Schedoni, seizing the ruffian by the throat, with a grasp that seemed intended to annihilate him; when, recollecting that the fellow was only willing to obey the very instructions he had himself but lately delivered to him, other emotions succeeded to that of rage; he slowly liberated him, and in accents broken, and softening from sternness, bade him retire to rest. “Tomorrow,” he added, “I will speak further with you. As for this night — I have changed my purpose. Begone!”

Spalatro was about to express the indignation, which astonishment and fear had hitherto overcome, but his employer repeated his command in a voice of thunder, and closed the door of his apartment with violence, as he shut out a man, whose presence was become hateful to him. He felt relieved by his absence, and began to breathe more freely, till, remembering that this accomplice had just boasted that he was no dastard, he dreaded left, by way of proving the assertion, he should attempt to commit the crime, from which he had lately shrunk. Terrified at the possibility, and even apprehending that it might already have become a reality, he rushed from the room, and found Spalatro in the passage leading to the private staircase; but, whatever might have been his purpose, the situation and looks of the latter were sufficiently alarming. At the approach of Schedoni, he turned his sullen and malignant countenance towards him, without answering the call, or the demand as to his business there; and with slow steps obeyed the order of his master, that he should withdraw to his room. Thither Schedoni followed, and, having locked him in it for the night, he repaired to the apartment of Ellena, which he secured from the possibility of intrusion. He then returned to his own, not to sleep, but to abandon himself to the agonies of remorse and horror; and he yet shuddered like a man, who has just recoiled from the brink of a precipice, but who still measures the gulf with his eye.

Chapter 2 0

— But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.
Milton.

Ellena, when Schedoni had left her, recollected all the particulars, which he had thought proper to reveal concerning her family, and, comparing them with such circumstances as the late Bianchi had related on the same subject, she perceived nothing that was contradictory between the two accounts. But she knew not even yet enough of her own story, to understand why Bianchi had been silent as to some particulars, which had just been disclosed. From Bianchi she had always understood, that her mother had married a nobleman of the duchy of Milan, and of the house of Marinella; that the marriage had been unfortunate; and that she herself, even before the death of the Countess, had been committed to the care of Bianchi, the only sister of that lady. Of this event, or of her mother, Ellena had no remembrance; for the kindness of Bianchi had obliterated from her mind the loss and the griefs of her early infancy; and she recollected only the accident which had discovered to her, in Bianchi's cabinet, after the death of the latter, the miniature and the name of her father. When she had enquired the reason of this injunction, Bianchi replied, that the degraded fortune of her house rendered privacy desirable; and answered her further questions concerning her father, by relating, that he had died while she was an infant. The picture, which Ellena had discovered, Bianchi had found among the trinkets of the departed Countess, and designed to present it at some future period to Ellena, when her discretion might be trusted with a knowledge of her family. This was the whole of what Signora Bianchi had judged it necessary to explain, though in her last hours it appeared that she wished to reveal more; but it was then too late.

Though Ellena perceived that many circumstances of the relations given by Schedoni, and by Signora Bianchi, coincided, and that none were

contradictory, except that of his death, she could not yet subdue her amazement at this discovery, or even the doubts which occasionally recurred to her as to it's truth. Schedoni, on the contrary, had not even appeared surprised, when she assured him, that she always understood her father had been dead many years; though when she asked if her mother too was living, both his distress and his assurances confirmed the relation made by Bianchi.

When Ellena's mind became more tranquil, she noticed again the singularity of Schedoni's visit to her apartment at so sacred an hour; and her thoughts glanced back involuntarily to the scene of the preceding evening on the seashore, and the image of her father appeared in each, in the terrific character of an agent of the Marchesa di Vivaldi. The suspicions, however, which she had formerly admitted, respecting his designs, were now impatiently rejected, for she was less anxious to discover truth, than to release herself from horrible suppositions; and she willingly believed that Schedoni, having misunderstood her character, had only designed to assist in removing her beyond the reach of Vivaldi. The ingenuity of hope suggested also, that, having just heard from her conductors, or from Spalatro, some circumstances of her story, he had been led to a suspicion of the relationship between them, and that in the first impatience of parental anxiety, he had disregarded the hour, and come, though at midnight, to her apartment to ascertain the truth.

While she soothed herself with this explanation of a circumstance, which had occasioned her considerable surprise, she perceived on the floor the point of a dagger peeping from beneath the curtains! Emotions almost too horrible to be sustained, followed this discovery; she took the instrument, and gazed upon it aghast and trembling, for a suspicion of the real motive of Schedoni's visit glanced upon her mind. But it was only for a moment; such a supposition was too terrible to be willingly endured; she again believed that Spalatro alone had meditated her destruction, and she thanked the Confessor her deliverer, instead of shrinking from him as an assassin. She now understood that Schedoni, having discovered the ruffian's design, had rushed into the chamber to save a stranger from his murderous poniard, and had unconsciously rescued his own daughter, when the portrait at her bosom informed him of the truth. With this

conviction Ellena’s eyes overflowed with gratitude, and her heart was hushed to peace.

Schedoni, meanwhile, shut up in his chamber, was agitated by feelings of a very opposite nature. When their first excess was exhausted, and his mind was calm enough to reflect, the images that appeared on it struck him with solemn wonder. In pursuing Ellena at the criminal instigation of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, it appeared that he had been persecuting his own child; and in thus consenting to conspire against the innocent, he had in the event been only punishing the guilty, and preparing mortification for himself on the exact subject to which he had sacrificed his conscience. Every step that he had taken with a view of gratifying his ambition was retrograde, and while he had been wickedly intent to serve the Marchesa and himself, by preventing the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, he had been laboriously counteracting his own fortune. An alliance with the illustrious house of Vivaldi, was above his loftiest hope of advancement, and this event he had himself nearly prevented by the very means which had been adoped, at the expence of every virtuous consideration, to obtain an inferior promotion. Thus by a singular retribution, his own crimes had recoiled upon himself.

Schedoni perceived the many obstacles, which lay between him and his newly awakened hopes, and that much was to be overcome before those nuptials could be publicly solemnized, which he was now still more anxious to promote, than he had lately been to prevent. The approbation of the Marchesa was, at least, desirable, for she had much at her disposal, and without it, though his daughter might be the wife of Vivaldi, he himself would be no otherwise benefited at present than by the honour of the connection. He had some peculiar reasons for believing, that her consent might be obtained, and, though there was hazard in delaying the nuptials till such an experiment had been made, he resolved to encounter it, rather than forbear to solicit her concurrence. But, if the Marchesa should prove inexorable, he determined to bestow the hand of Ellena, without her knowledge, and in doing so, he well knew that he incurred little danger from her resentment, since he had secrets in his possession, the consciousness of which must awe her into a speedy neutrality. The consent of the Marchese, as he despaired of obtaining it, he did not mean to solicit,

and the influence of the Marchesa was such, that Schedoni did not regard that as essential.

The first steps, however, to be taken, were those that might release Vivaldi from the Inquisition, the tremendous prison into which Schedoni himself, little foreseeing that he should so soon wish for his liberation, had caused him to be thrown. He had always understood, indeed, that if the Informer forbore to appear against the Accused in this Court, the latter would of course be liberated; and he also believed, that Vivaldi's freedom could be obtained whenever he should think proper to apply to a person at Naples, whom he knew to be connected with the Holy Office of Rome. How much the Confessor had suffered his wishes to deceive him, may appear hereafter. His motives for having thus confined Vivaldi, were partly those of selfdefence. He dreaded the discovery and the vengeance, which might follow the loss of Ellena, should Vivaldi be at liberty immediately to pursue his enquiries. But he believed that all trace of her must be lost, after a few weeks had elapsed, and that Vivaldi's sufferings from confinement in the Inquisition would have given interests to his mind, which must weaken the one he felt for Ellena. Yet, though in this instance selfdefence had been a principal motive with Schedoni, a desire of revenging the insult he had received in the church of the Spirito Santo, and all the consequent mortifications he experienced, had been a second; and, such was the blackness of his hatred, and the avarice of his revenge, that he had not considered the suffering, which the loss of Ellena would occasion Vivaldi, as sufficient retaliation.

In adopting a mode of punishment so extraordinary as that of imprisonment in the Inquisition, it appears, therefore, that Schedoni was influenced, partly by the difficulty of otherwise confining Vivaldi, during the period for which confinement was absolutely necessary to the success of his own schemes, and partly by a desire of inflicting the tortures of terror. He had also been encouraged by his discovery of this opportunity for conferring new obligations on the Marchesa. The very conduct, that must have appeared to the first glance of an honest mind fatal to his interests, he thought might be rendered beneficial to them, and that his dexterity could so command the business, as that the Marchesa should eventually thank him as the deliverer of her son, instead of discovering and execrating him as his Accuser; a scheme favoured by the unjust and

cruel rule enacted by the tribunal he approached, which permitted anonymous Informers.

To procure the arrestation of Vivaldi, it had been only necessary to send a written accusation, without a name, to the Holy Office, with a mention of the place where the accused person might be seized; but the suffering in consequence of this did not always proceed further than the question; since, if the Informer failed to discover himself to the Inquisitors, the prisoner, after many examinations, was released, unless he happened unwarily to criminate himself. Schedoni, as he did not intend to prosecute, believed, therefore, that Vivaldi would of course be discharged after a certain period, and supposing it also utterly impossible that he could ever discover his Accuser, the Confessor determined to appear anxious and active in effecting his release. This character of a deliverer, he knew he should be the better enabled to support by menas of a person officially connected with the Holy Office, who had already unconsciously assisted his views. In the apartment of this man, Schedoni had accidentally seen a formula of arrestation against a person suspected of Heresy, the view of which had not only suggested to him the plan he had since adopted, but had in some degree assisted him to carry it into effect. He had seen the scroll only for a short time, but his observations were so minute, and his memory so clear, that he was able to copy it with at least sufficient exactness to impose upon the Benedictine priest, who had, perhaps, seldom or never seen a real instrument of this kind. Schedoni had employed this artifice for the purpose of immediately securing Vivaldi, apprehending that, while the Inquisitors were slowly deliberating upon his arrest, he might quit Celano, and elude discovery. If the deception succeeded, it would enable him also to seize Ellena, and to mislead Vivaldi respecting her destination. The charge of having carried off a nun might appear to be corroborated by many circumstances, and Schedoni would probably have made these the subject of real denunciation, had he not foreseen the danger and the trouble in which it might implicate himself; and that, as the charge could not be substantiated, Ellena would finally escape. As far as his plan now went, it had been successful; some of the bravoes whom he hired to personate officials, had conveyed Vivaldi to the town, where the real officers of the Inquisition were appointed to receive him; while the others carried Ellena to the shore of the Adriatic.

Schedoni had much applauded his own ingenuity, in thus contriving, by the matter of the forged accusation, to throw an impenetrable veil over the fate of Ellena, and to secure himself from the suspicions or vengeance of Vivaldi, who, it appeared, would always believe that she had died, or was still confined in the unsearchable prisons of the Inquisition.

Thus he had betrayed himself in endeavouring to betray Vivaldi, whose release, however, he yet supposed could be easily obtained; but how much his policy had, in this instance, outrun his sagacity, now remained to be proved.

The subject of Schedoni's immediate perplexity was, the difficulty of conveying Ellena back to Naples; since, not chusing to appear at present in the character of her father, he could not decorously accompany her thither himself, nor could he prudently entrust her to the conduct of any person, whom he knew in this neighbourhood. It was, however, necessary to form a speedy determination, for he could neither endure to pass another day in a scene, which must continually impress him with the horrors of the preceding night, nor that Ellena should remain in it; and the morning light already gleamed upon his casements.

After some further deliberation, he resolved to be himself her conductor, as far at least as through the forests of the Garganus, and at the first town where conveniencies could be procured, to throw aside his Monk's habit, and, assuming the dress of a layman, accompany her in this disguise towards Naples, till he should either discover some secure means of sending her dorward to that city, or a temporary asylum for her in a convent on the way.

His mind was scarcely more tranquil, after having formed this determination, than before, and he did not attempt to repose himself even for a moment. The circumstances of the late discovery were almost perpetually recurring to his affrighted conscience, accompanied by a fear that Ellena might suspect the real purpose of his midnight visit; and he alternately formed and rejected plausible falsehoods, that might assuage her curiosity, and delude her apprehension.

The hour arrived, however, when it was necessary to prepare for departure, and found him still undecided as to the explanation he should form.

Having released Spalatro from his chamber, and given him directions to procure horses and a guide immediately from the neighbouring hamlet, he repaired to Ellena’s room, to prepare her for this hasty removal. On approaching it, a remembrance of the purpose, with which he had last passed through these same passages and staircase, appealed so powerfully to his feelings, that he was unable to proceed, and he turned back to his own apartment to recover some command over himself. A few moments restored to him his usual address, though not his tranquillity, and he again approached the chamber; it was now, however, by way of the corridor. As he unbarred the door, his hand trembled; but, when he entered the room, his countenance and manner had resumed their usual solemnity, and his voice only would have betrayed, to an attentive observer, the agitation of his mind.

Ellena was considerably affected on seeing him again, and he examined with a jealous eye the emotions he witnessed. The smile with which she met him was tender, but he perceived it pass away from her features, like the aërial colouring that illumines a mountain’s brow; and the gloom of doubt and apprehension again overspread them. As he advanced, he held forth his hand for her’s, when, suddenly perceiving the dagger he had left in the chamber, he involuntarily withdrew his proffered courtesy, and his countenance changed. Ellena, whose eyes followed his to the object that attracted them, pointed to the instrument, took it up, and approaching him said, “This dagger I found last night in my chamber! O my father!” —

“That dagger!” said Schedoni, with affected surprize.

“Examine it,” continued Ellena, while she held it up, “Do you know to whom it belongs? and who brought it hither?”

“What is it you mean?” asked Schedoni, betrayed by his feelings.

“Do you know, too, for what purpose it was brought?” said Ellena mournfully.

The Confessor made no reply, but irresolutely attempted to seize the instrument.

“O yes, I perceive you know too well,” continued Ellena, “here, my father, while I slept” —

“Give me the dagger,” interrupted Schedoni, in a frightful voice.

“Yes, my father, I will give it as an offering of my gratitude,” replied Ellena, but as she raised her eyes, filled with tears, his look and fixed

attitude terrified her, and she added with a still more persuasive tenderness, “Will you not accept the offering of your child, for having preserved her from the poniard of an assassin?”

Schedoni’s looks became yet darker; he took the dagger in silence, and threw it with violence to the furthest end of the chamber, while his eyes remained fixed on her’s. The force of the action alarmed her; “Yes, it is in vain that you would conceal the truth,” she added, weeping unrestrainedly, “your goodness cannot avail; I know the whole.” —

The last words aroused Schedoni again from his trance, his features became convulsed, and his look furious. “What do you know?” he demanded in a subdued voice, that seemed ready to burst in thunder.

“All that I owe you,” replied Ellena, “that last night, while I slept upon this mattress, unsuspicious of what was designed against me, an assassin entered the chamber with that instrument in his hand, and— “

A stifled groan from Schedoni checked Ellena; she observed his rolling eyes, and trembled; till, believing that his agitation was occasioned by indignation against the assassin, she resumed, “Why should you think it necessary to conceal the danger which has threatened me, since it is to you that I owe my deliverance from it? O! my father, do not deny me the pleasure of shedding these tears of gratitude, do not refuse the thanks, which are due to you! While I slept upon that couch, while a ruffian stole upon my slumber — it was you, yes! can I ever forget that it was my father, who saved me from his poniard!”

Schedoni’s passions were changed, but they were not less violent; he could scarcely controul them, while he said in a tremulous tone— “It is enough, say no more;” and he raised Ellena, but turned away without embracing her.

His strong emotion, as he paced in silence the furthest end of the apartment, excited her surprize, but she then attributed it to a remembrance of the perilous moment, from which he had rescued her.

Schedoni, meanwhile, to whom her thanks were daggers, was trying to subdue he feelings of remorse that tore his heart; and was so enveloped in a world of his own, as to be for some time unconscious of all around him. He continued to stalk in gloomy silence along the chamber, till the voice of Ellena, entreating him rather to rejoice that he had been permitted to save her, than so deeply to consider dangers which were past, again

touched the chord that vibrated to his conscience, and recalled him to a sense of his situation. He then bade her prepare for immediate departure, and abruptly quitted the room.

Vainly hoping that in flying from the scene of his meditated crime, he should leave with it the acuteness of remembrance, and the agonizing stings of remorse, he was now more anxious than ever to leave this place. Yet he should still be accompanied by Ellena, and her innocent looks, her affectionate thanks, inflicted an anguish, which was scarcely endurable. Sometimes, thinking that her hatred, or what to him would be still severer, her contempt, must be more tolerable than this gratitude, he almost resolved to undeceive her respecting his conduct, but as constantly and impatiently repelled the thought with horror, and finally determined to suffer her to account for his late extraordinary visit in the way she had chosen.

Spalatro, at length, returned from the hamlet with horses, but without having procured a guide to conduct the travellers through a tract of the long-devolving forests of the Garganus, which it was necessary for them to pass. No person had been willing to undertake so arduous a task; and Spalatro, who was well acquainted with all the labyrinths of the way, now offered his services.

Schedoni, though he could scarcely endure the presence of this man, had no alternative but to accept him, since he had dismissed the guide who had conducted him hither. Of personal violence Schedoni had no apprehension, though he too well understood the villainy of his proposed companion; for he considered that he himself should be well armed, and he determined to ascertain that Spalatro was without weapons; he knew also, that in case of a contest, his own superior stature would easily enable him to overcome such an antagonist.

Every thing being now ready for departure, Ellena was summoned, and the Confessor led her to his own apartment, where a slight breakfast was prepared.

Her spirits being revived by the speed of this departure, she would again have expressed her thanks, but he peremptorily interrupted her, and sorbade any further mention of gratitude.

On entering the court where the horses were in waiting, and perceiving Spalatro, Ellena shrunk and put her arm within Schedoni’s for protection.

“What recollections does the presence of that man revive!” said she, “I can scarcely venture to believe myself safe, even with you, when he is here.”

Schedoni made no reply, till the remark was repeated, “You have nothing to fear from him,” muttered the Confessor, while he hastened her forward, “and we have no time to lose in vague apprehension.”

“How!” exclaimed Ellena, “is not he the assassin from whom you saved me! I cannot doubt, that you know him to be such, though you would spare me the pain of believing so.”

“Well, well, be it so,” replied the Confessor; “Spalatro, lead the horses this way.”

The party were soon mounted, when, quitting this eventful mansion, and the shore of the Adriatic, as Ellena hoped for ever, they entered upon the gloomy wilderness of the Garganus. She often turned her eyes back upon the house with emotions of inexpressible awe, astonishment, and thankfulness, and gazed while a glimpse of it’s turretted walls could be caught beyond the dark branches, which, closing over it, at length shut it from her view. The joy of this departure, however, was considerably abated by the presence of Spalatro, and her fearful countenance enquired of Schedoni the meaning of his being suffered to accompany them. The Confessor was reluctant to speak concerning a man, of whose very existence he would willingly have ceased to think. Ellena guided her horse still closer to Schedoni’s, but, forbearing to urge the enquiry otherwise than by looks, she received no reply, and endeavoured to quiet her apprehensions, by considering that he would not have permitted this man to be their guide, unless he had believed he might be trusted. This consideration, though it relieved her fears, encreased her perplexity respecting the late designs of Spalatro, and her surprise that Schedoni, if he had really understood them to be evil, should endure his presence. Every time she stole a glance at the dark countenance of this man, rendered still darker by the shade of the trees, she thought “assassin” was written in each line of it, and could scarcely doubt that he, and not the people who had conducted her to the mansion, had dropped the dagger in her chamber. Whenever she looked round through the deep glades, and on the forest-mountains that on every side closed the scene, and seemed to exclude all cheerful haunt of man, and then regarded her companions, her heart sunk; notwithstanding the reasons she had for believing herself in the

protection of a father. Nay, the very looks of Schedoni himself, more than once reminding her of his appearance on the seashore, renewed the impressions of alarm and even of dismay, which she had there experienced. At such moments it was scarcely possible for her to consider him as her parent, and, in spite of every late appearance, strange and unaccountable doubts began to gather on her mind.

Schedoni, meanwhile, lost in thought, broke not, by a single word, the deep silence of the solitudes through which they passed. Spalatro was equally mute, and equally engaged by his reflections on the sudden change in Schedoni's purpose, and by wonder as to the motive, which could have induced him to lead Ellena in safety, from the very spot whither she was brought by his express command to be destroyed. He, however, was not so wholly occupied, as to be unmindful of his situation, or unwatchful of an opportunity of serving his own interests, and retaliating upon Schedoni for the treatment he had received on the preceding night.

Among the various subjects that distracted the Confessor, the difficulty of disposing of Ellena, without betraying at Naples that she was his relative, was not the least distressing. Whatever might be the reason which could justify such feelings, his fears of a premature discovery of the circumstance to the society with whom he lived, were so strong, as often to produce the most violent effect upon his countenance, and it was, perhaps, when he was occupied by this subject, that it's terrific expression revived with Ellena the late scene upon the shore. His embarrassment was not less, as to the excuse to be offered the Marchesa, for having failed to fulfil his engagement, and respecting the means by which he might interest her in favour of Ellena, and even dispose her to approve the marriage, before she should be informed of the family of this unfortunate young woman. Perceiving all the necessity for ascertaining the probabilities of such consent, before he ventured to make an avowal of her origin, he determined not to reveal himself till he should be perfectly sure that the discovery would be acceptable to the Marchesa. In the mean time, as it would be necessary to say something of Ellena's birth, he meant to declare, that he had discovered it to be noble, and her family worthy, in every respect, of a connection with that of the Vivaldi.

An interview with the Marchesa, was almost equally wished for and dreaded by the Confessor. He shuddered at the expectation of meeting a

woman, who had instigated him to the murder of his own child, which, though he had been happily prevented from committing it, was an act that would still be wished for by the Marchesa. How could he endure her reproaches, when she should discover that he had failed to accomplish her will! How conceal the indignation of a father, and dissimulate all a father's various feelings, when, in reply to such reproaches, he must form excuses, and act humility, from which his whole soul would revolt! Never could his arts of dissimilation have been so severely tried, not even in the late scenes with Ellena, never have returned upon himself in punishment so severe, as in that which awaited him with the Marchesa. And from it's approach, the cool and politic Schedoni often shrunk in such horror, that he almost determined to avoid it at any hazard, and secretly to unite Vivaldi and Ellena, without even soliciting the consent of the Marchesa.

A desire, however, of the immediate preferment, so necessary to his pride, constantly checked this scheme, and finally made him willing to subject every honest feeling, and submit to any meanness, however vicious, rather than forego the favourite object of his erroneous ambition. Never, perhaps, was the paradoxical union of pride and abjectness, more strongly exhibited than on this occasion.

While thus the travellers silently proceeded, Ellena's thoughts often turned to Vivaldi, and she considered, with trembling anxiety, the effect which the late discovery was likely to have upon their future lives. It appeared to her, that Schedoni must approve of a connection thus flattering to the pride of a father, though he would probably refuse his consent to a private marriage. And, when she further considered the revolution, which a knowledge of her family might occasion towards herself in the minds of the Vivaldi, her prospects seemed to brighten, and her cares began to dissipate. Judging that Schedoni must be acquainted with the present situation of Vivaldi, she was continually on the point of mentioning him, but was as constantly restrained by timidity, though, had she suspected him to be an inhabitant of the Inquisition, her scruples would have vanished before an irresistible interest. As it was, believing that he, like herself, had been imposed upon by the Marchesa's agents, in the disguise of officials, she concluded, as has before appeared, that he now suffered a temporary imprisonment by order of his mother, at one of the family villas. When, however, Schedoni, awaking from his reverie, abruptly

mentioned Vivaldi, her spirits fluttered with impatience to learn his exact situation, and she enquired respecting it.

“I am no stranger to your attachment,” said Schedoni, evading the question, “but I wish to be informed of some circumstances relative to it’s commencement.”

Ellena, confused, and not knowing what to reply, was for a moment silent, and then repeated her enquiry.

“Where did you first meet?” said the Confessor, still disregarding her question. Ellena related, that she had first seen Vivaldi, when attending her aunt from the church of San Lorenzo. For the present she was spared the embarrassment of further explanation by Spalatro, who, riding up to Schedoni, informed him they were approaching the twon of Zanti. On looking forward, Ellena perceived houses peeping from among the forest-trees, at a short distance, and presently heard the cheerful bark of a dog, that sure herald and faithful servant of man!

Soon after the travellers entered Zanti, a small town surrounded by the forest, where, however, the poverty of the inhabitants seemed to forbid a longer stay than was absolutely necessary for repose, and a slight refreshment. Spalatro led the way to a cabin, in which the few persons, that journied this road were usually entertained. The appearance of the people, who owned it, was as wild as their country, and the interior of the dwelling was so dirty and comfortless, that Schedoni, preferring to take his repast in the open air, a table was spread under the luxuriant shade of the forest-trees, at a little distance. Here, when the host had withdrawn, and Spalatro had been dispatched to examine the post-horses, and to procure a lay-habit for the Confessor, the latter, once more alone with Ellena, began to experience again somewhat of the embarassments of conscience; and Ellena, whenever her eyes glanced upon him, suffered a solemnity of fear that rose almost to terror. He, at length, terminated this emphatic silence, by renewing his mention of Vivaldi, and his command that Ellena should relate the history of their affection. Not daring to refuse, she obeyed, but with as much brevity as possible, and Schedoni did not interrupt her by a single observation. However eligible their nuptials now appeared to him, he forbore to give any hint of approbation, till he should have extricated the object of her regards from his perilous situation. But, with Ellena, this very silence implied the opinion it was meant to conceal,

and, encouraged by the hope it imparted, she ventured once more to ask, by whose order Vivaldi had been arrested; whither he had been conveyed, and the circumstances of his present situation.

Too politic to intrust her with a knowledge of his actual condition, the Confessor spared her the anguish of learning that he was a prisoner in the Inquisition. He affected ignorance of the late transaction at Celano, but ventured to believe, that both Vivaldi and herself had been arrested by order of the Marchesa, who, he conjectured, had thrown him into temporary confinement, a measure which she, no doubt, had meant to enforce also towards Ellena.

“And you, my father,” observed Ellena, “what brought you to my prison, — you who was not informed with the Marchesa’s designs? What accident conducted you to that remote solitude, just at the moment when you could save your child!”

“Informed of the Marchesa’s designs!” said Schedoni, with embarrassment and displeasure: “Have you ever imagined that I could be accessary — that I could consent to assist, I mean could consent to be a confidant of such atrocious” — Schedoni, bewildered, confounded, and half betrayed, checked himself.

“Yet you have said, the Marchesa meant only to confine me,!” observed Ellena; “was that design so atrocious? Alas, my father! I know too well that her plan was more atrocious, and since you had too much reason to know this, why do you say that imprisonment only was intended for me? But your solicitude for my tranquillity leads you to” —

“What means,” interrupted the suspicious Schedoni, “can I particularly have of understanding the Marchesa’s schemes? I repeat, that I am not her confidant; how then is it to be supposed I should know that they extended further than to imprisonment?”

“Did you not save me from the arm of the assassin!” said Ellena tenderly; “did not you wrench the very dagger from his grasp!”

“I had forgotten, I had forgotten,” said the Confessor, yet more embarrassed.

“Yes, good minds are ever thus apt to forget the benefits they confer,” replied Ellena. “But you shall find, my father, that a grateful heart is equally tenacious to remember them; it is the indelible register of every act that is dismissed from the memory of the benefactor.”

“Mention no more of benefits,” said Schedoni, impatiently; “let silence on this subject henceforth indicate your with to oblige me.”

He rose, and joined the host, who was at the door of his cabin. Schedoni wished to dismiss Spalatro as soon as possible, and he enquired for a guide to conduct him through that part of the forest, which remained to be traversed. In this poor town, a person willing to undertake that office was easily to be found, but the host went in quest of a neighbour whom he had recommended.

Meanwhile Spalatro returned, without having succeeded in his commission. Not any lay-habit could be procured, upon so short a notice, that suited Schedoni. He was obliged, therefore, to continue his journey to the next town at least, in his own dress, but the necessity was not very serious to him, since it was improbable that he should be known in this obscure region.

Presently the host appeared with his neighbour, when Schedoni, having received satisfactory answers to his questions, engaged him for the remainder of the forest-road, and dismissed Spalatro. The ruffian departed with sullen reluctance and evident ill-will, circumstances which the Confessor scarcely noticed, while occupied by the satisfaction of escaping from the presence of the atrocious partner of his conscience. But Ellena, as he passed her, observed the malignant disappointment of his look, and it served only to heighten the thankfulness his departure occasioned her.

It was afternoon before the travellers proceeded. Schedoni had calculated that they could easily reach the town, at which they designed to pass the night, before the close of evening, and he had been in no haste to depart during the heat of the day. Their track now lay through a country less savage, though scarcely less wild than that they had passed in the morning. It emerged from the interior towards the border of the forest; they were no longer enclosed by impending mountains; the withdrawing shades were no longer impenetrable to the eye, but now and then opened to gleams of sunshine-land-scape, and blue distances; and in the immediate scene, many a green glade spread it’s bosom to the sun. The grandeur of the trees, however, did not decline; the plane, the oak, and the chestnut still threw a pomp of foliage round these smiling spots, and seemed to consecrate the mountain streams, that descended beneath their solemn shade.

To the harassed spirits of Ellena the changing scenery was refreshing, and she frequently yielded her cares to the influence of majestic nature. Over the gloom of Schedoni, no scenery had, at any moment, power; the shape and paint of external imagery gave neither impression or colour to his fancy. He contemned the sweet illusions, to which other spirits are liable, and which often confer a delight more exquisite, and not less innocent, than any, which deliberative reason can bestow.

The same thoughtful silence, that had wrapt him at the beginning of the journey, he still preserved, except when occasionally he asked a question of the guide concerning the way, and received answers too loquacious for his humour. This loquacity, however, was not easily repressed, and the peasant had already begun to relate some terrible stories of murder, committed in these forests upon people, who had been hardy enough to venture into them without a guide, before the again abstracted Schedoni even noticed that he spoke. Though Ellena did not give much credit to these narratives, they had some effect upon her fears, when soon after she entered the deep shades of a part of the forest, that lay along a narrow desile, whence every glimpse of cheerful landscape was again excluded by precipices, which towered on either side. The stilness was not less effectual than the gloom, for no sounds were heard, except such as seemed to characterize solitude, and impress it’s awful power more deeply on the heart, — the hollow dashing of torrents descending distantly, and the deep sighings of the wind, as it passed among trees, which threw their broad arms over the cliffs, and crowned the highest summits. Onward, through the narrowing windings of the defile, no living object appeared; but, as Ellena looked fearfully back, she thought she distinguished a human figure advancing beneath the dusky umbrage that closed the view. She communicated her suspicion to Schedoni, though not her fears, and they stopped for a moment, to observe further. The object advanced slowly, and they perceived the stature of a man, who, having continued to approach, suddenly paused, and then glided away behind the foliage that crossed the perspective, but not before Ellena fancied she discriminated the figure of Spalatro, None but a purpose the most desperate, she believed, could have urged him to follow into this pass, instead of returning, as he had pretended, to his home. Yet it appeared improbable, that he alone should be willing to attack two armed persons, for both Schedoni and the guide

had weapons of defence. This consideration afforded her only a momentary respite from apprehension, since it was possible that he might not be alone, though only one person had yet been seen among the shrouding branches of the woods. “Did you not think he resembled Spalatro?” said Ellena to the Confessor, “was he not of the same stature and air? You are well armed, or I should fear for you, as well as for myself.”

“I did not observe a resemblance,” replied Schedoni, throwing a glance back, “but whoever he is, you have nothing to apprehend from him, for he has disappeared.”

“Yes, Signor, so much the worse,” observed the guide, “so much the worse, if he means us any harm, for he can steal along the rocks behind these thickets, and strike out upon us before we are aware of him. Or, if he knows the path that runs among those old oaks yonder, on the left, where the ground rises, he has us sure at the turning of the next cliff.”

“Speak lower,” said Schedoni, “unless you mean that he should benefit by your instructions.”

Though the Confessor said this without any suspicion of evil intention from the guide, the man immediately began to justify himself, and added, “I’ll give him a hint of what he may expect, however, if he attacks us.” As he spoke, he fired his trombone in the air, when every rock reverberated the sound, and the faint and fainter thunder retired in murmurs through all the windings of the desile. The eagerness, with which the guide had justified himself, produced an effect upon Schedoni contrary to what he designed; and the Confessor, as he watched him suspiciously, observed, that after he had fired, he did not load his piece again. “Since you have given the enemy sufficient intimation where to find us,” said Schedoni, “you will do well to prepare for his reception; load again, friend. I have arms too, and they are ready.”

While the man sullenly obeyed, Ellena, again alarmed, looked back in search of the stranger, but not any person appeared beneath the gloom, and no footstep broke upon the stilness. When, however, she suddenly heard a rustling noise, she looked to the bordering thickets, almost expecting to see Spalatro break from among them, before she perceived that it was only the sounding pinions of birds, which, startled by the report of the trombone from their high nests in the cliffs, winged their way from danger.

The suspicions of the Confessor had, probably, been flight, for they were transient; and when Ellena next addressed him, he had again retired within himself. He was ruminating upon an excuse to be offered the Marchesa, which might be sufficient both to assuage her disappointment and baffle her curiosity, and he could not, at present, fabricate one that might soothe her resentment, without risk of betraying his secret.

Twilight had added its gloom to that of the rocks, before the travellers distinguished the town, at which they meant to pass the night. It terminated the defile, and its grey houses could scarcely be discerned from the precipice upon which they hung, or from the trees that embosomed them. A rapid stream rolled below, and over it a bridge conducted the wanderers to the little inn, at which they were to take up their abode. Here, quietly lodged, Ellena dismissed all present apprehension of Spalatro, but she still believed she had seen him, and her suspicions, as to the motive of his extraordinary journey, were not appeased.

As this was a town of ampler accommodation than the one they had left, Schedoni easily procured a lay-habit, that would disguise him for the remainder of the journey; and Ellena was permitted to lay aside the nun's veil, for one of a more general fashion; but, in dismissing it, she did not forget that it had been the veil of Olivia, and she preserved it as a sacred relique of her favourite recluse.

The distance between this town and Naples was still that of several days journey, according to the usual mode of travelling; but the most dangerous part of the way was now overcome, the road having emerged from the forests; and when Schedoni, on the following morning, was departing, he would have discharged the guide, had not the host assured him, he would find one still necessary in the open, but wild, country through which he must pass. Schedoni's distrust of this guide had never been very serious, and, as the result of the preceding evening proved favourable, he had restored him so entirely to his confidence, as willingly to engage him for the present day. In this confidence, however, Ellena did not perfectly coincide; she had observed the man while he loaded the trombone, on Schedoni's order, and his evident reluctance had almost persuaded her, that he was in league with some person who designed to attack them; a conjecture, perhaps, the more readily admitted while her mind was suffering from the impression of having seen Spalatro. She now ventured

to hint her distrust to the Confessor, who paid little attention to it, and reminded her, that sufficient proof of the man’s honesty had appeared, in their having been permitted to pass in safety, a defile so convenient for the purpose of rapine as that of yesterday. To a reply apparently so reasonable. Ellena could oppose nothing, had she even dared to press the topic; and she recommenced the journey with gayer hopes.

Chapter 2 1

Mark where you ruin frowns upon the steep,
The giant-spectre of departed power!
Within those shadowy walls and silent chambers
Have stalked the crimes of days long past!

On this day, Schedoni was more communicative than on the preceding one. While they rode apart from the guide, he conversed with Ellena on various topics relative to herself, but without once alluding to Vivaldi; and even condescended to mention his design of disposing of her in a convent at some distance from Naples, till it should be convenient for him to acknowledge her for his daughter. But the difficulty of finding a suitable situation embarrassed him, and he was disconcerted by the aukwardness of introducing her himself to strangers, whose curiosity would be heightened by a sense of their interest.

These circumstances induced him the more easily to attend to the distress of Ellena, on her learning that she was again to be placed at a distance from her home, and among strangers; and the more willingly to listen to the account she gave of the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta, and to her request of returning thither. But in whatever degree he might be inclined to approve, he listened without consenting, and Ellena had only the consolation of perceiving that he was not absolutely determined to adopt his first plan.

Her thoughts were too deeply engaged upon her future prospects to permit leisure for present fears, or probably she would have suffered some return of those of yesterday, in traversing the lonely plains and rude vallies, through which the road lay. Schedoni was thankful to the landlord, who had advised him to keep the guide, the road being frequently obscured amongst the wild heaths that stretched around, and the eye often sweeping over long tracts of country, without perceiving a village, or any human dwelling. During the whole morning, they had not met one traveller, and they continued to proceed beneath the heat of noon, because Schedoni had

been unable to discover even a cottage, in which shelter and repose might be obtained.

It was late in the day when the guide pointed out the grey walls of an edifice, which crowned the acclivity they were approaching. But this was so shrouded among woods, that no feature of it could be distinctly seen, and it did but slightly awaken their hopes of approaching a convent, which might receive them with hospitality.

The high banks overshadowed with thickets, between which the road ascended, soon excluded even a glimpse of the walls; but, as the travellers turned the next projection, they perceived a person on the summit of the road, crossing as if towards some place of residence, and concluded that the edifice they had seen was behind the trees, among which he had disappeared.

A few moments brought them to the spot, where, retired at a short distance among the woods that browed the hill, they discovered the extensive remains of what seemed to have been a villa, and which, from the air of desolation it exhibited, Schedoni would have judged to be wholly deserted, had he not already seen a person enter. Wearied and exhausted, he determined to ascertain whether any refreshment could be procured from the inhabitants within, and the party alighted before the portal of a deep and broad avenue of arched stone, which seemed to have been the grand approach to the villa. The entrance was obstructed by fallen fragments of columns, and by the underwood that had taken root amongst them. The travellers, however, easily overcame these interruptions: but as the avenue was of considerable extent, and as its only light proceeded from the portal, except what a few narrow loops in the walls admitted, they soon found themselves involved in an obscurity that rendered the way difficult, and Schedoni endeavoured to make himself heard by the person he had seen. The effort was unsuccessful, but, as they proceeded a bend in the passage shewed a distant glimmering of light, which served to guide them to the opposite entrance, where an arch opened immediately into a court of the villa. Schedoni paused here in disappointment, for every object seemed to bear evidence of abandonment and desolation; and he looked, almost hopelessly, round the light colonnade which ran along three sides of the court, and to the trees that waved over the fourth, in search of the person, who had been seen from the road. No human figure stole upon

the vacancy; yet the apt fears of Ellena almost imagined the form of Spalatro gliding behind the columns, and she started as the air shook over the wild plants that wreathed them, before she discovered that it was not the sound of steps. At the extravagance of her suspicions, however, and the weakness of her terrors, she blushed, and endeavoured to resist that propensity to fear, which nerves long pressed upon had occasioned in her mind.

Schedoni, meanwhile, stood in the court, like the evil spirit of the place, examining its desolation, and endeavouring to ascertain whether any person lurked in the interior of the building. Several doorways in the colonnade appeared to lead to chambers of the villa, and, after a short hesitation, Schedoni, having determined to pursue his inquiry, entered one of them, and passed through a marble hall to a suite of rooms, whose condition told how long it was since they had been inhabited. The roofs had entirely vanished, and even portions of the walls had fallen, and lay in masses amongst the woods without.

Perceiving that it was as useless as difficult to proceed, the confessor returned to the court, where the shade of the palmetos, at least, offered an hospitable shelter to the wearied travellers. They reposed themselves beneath the branches, on some fragments of a marble fountain, whence the court opened to the extensive landscape, now mellowed by the evening beams, and partook of the remains of a repast, which had been deposited in the wallet of the guide.

“This place appears to have suffered from an earthquake, rather than from time,” said Schedoni, “for the walls, though shattered, do not seem to have decayed; and much that has been strong lies in ruin, while what is comparatively slight remains uninjured; these are certainly symptoms of partial shocks of the earth. Do you know any thing of the history of this place, friend?”

“Yes, Signor,” replied the guide.

“Relate it, then.

“I shall never forget the earthquake that destroyed it Signor; for it was felt all through the Garganus. I was then about sixteen, and I remember it was near an hour before midnight that the great shock was felt. The weather had been almost stifling for several days, scarcely a breath of air had stirred, and slight tremblings of the ground were noticed by many

people. I had been out all day, cutting wood in the forest with my father, and tired enough we were, when— “

“This is the history of yourself,” said Schedoni, interrupting him, “Who did this place belong to?”

“Did any person suffer here?” said Ellena.

“The Baróne di Cambrusca lived here,” replied the guide.

“Hah! the Baróne!” repeated Schedoni, and sunk into one of his customary fits of abstraction.

“He was a Signor little loved in the country,” continued the guide, “and some people said it was a judgment upon him for— “

“Was it not rather a judgment upon the country,” interrupted the Confessor, lifting up his head, and then sinking again into silence.

“I know not for that, Signor, but he had committed crimes enough to make one’s hair stand on end. It was here that he— “

“Fools are always wondering at the actions of those above them,” said Schedoni, testily; “Where is the Baróne now?”

“I cannot tell, Signor, but most likely where he deserves to be, for he has never been heard of since the night of the earthquake, and it is believed he was buried under the ruins.”

“Did any other person suffer?” repeated Ellena.

“You shall hear, Signora,” replied the peasant, “I happen to know something about the matter, because a cousin of our’s lived in the family at the time, and my father has often told me all about it, as well as of the late lord’s goings-on. It was near midnight when the great shock came, and the family, thinking of nothing at all, had supped, and been asleep some time. Now it happened, that the Baróne’s chamber was in a tower of the old building, at which people often wondered, because, said they, why should he chuse to sleep in the old part when there are so many fine rooms in the new villa? but so it was.”

“Come, dispatch your meal,” said Schedoni, awaking from his deep musing, “the sun is setting, and we have yet far to go.”

“I will finish the meal and the story together, Signor, with your leave,” replied the guide. Schedoni did not notice what he said, and, as the man was not forbidden, he proceeded with his relation.

“Now it happened, that the Baróne’s chamber was in that old tower, — if you will look this way, Signora, you may see what is left of it.”

Ellena turned her attention to where the guide pointed, and perceived the shattered remains of a tower rising beyond the arch, through which she had entered the court.

“You see that corner of a windowcase, left in the highest part of the wall, Signora,” continued the guide, “just by that tuft of ash, that grows out of the stone.”

“I observe,” said Ellena.

“Well, that was one of the windows of the very chamber, Signora, and you see scarcely any thing else is left of it. Yes, there is the door-case, too, but the door itself is gone; that little staircase, which you see beyond it, led up to another story, which nobody now would guess had ever been; for roof, and flooring, and all are fallen. I wonder how that little staircase in the corner happened to hold so-fast!”

“Have you almost done?” inquired Schedoni, who had not apparently attended to any thing the man said, and now alluded to the refreshment he was taking.

“Yes, Signor, I have not a great deal more to tell, or to eat either, for that matter,” replied the guide; “but you shall bear. Well, yonder was the very chamber, Signora; at that door-case, which is still in the wall, the Baróne came in; ah! he little thought, I warrant, that he should never more go out at it! How long he had been in the room I do not know, nor whether he was asleep, or awake, for there is nobody that can tell; but when the great shock came, it split the old tower at once, before any other part of the buildings. You see that heap of ruins, yonder, on the ground, Signora, there lie the remains of the chamber; the Baróne, they say, was buried under them!”

Ellena shuddered while she gazed upon this destructive mass. A groan from Schedoni startled her, and she turned towards him, but, as he appeared shrouded in meditation, she again directed her attention to this awful memorial. As her eye passed upon the neighbouring arch, she was struck with the grandeur of its proportions, and with its singular appearance, now that the evening rays glanced upon the overhanging shrubs, and darted a line of partial light athwart the avenue beyond. But what was her emotion, when she perceived a person gliding away in the perspective of the avenue, and, as he crosled where the gleam fell, distinguished the figure and countenance of Spalatro! She had scarcely

power faintly to exclaim, “Steps go there!” before he had disappeared; and, when Schedoni looked round, the vacuity and silence of solitude every where prevailed.

Ellena now did not scruple positively to affirm that she had seen Spalatro, and Schedoni, fully sensible that, if her imagination had not deluded her, the purpose of his thus tracing their route must be desperate, immediately rose, and, followed by the peasant, passed into the avenue to ascertain the truth, leaving Ellena alone in the court. He had scarcely disappeared before the danger of his adventuring into that obscure passage, where an assassin might strike unseen, forcibly occurred to Ellena, and she loudly conjured him to return. She listened for his voice, but heard only his retreating steps; when, too anxious to remain where she was, she hastened to the entrance of the avenue. But all was now hushed; neither voice, nor steps were distinguished. Awed by the gloom of the place, she feared to venture further, yet almost equally dreaded to remain alone in any part of the ruin, while a man so desperate as Spalatro was hovering about it.

As she yet listened at the entrance of the avenue, a faint cry, which seemed to issue from the interior of the villa, reached her. The first dreadful surmise that struck Ellena was, that they were murdering her father, who had probably been decoyed, by another passage, back into some chamber of the ruin; when, instantly forgetting every fear for herself, she hastened towards the spot whence she judged the sound to have issued. She entered the hall, which Schedoni had noticed, and passed on through a suite of apartments beyond. Every thing here, however, was silent, and the place apparently deserted. The suite terminated in a passage, that seemed to lead to a distant part of the villa, and Ellena, after a momentary hesitation, determined to follow it.

She made her way with difficulty between the half-demolished walls, and was obliged to attend so much to her steps, that she scarcely noticed whither she was going, till, the deepening shade of the place recalling her attention, she perceived herself among the ruins of the tower, whose history had been related by the guide; and, on looking up, observed she was at the foot of the staircase, which still wound up the wall, that had led to the chamber of the Baróne.

At a moment less anxious, the circumstance would have affected her; but now, she could only repeat her calls upon the name of Schedoni, and listen for some signal that he was near. Still receiving no answer, nor hearing any further sound of distress, she began to hope that her fears had deceived her, and having ascertained that the passage terminated here, she quitted the spot.

On regaining the first chamber, Ellena rested for a moment to recover breath; and, while she leaned upon what had once been a window, opening to the court, she heard a distant report of firearms. The sound swelled, and seemed to revolve along the avenue through which Schedoni had disappeared. — Supposing that the combatants were engaged at the farthest entrance, Ellena was preparing to go thither, when a sudden step moved near her, and, on turning, she discovered, with a degree of horror that almost deprived her of recollection, Spalatro himself stealing along the very chamber in which she was.

That part of the room which she stood in, fell into a kind of recess; and whether it was this circumstance that prevented him from immediately perceiving her, or that, his chief purpose being directed against another object, he did not chuse to pause here, he passed on with skulking steps; and, before Ellena had determined whither to go, she observed him cross the court before her, and enter the avenue. As he had passed, he looked up at the window: and it was certain he then saw her, for he instantly faultered, but in the next moment proceeded swiftly, and disappeared in the gloom.

It seemed that he had not yet encountered Schedoni, but it also occurred to Ellena, that he was gone into the avenue for the purpose of waiting to assassinate him in the darkness. While she was meditating some means of giving the Confessor a timely alarm of his danger, she once more distinguished his voice. It approached from the avenue, and Ellena immediately calling aloud that Spalatro was there, entreated him to be on his guard. In the next instant a pistol was fired there.

Among the voices that succeeded the report, Ellena thought she distinguished groans. Schedoni’s voice was in the next moment heard again, but it seemed faint and low. The courage which she had before exerted was now exhausted; she remained fixed to the spot, unable to

encounter the dreadful spectacle that probably awaited her in the avenue, and almost sinking beneath the expectation of it.

All was now hushed; she listened for Schedoni's voice, and even for a footstep — in vain. To endure this state of uncertainty much longer was scarcely possible, and Ellena was endeavouring to collect fortitude to meet a knowledge of the worst, when suddenly a feeble groaning was again heard. It seemed near, and to be approaching still nearer. At that moment, Ellena, on looking towards the avenue, perceived a figure covered with blood, pass into the court. A film, which drew over her eyes, prevented her noticing farther. She tottered a few paces back, and caught at the fragment of a pillar, by which she supported herself. The weakness was transient; immediate assistance appeared necessary to the wounded person, and pity soon predominating over horror, she recalled her spirits, and hastened to the court.

When, on reaching it, she looked round in search of Schedoni, he was no where to be seen; the court was again solitary and silent, till she awakened all its echoes with the name of father. While she repeated her calls, she hastily examined the colonnade, the separated chamber which opened immediately from it, and the shadowy ground beneath the palmetos, but without discovering any person.

As she turned towards the avenue, however, a track of blood on the ground told her too certainly where the wounded person had passed. It guided her to the entrance of a narrow passage, that seemingly led to the foot of the tower; but here she hesitated, fearing to trust the obscurity beyond. For the first time, Ellena conjectured, that not Schedoni, but Spalatro might be the person she had seen, and that, though he was wounded, vengeance might give him strength to strike his stiletto at the heart of whomsoever approached him, while the duskiness of the place would fathe deed.

She was yet at the entrance of the passage, fearful to enter, and reluctant to leave it, listening for a sound, and still hearing at intervals, swelling though feeble groans; when quick steps were suddenly heard advancing up the grand avenue, and presently her own name was repeated loudly in the voice of Schedoni. His manner was hurried as he advanced to meet her, and he threw an eager glance round the court. "We must be gone," said he,

in a low tone, and taking her arm within his. “Have you seen any one pass?”

“I have seen a wounded man enter the court,” replied Ellena, “and feared he was yourself.”

“Where? — Which way did he go!” inquired Schedoni, eagerly, while his eyes glowed, and his countenance became fell.

Ellena, instantly comprehending his motive for the question, would not acknowledge that she knew whither Spalatro had withdrawn; and, reminding him of the danger of their situation, she entreated that they might quit the villa immediately.

“The sun is already set,” she added.

“I tremble at what may be the perils of this place at such an obscure hour, and even at what may be those of our road at a later!”

“You are sure he was wounded?” said the Confessor.

“Too sure,” replied Ellena, faintly.

“Too sure!” sternly exclaimed Schedoni.

“Let us depart, my father; O let us go this instant!” repeated Ellena.

“What is the meaning of all this!” asked Schedoni, with anger. “You cannot, surely, have the weakness to pity this fellow!”

“It is terrible to see any one suffer,” said Ellena. “Do not, by remaining here, leave me a possibility of grieving for you. What anguish it would occasion you, to see me bleed; judge, then, what must be mine, if you are wounded by the dagger of an assassin!”

Schedoni stifled the groan which swelled from his heart, and abruptly turned away.

“You trifle with me,” he said, in the next moment: “you do not know that the villain is wounded. I fired at him, it is true, at the instant I saw him enter the avenue, but he has escaped me. What reason have you for your supposition?”

Ellena was going to point to the track of blood on the ground, at a little distance, but checked herself; considering that this might guide him on to Spalatro, and again she entreated they might depart, adding, “O! spare yourself, and him!”

“What! spare an assassin!” said Schedoni, impatiently.

“An assassin! He has, then, attempted your life?” exclaimed Ellena.

“Why no, not absolutely that,” said Schedoni, recollecting himself, “but — what does the fellow do here? Let me pass, I will find him.”

Ellena still hung upon his garment, while, with persuasive tenderness, she endeavoured to awaken his humanity. “O! if you had ever known what it was to expect instant death,” she continued, “you would pity this man now, as he, perhaps, has sometimes pitied others! I have known such suffering, my father, and can, therefore, feel even for him!”

“Do you know for whom you are pleading?” said the distracted Schedoni, while every word she had uttered seemed to have penetrated his heart. The surprize which this question awakened in Ellena’s countenance, recalled him to a consciousness of his imprudence; he recollected that Ellena did not certainly know the office, with which Spalatro had been commissioned against her: and when he considered that this very Spalatro, whom Ellena had with such simplicity supposed to have, at some time, spared a life through pity, had in truth spared her own, and, yet more, had been eventually a means of preventing him from destroying his own child, the Confessor turned in horror from his design; all his passions changed, and he abruptly quitted the court, nor paused till he reached the farthest extremity of the avenue, where the guide was in waiting with the horses.

A recollection of the conduct of Spalatro respecting Ellena had thus induced Schedoni to spare him; but this was all; it did not prevail with him to inquire into the condition of this man, or to mitigate his punishment; and, without remorse, he now left him to his fate.

With Ellena it was otherwise; though she was ignorant of the obligation she owed him, she could not know that any human being was left under such circumstances of suffering and solitude, without experiencing very painful emotion; but, considering how expeditiously Spalatro had been able to remove himself, she endeavoured to hope that his wound was not mortal.

The travellers, mounting their horses in silence, left the ruin, and were for some time too much engaged by the impression of the late occurrences, to converse together. When, at length, Ellena inquired the particulars of what had passed in the avenue, she understood that Schedoni, on pursuing Spalatro, had seen him there only for a moment. Spalatro had escaped by some way unknown to the Confessor, and had regained the interior of the ruin, while his pursuers were yet following the

avenue. The cry, which Ellena had imagined to proceed from the interior, was uttered, as it now appeared, by the guide, who, in his haste, had fallen over some fragments of the wall that lay scattered in the avenue: the first report of arms had been from the trombone, which Schedoni had discharged on reaching the portal; and the last, when he fired a pistol, on perceiving Spalatro passing from the court.

“We have had trouble enough in running after this fellow,” said the guide, “and could not catch him at last. It is strange that, if he came to look for us, he should run away so when he had found us! I do not think he meant us any harm, after all, else he might have done it easily enough in that dark passage; instead whereof he only took to his heels!”

“Silence!” said Schedoni, “fewer words, friend.”

“Well, Signor, he’s peppered now, however; so we need not be afraid; his wings are clipped for one while, so he cannot overtake us. We need not be in such a hurry, Signor, we shall get to the inn in good time yet. It is upon a mountain yonder, whose top you may see upon that red streak in the west. He cannot come after us; I myself saw his arm was wounded.”

“Did you so?” said Schedoni, sharply: “and pray where was you when you saw so much? It was more than I saw.”

“I was close at your heels, Signor, when you fired the pistol.”

“I do not remember to have heard you there,” observed the Confessor: “and why did you not come forward, instead of retreating? And where, also, did you hide yourself while I was searching for the fellow, instead of assisting me in the pursuit?”

The guide gave no answer, and Ellena, who had been attentively observing him during the whole of this conversation, perceived that he was now considerably embarrassed; so that her former suspicions as to his integrity began to revive, notwithstanding the several circumstances, which had occurred to render them improbable. There was, however, at present no opportunity for farther observation, Schedoni having, contrary to the advice of the guide, immediately quickened his pace, and the horses continuing on the full gallop, till a steep ascent compelled them to relax their speed.

Contrary to his usual habit, Schedoni now, while they slowly ascended, appeared desirous of conversing with this man, and asked him several questions relative to the villa they had left; and, whether it was that he

really felt an interest on the subject, or that he wished to discover if the man had deceived him in the circumstances he had already narrated, from which he might form a judgment as to his general character, he pressed his inquiries with a patient minuteness, that somewhat surprized Ellena. During this conversation, the deep twilight would no longer permit her to notice the countenances of either Schedoni, or the guide, but she gave much attention to the changing tones of their voices, as different circumstances and emotions seemed to affect them. It is to be observed, that during the whole of this discourse, the guide rode at the side of Schedoni.

While the Confessor appeared to be musing upon something, which the peasant had related respecting the Baróne di Cambrusca, Ellena inquired as to the fate of the other inhabitants of the villa.

“The falling of the old tower was enough for them,” replied the guide; “the crash waked them all directly, and they had time to get out of the new buildings, before the second and third shocks laid them also in ruins. They ran out into the woods for safety, and found it too, for they happened to take a different road from the earthquake. Not a soul suffered, except the Baróne, and he deserved it well enough. O! I could tell such things that I have heard of him!— “

“What became of the rest of the family?” interrupted Schedoni.

“Why, Signor, they were scattered here and there, and every where; and they none of them ever returned to the old spot. No! no! they had suffered enough there already, and might have suffered to this day, if the earthquake had not happened.”

“If it had not happened?” repeated Ellena.

“Aye, Signora, for that put an end to the Baróne. If those walls could but speak, they could tell strange things, for they have looked upon sad doings: and that chamber, which I shewed you, Signora, nobody ever went into it but himself, except the servant, to keep it in order, and that he would scarcely suffer, and always staid in the room the while.”

“He had probably treasure secreted there,” said Ellena.

“No, Signora, no treasure! He had always a lamp burning there; and sometimes in the night he has been heard — Once, indeed, his valet happened to— “

“Come on,” said Schedoni, interrupting him; “keep pace with me. What idle dream are you relating now?”

“It is about the Baróne di Cambrusca, Signor, him that you was asking me so much about just now. I was saying what strange ways he had, and how that, on one stormy night in December, as my cousin Francisco told my father, who told me, and he lived in the family at the time it happened — “

“What happened?” said Schedoni, hastily.

“What I am going to tell, Signor. My cousin lived there at the time; so, however unbelievable it may seem, you may depend upon it, it is all true. My father knows I would not believe it myself till— “

“Enough of this,” said Schedoni; no more. What family had this Baróne — had he a wife at the time of this destructive shock?”

“Yes, truly, Signor, he had, as I was going to tell, if you would but condescend to have patience.”

“The Baróne had more need of that, friend; I have no wife.”— “The Baróne’s wife had most need of it, Signor, as you shall hear. A good soul, they say, was the Baronessa! but luckily she died many years before. He had a daughter, also, and, young as she was, she had lived too long, but for the earthquake which set her free.”

“How far is it to the inn?” said the Confessor, roughly.

“When we get to the top of this hill, Signor, you will see it on the next, if any light is stirring, for there will only be the hollow between us. But do not be alarmed, Signor, the fellow we left cannot overtake us. Do you know much about him, Signor?”

Schedoni inquired whether the trombone was charged; and, discovering that it was not, ordered the man to load immediately.

“Why, Signor, if you knew as much of him as I do, you could not be more afraid!” said the peasant, while he stopped to obey the order.

“I understood that he was a stranger to you!” observed the Confessor, with surprize.

“Why, Signor, he is, and he is not; I know more about him than he thinks for.”

“You seem to know a vast deal too much of other persons affairs,” said Schedoni, in a tone that was meant to silence him.

“Why, that is just what he would say, Signor; but bad deeds will out, whether people like them to be known or not. This man comes to our town sometimes to market, and nobody knew where he came from for a long while; so they set themselves to work and found it out at last.”

“We shall never reach the summit of this hill,” said Schedoni, testily.

“And they found out, too, a great many strange things about him,” continued the guide.

Ellena, who had attended to this discourse with a degree of curiosity that was painful, now listened impatiently for what might be farther mentioned concerning Spalatro, but without daring to invite, by a single question, any discovery on a subject which appeared to be so intimately connected with Schedoni.

“It was many years ago,” rejoined the guide, “that this man came to live in that strange house on the seashore. It had been shut up ever since— “

“What are you talking of now?” interrupted the Confessor.

“Why, Signor, you never will let me tell you. You always snap me up so short at the beginning, and then ask — what am I talking about! I was going to begin the story, and it is a pretty long one. But first of all, Signor, who do you suppose this man belonged to! And what do you think the people determined to do, when the report was first set a-going? only they could not be sure it was true, and any body would be unwilling enough to believe such a shocking— “

“I have no curiosity on the subject,” replied the Confessor, sternly interrupting him; “and desire to hear no more concerning it.”

“I meant no harm, Signor,” said the man; “I did not know it concerned you.”

“And who says that it does concern me!”

“Nobody, Signor, only you seemed to be in a bit of a passion, and so I thought — But I meant no harm, Signor, only as he happened to be your guide part of the way, I guessed you might like to know something of him.”

“All that I desire to know of my guide is, that he does his duty,” replied Schedoni, “that he conducts me safely, and understands when to be silent.”

To this the man replied nothing, but slackened his pace, and slunk behind his reprover.

The travellers reaching, soon after, the summit of this long hill, looked out for the inn of which they had been told; but darkness now confounded every object, and no domestic light twinkling, however distantly, through the gloom, gave signal of security and comfort. They descended dejectedly into the hollow of the mountains, and found themselves once more immerged in woods. Schedoni again called the peasant to his side, and bade him keep abreast of him, but he did not discourse; and Ellena was too thoughtful to attempt conversation. The hints, which the guide had thrown out respecting Spalatro, had increased her curiosity on that subject; but the conduct of Schedoni, his impatience, his embarrassment, and the decisive manner in which he had put an end to the talk of the guide, excited a degree of surprize, that bordered on astonishment. As she had, however, no clue to lead her conjectures to any point, she was utterly bewildered in surmise, understanding only that Schedoni had been much more deeply connected with Spalatro than she had hitherto believed.

The travellers having descended into the hollow, and commenced the ascent of the opposite height, without discovering any symptom of a neighbouring town, began again to fear that their conductor had deceived them. It was now so dark that the road, though the soil was a limestone, could scarcely be discerned, the woods on either side forming a “close dungeon of innumerous boughs,” that totally excluded the twilight of the stars.

While the Confessor was questioning the man, with some severity, a faint shouting was heard from a distance, and he stopped the horses to listen from what quarter it came.

“That comes the way we are going, Signor,” said the guide.

“Hark!” exclaimed Schedoni, “those are strains of revelry!”

A confused sound of voices, laughter, and musical instruments, was heard, and, as the air blew stronger, tamborines and flutes were distinguished.

“Oh! Oh! we are near the end of our journey!” said the peasant; “all this comes from the town we are going to. But what makes them all so merry, I wonder!”

Ellena, revived by this intelligence, followed with alacrity the sudden speed of the Confessor; and presently reaching a point of the mountain,

where the woods opened, a cluster of lights on another summit, a little higher, more certainly announced the town.

They soon after arrived at the ruinous gates, which had formerly led to a place of some strength, and passed at once from darkness and desolated walls, into a market place, blazing with light and resounding with the multitude. Booths, fantastically hung with lamps, and filled with merchandize of every kind, disposed in the gayest order, were spread on all sides, and peasants in their holiday cloaths, and parties of masks crowded every avenue. Here was a band of musicians, and there a group of dancers; on one spot the outré humour of a zanni provoked the never-failing laugh of an Italian rabble, in another the improvisatore, by the pathos of his story, and the persuasive sensibility of his strains, was holding the attention of his auditors, as in the bands of magic. Farther on was a stage raised for a display of fireworks, and near this a theatre, where a mimic opera, the “shadow of a shade,” was exhibiting, whence the roar of laughter, excited by the principal buffo within, mingled with the heterogeneous voices of the venders of ice, maccaroni, sherbet, and diavoloni, without.

The Confessor looked upon this scene with disappointment and ill-humour, and bade the guide go before him, and shew the way to the best inn; an office which the latter undertook with great glee, though he made his way with difficulty. “To think I should not know it was the time of the fair!” said he, “though, to say truth, I never was at it but once in my life, so it is not so surprizing, Signor.”

“Make way through the crowd,” said Schedoni.

“After jogging on so long in the dark, Signor, with nothing at all to be seen,” continued the man, without attending to the direction, “then to come, all of a sudden, to such a place as this, why it is like coming out of purgatory into paradise! Well! Signor, you have forgot all your quandaries now; you think nothing now about that old ruinous place where we had such a race after the man, that would not murder us; but that shot I fired did his business.”

“You fired!” said Schedoni, aroused by the assertion.

“Yes, Signor, as I was looking over your shoulder; I should have thought you must have heard it!”

“I should have thought so, too, friend.”

“Aye, Signor, this fine place has put all that out of your head, I warrant, as well as what I said about that same fellow; but, indeed, Signor, I did not know he was related to you, when I talked so of him. But, perhaps, for all that, you may not know the piece of his story I was going to tell you, when you cut me off so short, though you are better acquainted with one another than I guessed for; so, when I come in from the fair, Signor, if you please, I will tell it you; and it is a pretty long history, for I happen to know the whole of it; though, where you cut me short, when you was in one of those quandaries, was only just at the beginning, but no matter for that, I can begin it again, for— “

“What is all this!” said Schedoni, again recalled from one of the thoughtful moods in which he had so habitually indulged, that even the bustle around him had failed to interrupt the course of his mind. He now bade the peasant be silent; but the man was too happy to be tractable, and proceeded to express all he felt, as they advanced slowly through the crowd. Every object here was to him new and delightful; and, nothing doubting that it must be equally so to every other person, he was continually pointing out to the proud and gloomy Confessor the trivial subjects of his own admiration. “See! Signor, there is Punchinello, see! how he eats the hot maccaroni! And look there, Signor! there is a juggler! O! good Signor, stop one minute, to look at his tricks. See! he has turned a monk into a devil already, in the twinkling of an eye!”

“Silence! and proceed,” said Schedoni.

“That is what I say, Signor: — silence! for the people make such a noise that I cannot hear a word you speak. — Silence, there!”

“Considering that you could not hear, you have answered wonderfully to the purpose,” said Ellena.

“Ah! Signora! is not this better than those dark woods and hills? But what have we here? Look, Signor, here is a fine sight!”

The crowd, which was assembled round a stage on which some persons grotesquely dressed, were performing, now interrupting all farther progress, the travellers were compelled to stop at the foot of the platform. The people above were acting what seemed to have been intended for a tragedy, but what their strange gestures, uncouth recitation, and incongruous countenances, had transformed into a comedy.

Schedoni, thus obliged to pause, withdrew his attention from the scene; Ellena consented to endure it, and the peasant, with gaping mouth and staring eyes, stood like a statue, yet not knowing whether he ought to laugh or cry, till suddenly turning round to the Confessor, whose horse was of necessity close to his, he seized his arm, and pointing to the stage, called out, “Look! Signor, see! Signor, what a scoundrel! what a villain! See! he has murdered his own daughter!”

At these terrible words, the indignation of Schedoni was done away by other emotions; he turned his eyes upon the stage, and perceived that the actors were performing the story of Virginia. It was at the moment when she was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard, with which he had stabbed her. The feelings of Schedoni, at this instant, inflicted a punishment almost worthy of the crime he had meditated.

Ellena, struck with the action, and with the contrast which it seemed to offer to what she had believed to have been the late conduct of Schedoni towards herself, looked at him with most expressive tenderness, and as his glance met her’s, she perceived, with surprize, the changing emotions of his soul, and the inexplicable character of his countenance. Stung to the heart, the Confessor furiously spurred his horse, that he might escape from the scene, but the poor animal was too spiritless and jaded, to force its way through the crowd; and the peasant, vexed at being hurried from a place where, almost for the first time in his life, he was suffering under the strange delights of artificial grief, and half angry, to observe an animal, of which he had the care, ill treated, loudly remonstrated, and seized the bridle of Schedoni, who, still more incensed, was applying the whip to the shoulders of the guide, when the crowd suddenly fell back and opened a way, through which the travellers passed, and arrived, with little further interruption, at the door of the inn.

Schedoni was not in a humour which rendered him fit to encounter difficulties, and still less the vulgar squabbles of a place already crowded with guests; yet it was not without much opposition that he at length obtained a lodging for the night. The peasant was not less anxious for the accommodation of his horses; and, when Ellena heard him declare, that the animal, which the Confessor had so cruelly spurred, should have a double feed, and a bed of straw as high as his head, if he himself went without one, she gave him, unnoticed by Schedoni, the only ducat she had left.

Chapter 2 2

“But, if you be afraid to hear the worst,
Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.”
Shakespeare.

Schedoni passed the night without sleep. The incident of the preceding evening had not only renewed the agonies of remorse, but excited those of pride and apprehension. There was something in the conduct of the peasant towards him, which he could not clearly understand, though his suspicions were sufficient to throw his mind into a state of the utmost perturbation. Under an air of extreme simplicity, this man had talked of Spalatro, had discovered that he was acquainted with much of his history, and had hinted that he knew by whom he had been employed; yet at the same time appeared unconscious, that Schedoni’s was the master-hand, which had directed the principal actions of the ruffian. At other times, his behaviour had seemed to contradict the supposition of his ignorance on this point; from some circumstances he had mentioned, it appeared impossible but that he must have known who Schedoni really was, and even his own conduct had occasionally seemed to acknowledge this, particularly when, being interrupted in his history of Spalatro, he attempted an apology, by saying, he did not know it concerned Schedoni: nor could the conscious Schedoni believe that the very pointed manner, in which the peasant had addressed him at the representation of Virginia, was merely accidental. He wished to dismiss the man immediately, but it was first necessary to ascertain what he knew concerning him, and then to decide on the measures to be taken. It was, however, a difficult matter to obtain this information, without manifesting an anxiety, which might betray him, if the guide had, at present, only a general suspicion of the truth; and no less difficult to determine how to proceed towards him, if it should be evident that his suspicions rested on Spalatro. To take him forward to Naples, was to bring an informer to his home; to suffer him to return with his discovery, now that he probably knew the place of Schedoni’s residence, was little less hazardous. His death only could secure the secret.

After a night passed in the tumult of such considerations, the Confessor summoned the peasant to his chamber, and, with some short preface, told him he had no further occasion for his services, adding, carelessly, that he advised him to be on his guard as he re-passed the villa, lest Spalatro, who might yet lurk there, should revenge upon him the injury he had received. “According to your account of him, he is a very dangerous fellow,” said Schedoni; “but your information is, perhaps, erroneous.”

The guide began, testily, to justify himself for his assertions, and the Confessor then endeavoured to draw from him what he knew on the subject. But, whether the man was piqued by the treatment he had lately received, or had other reasons for reserve, he did not, at first, appear so willing to communicate as formerly.

“What you hinted of this man,” said Schedoni, “has, in some degree, excited my curiosity: I have now a few moments of leisure, and you may relate, if you will, something of the wonderful history you talked of.”

“It is a long story, Signor, and you would be tired before I got to the end of it,” replied the peasant; “and, craving your pardon, Signor, I don’t much like to be snapped up so!”

“Where did this man live?” said the Confessor. “You mentioned something of a house at the sea side.”

“Aye, Signor, there is a strange history belonging to that house, too; but this man, as I was saying, came there all of a sudden, nobody knew how! and the place had been shut up ever since the Marchese— “

“The Marchese!” said Schedoni, coldly, “what Marchese, friend?”— “Why, I mean the Baróne di Cambrusca, Signor, to be sure, as I was going to have told you, of my own accord, if you would only have let me. Shut up ever since the Baróne — I left off there, I think.”

“I understood that the Baróne was dead!” observed the Confessor.

“Yes, Signor,” replied the peasant, fixing his eyes on Schedoni; “but what has his death to do with what I was telling? This happened before he died.”

Schedoni, somewhat disconcerted by this unexpected remark, forgot to resent the familiarity of it. “This man, then, this Spalatro, was connected with the Baróne di Cambrusca?” said he.

“It was pretty well guessed so, Signor.”

“How! no more than guessed?”

“No, Signor, and that was more than enough for the Baróne’s liking, I warrant. He took too much care for any thing certain to appear against him, and he was wife so to do, for if it had — it would have been worse for him. But I was going to tell you the story, Signor.”

“What reasons were there for believing this was an agent of the Baróne di Cambrusca, friend?”

“I thought you wished to hear the story, Signor.”

“In good time; but first what were your reasons?”

“One of them is enough, Signor, and if you would only have let me gone straight on with the story, you would have found it out by this time, Signor.”

Schedoni frowned, but did not otherwise reprove the impertinence of the speech.

“It was reason enough, Signor, to my mind,” continued the peasant, “that it was such a crime as nobody but the Baróne di Cambrusca could have committed; there was nobody wicked enough, in our parts, to have done it but him. Why is not this reason enough, Signor? What makes you look at me so? why the Baróne himself could hardly have looked worse, if I had told him as much!”

“Be less prolix,” said the Confessor, in a restrained voice.

“Well then, Signor, to begin at the beginning. It is a good many years ago that Marco came first to our town. Now the story goes, that one stormy night— “

“You may spare yourself the trouble of relating the story,” said Schedoni, abruptly, “Did you ever see the Baróne you was speaking of, friend?”

“Why did you bid me tell it, Signor, since you know it already! I have been here all this while, just a-going to begin it, and all for nothing!”

“It is very surprising,” resumed the artful Schedoni, without having noticed what had been said, “that if this Spalatro was known to be the villain you say he is, not any step should have been taken to bring him to justice! how happened that? But, perhaps, all this story was nothing more than a report.”

“Why, Signor, it was every body’s business, and nobody’s, as one may say; then, besides, nobody could prove what they had heard, and though every body believed the story just the same as if they had seen the whole,

yet that, they said, would not do in law, but they should be made to prove it. Now, it is not one time in ten that any thing can be proved, Signor, as you well know, yet we none of us believe it the less for that!

“So, then, you would have had this man punished for a murder, which, probably, he never committed!” said the Confessor.

“A murder!” repeated the peasant. Schedoni was silent, but, in the next instant, said, “Did you not say it was a murder?”

“I have not told you so, Signor!

“What was the crime, then?” resumed Schedoni, after another momentary pause, you said it was atrocious, and what more so than — murder?” His lip quivered as he pronounced the last word.

The peasant made no reply, but remained with his eyes fixed upon the Confessor, and, at length, repeated, “Did I say it was murder, Signor?”

“If it was not that, say what it was,” demanded the Confessor, haughtily; “but let it be in two words.”

“As if a story could be told in two words, Signor!”

“Well, well, be brief.”

“How can I, Signor, when the story is so long!”

“I will waste no more time,” said Schedoni, going.

“Well, Signor, I will do my best to make it short. It was one stormy night in December, that Marco Torma had been out fishing. Marco, Signor, was an old man that lived in our town when I was a boy; I can but just remember him, but my father knew him well, and loved old Marco, and used often to say— “

“To the story!” said Schedoni.

“Why I am telling it, Signor, as fast as I can. This old Marco did not live in our town at the time it happened, but in some place, I have forgot the name of it, near the sea shore. What can the name be! it is something like — “

“Well, what happened to this old dotard?”

“You are out there, Signor, he was no old dotard; but you shall hear. At that time, Signor, Marco lived in this place that I have forgot the name of, and was a fisherman, but better times turned up afterwards, but that is neither here nor there. Old Marco had been out fishing; it was a stormy night, and he was glad enough to get on shore, I warrant. It was quite dark, as dark, Signor, I suppose, as it was last night, and he was making the best

of his way, Signor, with some fish along the shore, but it being so dark, he lost it notwithstanding. The rain beat, and the wind blew, and he wandered about a long while, and could see no light, nor hear any thing, but the surge near him, which sometimes seemed as if it was coming to wash him away. He got as far off it as he could, but he knew there were high rocks over the beach, and he was afraid he should run his head against them, if he went too far, I suppose. However, at last, he went up close to them, and as he got a little shelter, he resolved to try no further for the present. I tell it you, Signor, just as my father told it me, and he had it from the old man himself,"

"You need not be so particular," replied the Confessor; "speak to the point."

"Well, Signor, as old Marco lay snug under the rocks, he thought he heard somebody coming, and he lifted up his head, I warrant, poor old soul! as if he could have seen who it was; however, he could hear, though it was so dark, and he heard the steps coming on; but he said nothing yet, meaning to let them come close up to him, before he discovered himself. Presently he sees a little moving light, and it comes nearer and nearer, till it was just opposite to him, and then he saw the shadow of a man on the ground, and then spied the man himself, with a dark lanthorn, passing along the beach."

"Well, well, to the purpose," said Schedoni.

"Old Marco, Signor, my father says, was never stout-hearted, and he took it into his head this might be a robber, because he had the lanthorn, though, for that matter, he would have been glad enough of a lanthorn himself, and so he lay quiet. But, presently, he was in a rare fright, for the man stopped to rest the load he had upon his back, on a piece of rock near him, and old Marco saw him throw off a heavy sack, and heard him breathe hard, as if he was hugely tired. I tell it, Signor, just as my father does."

"What was in the sack?" said Schedoni, coolly.

"All in good time, Signor;" perhaps old Marco never found out; but you shall hear. He was afraid, when he saw the sack, to stir a limb, for he thought it held booty. But, presently, the man, without saying a word, heaved it on his shoulders again, and staggered away with it along the beach, and Marco saw no more of him."

“Well! what has he to do with your story, then?” said the Confessor, “Was this Spalatro?”

“All in good time, Signor; you put me out. When the storm was down a little, Marco crept out, and, thinking there must be a village, or a hamlet, or a cottage, at no great distance, since this man had passed, he thought he would try a little further. He had better have staid where he was, for he wandered about a long while, and could see nothing, and what was worse, the storm came on louder than before, and he had no rocks to shelter him now. While he was in the quandary, he sees a light at a distance, and it came into his head this might be the lantern again, but he determined to go on notwithstanding, for if it was, he could stop short, and if it was not, he should get shelter, perhaps; so on he went, and I suppose I should have done the same, Signor.”

“Well! this history never will have an end!” said Schedoni.

“Well! Signor, he had not gone far when he found out that it was no lantern, but a light at a window. When he came up to the house he knocked softly at the door, but nobody came.”

“What house?” inquired the Confessor, sharply.

“The rain beat hard, Signor, and I warrant poor old Marco waited a long time before he knocked again, for he was main patient, Signor. O! how I have seen him-listen to a story, let it be ever so long!”

“I have need of his patience!” said Schedoni.

“When he knocked again, Signor, the door gave way a little, and he found it was open, and so, as nobody came, he thought fit to walk in of his own accord.”

“The dotard! what business had he to be so curious?” exclaimed Schedoni.

“Curious! Signor, he only sought shelter! He stumbled about in the dark, for a good while, and could find nobody, nor make nobody hear, but, at last, he came to a room where there was some fire not quite out, upon the hearth, and he went up to it, to warm himself, till somebody should come.”

“What! was there nobody in the house?” said the Confessor.

“You shall hear, Signor. He had not been there, he said, no, he was sure, not above two minutes, when he heard a strange sort of a noise in the very room where he was, but the fire gave such a poor light, he could not see whether any body was there.”

“What was the noise?”

“You put me out, Signor. He said he did not much like it, but what could he do! So he stirred up the fire, and tried to make it blaze a little, but it was as dusky as ever; he could see nothing. Presently, however, he heard somebody coming, and saw a light, and then a man coming towards the room where he was, so he went up to him to ask shelter.”

“Who was this man?” said Schedoni.

“Ask shelter. He says the man, when he came to the door of the room, turned as white as a sheet, as well he might, to see a stranger, to find a stranger there, at that time of the night. I suppose I should have done the same myself. The man did not seem very willing to let him stay, but asked what he did there, and such like; but the storm was very loud, and so Marco did not let a little matter daunt him, and, when he shewed the man what fine fish he had in his basket, and said he was welcome to it, he seemed more willing.”

“Incredible!” exclaimed Schedoni, “the blockhead!”

“He had wit enough for that matter, Signor; Marco says he appeared to be main hungry— “

“Is that any proof of his wit?” said the Confessor, peevishly.

“You never will let me finish, Signor; main hungry; for he put more wood on the fire directly, to dress some of the fish. While he was doing this, Marco says his heart, somehow, misgave him, that this was the man he saw on the beach, and he looked at him pretty hard, till the other asked him, crossly, what he stared at him so for; but Marco took care not to tell. While he was busy making ready the fish, however, Marco had an opportunity of eying him the more, and every time the man looked round the room, which happened to be pretty often, he had a notion it was the same.”

“Well, and if it was the same,” said Schedoni.

“But when Marco happened to spy the sack, lying in a corner, he had no doubt about the matter. He says his heart then misgave him sadly, and he wished himself safe out of the house, and determined, in his own mind, to get away as soon as he could, without letting the man suspect what he thought of him. He now guessed, too, what made the man look round the room so often, and, though Marco thought before it was to find out if he

had brought any body with him, he now believed it was to see whether his treasure was safe."

"Aye, likely enough," observed Schedoni.

"Well, old Marco sat not much at his ease, while the fish was preparing, and thought it was 'out of the fryingpan into the fire' with him; but what could he do?"

"Why get up and walk away, to be sure," said the Confessor, "as I shall do, if your story lasts much longer."

"You shall hear, Signor; he would have done so, if he had thought this man would have let him, but— "

"Well, this man was Spalatro, I suppose," said Schedoni, impatiently, 'and this was the house on the shore you formerly mentioned."

"How well you have guessed it, Signor! though to say truth, I have been expecting you to find it out for this half hour."

Schedoni did not like the significant look, which the peasant assumed while he said this, but he bade him proceed.

"At first, Signor, Spalatro hardly spoke a word, but he came to by degrees, and by the time the fish was nearly ready, he was talkative enough."

Here the Confessor rose, with some emotion, and paced the room.

"Poor old Marco, Signor, began to think better of him, and when he heard the rain at the casements, he was loath to think of stirring. Presently Spalatro went out of the room for a plate to eat the fish on.— "

"Out of the room?" said Schedoni, and checked his steps.

"Yes, Signor, but he took care to carry the light with him. However, Marco, who had a deal of curiosity to— "

"Yes, he appears to have had a great deal, indeed!" said the Confessor, and turning away, renewed his pace.

"Nay, Signor, I am not come to that yet, he has shewn none yet; — a great deal of curiosity to know what was in the sack, before he consented to let himself stay much longer, thought this a good opportunity for looking, and as the fire was now pretty bright, he determined to see. He went up to the sack, therefore, Signor, and tried to lift it,, but it was too heavy for him though it did not seem full."

Schedoni again checked his steps, and stood fixed before the peasant.

“He raised it, however, a little, Signor, but it fell from his hands, and with such a heavy weight upon the floor, that he was sure it held no common booty. Just then, he says, he thought he heard Spalatro coming, and the sound of the sack was enough to have frightened him, and so Marco quitted it; but he was mistaken, and he went to it again. But you don’t seem to hear me, Signor, for you look as you do when you are in those quandaries, so busy a-thinking, and I— “

“Proceed,” said Schedoni, sternly, and renewed his steps, “I hear you.”

“Went to it again,” — resumed the peasant, cautiously taking up the story at the last words he had dropped. “He untied the string, Signor, that held the sack, and opened the cloth a little way, but think, Signor, what he must have thought, when he felt — cold flesh! O, Signor! and when he saw by the light of the fire, the face of a corpse within! O, Signor!” —

The peasant, in the eagerness with which he related this circumstance, had followed Schedoni to the other end of the chamber, and he now took hold of his garment, as if to secure his attention to the remainder of the story. The Confessor, however, continued his steps, and the peasant kept pace with him, still loosely holding his garment.

“Marco,” he resumed, “was so terrified, as my father says, that he hardly knew where he was, and I warrant, if one could have seen him, he looked as white, Signor, as you do now.”

The Confessor abruptly withdrew his garment from the peasant’s grasp, and said, in an inward voice, “If I am shocked at the mere mention of such a spectacle, no wonder he was, who beheld it!” After the pause of a moment, he added,— “But what followed?”

“Marco says he had no power to tie up the cloth again, Signor, and when he came to his thoughts, his only fear was, lest Spalatro should return, though he had hardly been gone a minute, before he could get out of the house, for he cared nothing about the storm now. And sure enough he heard him coming, but he managed to get out of the room, into a passage another way from that Spalatro was in. And luckily, too, it was the same passage he had come in by, and it led him out of the house. He made no more ado, but ran straight off, without stopping to chuse which way, and many perils and dangers he got into among the woods, that night, and— “

“How happened it, that this Spalatro was not taken up, after this discovery?” said Schedoni. “What was the consequence of it?”

“Why, Signor, old Marco had like to have caught his death that night; what with the wet, and what with the fright, he was laid up with a fever, and was light-headed, and raved of such strange things, that people would not believe any thing he said when he came to his senses.”

“Aye,” said Schedoni, “the narrative resembles a delirious dream, more than a reality; I perfectly accord with them in their opinion of this feverish old man.”

“But you shall hear, Signor; after a while they began to think better of it, and there was some stir made about it; but what could poor folks do, for nothing could be proved! The house was searched, but the man was gone, and nothing could be found! From that time the place was shut up; till many years after, this Spalatro appeared, and old Marco then said he was pretty sure he was the man, but he could not swear it, and so nothing could be done.”

“Then it appears, after all, that you are not certain that this long history belongs to this Spalatro!” said the Confessor; “nay, not even that the history itself is any thing more than the vision of a distempered brain!”

“I do not know, Signor, what you may call certain; but I know what we all believe. But the strangest part of the story is to come yet, and that which nobody would believe, hardly, if— “

“I have heard enough,” said Schedoni, “I will hear no more!”

“Well but, Signor, I have not told you half yet; and I am sure when I heard it myself, it so terrified me.”

“I have listened too long to this idle history,” said the Confessor, “there seems to be no rational foundation for it. Here is what I owe you; you may depart.”

“Well, Signor, ‘tis plain you know the rest already, or you never would go without it. But you don’t know, perhaps, Signor, what an unaccountable — I am sure it made my hair stand on end to hear of it, what an unaccountable— “

“I will hear no more of this absurdity,” interrupted Schedoni, with sternness. “I reproach myself for having listened so long to such a gossip’s tale, and have no further curiosity concerning it. You may withdraw; and bid the host attend me.”

“Well, Signor, if you are so easily satisfied,” replied the peasant, with disappointment, “there is no more to be said, but— “

“You may stay, however, while I caution you,” said Schedoni, “how you pass the villa, where this Spalatro may yet linger, for, though I can only smile at the story you have related— “

“Related, Signor! why I have not told it half; and if you would only please to be patient— “

“Though I can only smile at that simple narrative,” — repeated Schedoni in a louder tone.

“Nay, Signor, for that matter, you can frown at it too, as I can testify,” muttered the guide.

“Listen to me!” said the Confessor, in a yet more insisting voice. “I say, that though I give no credit to your curious history, I think this same Spalatro appears to be a desperate fellow, and, therefore, I would have you be on your guard. If you see him, you may depend upon it, that he will attempt your life in revenge of the injury I have done him. I give you, therefore, in addition to your trombone, this stiletto to defend you.”

Schedoni, while he spoke, took an instrument from his bosom, but it was not the one he usually wore, or, at least, that he was seen to wear. He delivered it to the peasant, who received it with a kind of stupid surprise, and then gave him some directions as to the way in which it should be managed.

“Why, Signor,” said the man, who had listened with much attention, “I am kindly obliged to you for thinking about me, but is there any thing in this stiletto different from others, that it is to be used so?”

Schedoni looked gravely at the peasant for an instant, and then replied, “Certainly not, friend, I would only instruct you to use it to the best advantage; — farewell!”

“Thank you kindly, Signor, but — but I think I have no need of it, my trombone is enough for me.”

“This will defend you more adroitly,” replied Schedoni, refusing to take back the stiletto, “and moreover, while you were loading the trombone, your adversary might use his poniard to advantage. Keep it, therefore, friend; it will protect you better than a dozen trombones. Put it up.”

Perhaps it was Schedoni’s particular look, more than his argument, that convinced the guide of the value of his gift; he received it submissively, though with a stare of stupid surprise; probably it had been better, if it had been suspicious surprise. He thanked Schedoni again, and was leaving the

room, when the Confessor called out, “Send the landlord to me immediately, I shall set off for Rome without delay!”

“Yes, Signor,” replied the peasant, “you are at the right place, the road parts here; but I thought you was going for Naples!”

“For Rome,” said Schedoni.

“For Rome, Signor! Well, I hope you will get safe, Signor, with all my heart!” said the guide, and quitted the chamber.

While this dialogue had been passing between Schedoni and the peasant, Ellena, in solitude, was considering on the means of prevailing with the Confessor to allow her to return either to Altieri, or to the neighbouring cloister of “Our Lady of Pity,” instead of placing her at a distance from Naples, till he should think proper to acknowledge her. The plan, which he had mentioned, seemed to her long-harrassed mind to exile her forever from happiness, and all that was dear to her affections; it appeared like a second banishment to San Stesano, and every abbess, except that of the Santa della Pieta, came to her imagination in the portraiture of an inexorable jailor. While this subject engaged her, she was summoned to attend Schedoni, whom she found impatient to enter the carriage, which at this town they had been able to procure. Ellena, on looking out for the guide, was informed that he had already set off for his home, a circumstance, for the suddenness of which she knew not how to account.

The travellers immediately proceeded on their journey; Schedoni, reflecting on the late conversation, said little, and Ellena read not in his countenance any thing that might encourage her to introduce the subject of her own intended solicitation. Thus separately occupied, they advanced, during some hours, on the road to Naples, for thither Schedoni had designed to go, notwithstanding his late assertion to the guide, whom it appears, for whatever reason, he was anxious to deceive, as to the place of his actual residence.

They stopped to dine at a town of some consideration, and, when Ellena heard the Confessor inquire concerning the numerous convents it contained, she perceived that it was necessary for her no longer to defer her petition. She therefore represented immediately what must be the forlornness of her state, and the anxiety of her mind, if she were placed at a distance from the scenes and the people, which affection and early habit seemed to have consecrated; especially at this time, when her spirits had

scarcely recovered from the severe pressure of long suffering, and when to soothe and renovate them, not only quiet, but the consciousness of security, were necessary; a consciousness which it was impossible, and especially so after her late experience, that she could acquire among strangers, till they should cease to be such.

To these pleadings Schedoni thoughtfully attended, but the darkness of his aspect did not indicate that his compassion was touched; and Ellena proceeded to represent, secondly, that which, had she been more artful, or less disdainful of cunning, she would have urged the first. As it was, she had begun with the mention of circumstances, which, though the least likely to prevail with Schedoni, she felt to be most important to herself; and she concluded with representing that, which was most interesting to him. Ellena suggested, that her residence in the neighbourhood of Altieri might be so managed, as that his secret would be as effectually preserved, as if she were at an hundred miles from Naples.

It may appear extraordinary, that a man of Schedoni's habitual coolness, and exact calculation, should have suffered fear, on this occasion, to obscure his perceptions; and this instance strongly proved the magnitude of the cause, which could produce so powerful an effect. While he now listened to Ellena, he began to perceive circumstances that had eluded his own observation; and he, at length, acknowledged, that it might be safer to permit her to return to the Villa Altieri, and that she should from thence go, as she had formerly intended, to the Santa della Pieta, than to place her in any convent, however remote, where it would be necessary for himself to introduce her. His only remaining objection to the neighbourhood of Naples, now rested on the chance it would offer the Marchesa di Vivaldi of discovering Ellena's abode, before he should judge it convenient to disclose to her his family; and his knowledge of the Marchesa justified his most horrible suspicion, as to the consequence of such a premature discovery.

Something, however, it appeared, must be risked in any situation he might chuse for Ellena; and her residence at the Santa della Pieta, a large convent, well secured, and where, as she had been known to them from her infancy, the abbess and the sisters might be supposed to be not indifferent concerning her welfare, seemed to promise security against any actual violence from the malice of the Marchesa; against her artful duplicity

every place would be almost equally insufficient. Here, as Ellena would appear in the character she had always been known in, no curiosity could be excited, or suspicion awakened, as to her family; and here, therefore, Schedoni's secret would more probably be preserved, than elsewhere. As this was, after all, the predominant subject of his anxiety, to which, however unnatural it may seem, even the safety of Ellena was secondary, he finally determined, that she should return to the Santa della Pieta; and she thanked him almost with tears, for a consent which she received as a generous indulgence, but which was in reality little more than an effect of selfish apprehension.

The remainder of the journey, which was of some days, passed without any remarkable occurrence: Schedoni, with only short intervals, was still enveloped in gloom and silence; and Ellena, with thoughts engaged by the one subject of her interest, the present situation and circumstances of Vivaldi, willingly submitted to this prolonged stillness.

As, at length, she drew near Naples, her emotions became more various and powerful; and, when she distinguished the top of Vesuvius peering over every intervening summit, she wept as her imagination charactered all the wellknown country it overlooked. But when, having reached an eminence, that scenery was exhibited to her senses, when the Bay of Naples, stretching into remotest distance, was spread out before her; when every mountain of that magnificent horizon, which enclosed her native landscape, that country which she believed Vivaldi to inhabit, stood unfolded, how affecting, how overwhelming were her sensations! Every object seemed to speak of her home, of Vivaldi, and of happiness that was passed! and so exquisitely did regret mingle with hope, the tender grief of remembrance with the interest of expectation, that it were difficult to say which prevailed.

Her expressive countenance disclosed to the Confessor the course of her thoughts and of her feelings, feelings which, while he contemned, he believed he perfectly comprehended, but of which, having never in any degree experienced them, he really understood nothing. The callous Schedoni, by a mistake not uncommon, especially to a mind of his character, substituted words for truths; not only confounding the limits of neighbouring qualities, but mistaking their very principles. Incapable of perceiving their nice distinctions, he called the persons who saw them,

merely fanciful; thus making his very incapacity an argument for his superior wisdom. And, while he confounded delicacy of feeling with fatuity of mind, taste with caprice, and imagination with error, he yielded, when he most congratulated himself on his sagacity, to illusions not less egregious, because they were less brilliant, than those which are incident to sentiment and feeling.

The better to escape observation, Schedoni had contrived not to reach Naples till the close of evening, and it was entirely dark before the carriage stopped at the gate of the Villa Altieri. Ellena, with a mixture of melancholy and satisfaction, viewed, once more, her long-deserted home, and while she waited till a servant should open the gate, remembered how often she had thus waited when there was a beloved friend within, to welcome her with smiles, which were now gone for ever. Beatrice, the old housekeeper, at length, however, appeared, and received her with an affection as sincere, if not as strong, as that of the relative for whom she mourned.

Here Schedoni alighted, and, having dismissed the carriage, entered the house, for the purpose of relinquishing also his disguise, and resuming his monk’s habit. Before he departed, Ellena ventured to mention Vivaldi, and to express her wish to hear of his exact situation; but, though Schedoni was too well enabled to inform her of it, the policy which had hitherto kept him silent on this subject still influenced him; and he replied only, that if she should happen to learn the circumstances of his condition, she should not remain ignorant of them.

This assurance revived Ellena, for two reasons; it afforded her a hope of relief from her present uncertainty, and it also seemed to express an approbation of the object of her affection, such as the Confessor had never yet disclosed. Schedoni added, that he should see her no more, till he thought proper to acknowledge her for his daughter; but that, if circumstances made it necessary, he should, in the mean time, write to her; and he now gave her a direction by which to address him under a fictitious name, and at a place remote from his convent. Ellena, though assured of the necessity for this conduct, could not yield to such disguise, without an aversion that was strongly expressed in her manner, but of which Schedoni took no notice. He bade her, as she valued her existence, watchfully to preserve the secret of her birth; and to waste not a single day at Villa

Altieri, but to retire to the Santa della Pieta; and these injunctions were delivered in a manner so solemn and energetic, as not only deeply to impress upon her mind the necessity of fulfilling them, but to excite some degree of amazement.

After a short and general direction respecting her further conduct, Schedoni bade her farewell, and, privately quitting the villa, in his ecclesiastical dress, repaired to the Dominican convent, which he entered as a brother returned from a distant pilgrimage. He was received as usual by the society, and found himself, once more, the austere father Schedoni of the Spirito Santo.

The cause of his first anxiety was the necessity for justifying himself to the Marchesa di Vivaldi, for ascertaining how much he might venture to reveal of the truth, and for estimating what would be her decision, were she informed of the whole. His second step would be to obtain the release of Vivaldi; and, as his conduct in this instance would be regulated, in a great degree, by the result of his conference with the Marchesa, it would be only the second. However painful it must be to Schedoni to meet her, now that he had discovered the depth of the guilt, in which she would have involved him, he determined to seek this eventful conference on the following morning: and he passed this night partly in uneasy expectation of the approaching day, but chiefly in inventing circumstances and arranging arguments, that might bear him triumphantly towards the accomplishment of his grand design.

Chapter 2 3

“Beneath the silent gloom of Solitude
Tho’ Peace can sit and smile, tho’ meek Content
Can keep the cheerful tenor of her soul,
Ev’n in the loneliest shades, yet let not Wrath
Approach, let black Revenge keep far aloof,
Or soon they flame to madness..”
Elfrida.

Schedoni, on his way to the Vivaldi palace, again reviewed and arranged every argument, or rather specious circumstances, which might induce the Marchesa’s consent to the nuptials he so much desired. His family was noble, though no longer wealthy, and he believed that as the seeming want of descent had hitherto been the chief objection to Ellena, the Marchesa might be prevailed with to overlook the wreck of his fortune.

At the palace he was told, that the Marchesa was at one of her villas on the bay; and he was too anxious not to follow her thither immediately. This delightful residence was situated on an airy promontory, that overhung the water, and was nearly embosomed among the woods, that spread far along the heights, and descended, with great pomp of foliage and colouring, to the very margin of the waves. It seemed scarcely possible that misery could inhabit so enchanting an abode; yet the Marchesa was wretched amidst all these luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happiness of an innocent mind. Her heart was possessed by evil passions, and all her perceptions were distorted and discoloured by them, which, like a dark magician, had power to change the fairest scenes into those of gloom and desolation.

The servants had orders to admit father Schedoni at all times, and he was shewn into a saloon, in which the Marchesa was alone. Every object in this apartment announced taste, and even magnificence. The hangings were of purple and gold; the vaulted cieling was designed by one of the first painters of the Venetian school; the marble statues that adorned the recesses were not less exquisite, and the whole symmetry and architecture,

airy, yet rich; gay, yet chastened; resembled the palace of a fairy, and seemed to possess almost equal fascinations. The lattices were thrown open, to admit the prospect, as well as the air loaded with fragrance from an orangery, that spread before them. Losty palms and plantains threw their green and refreshing tint over the windows, and on the lawn that sloped to the edge of the precipice, a shadowy perspective, beyond which appeared the ample waters of the gulf, where the light fails of feluccas, and the spreading canvas of larger vessels, glided upon the scene and passed away, as in a camera obscura. Vesuvius and the city of Naples were seen on the coast beyond, with many a bay and lofty cape of that long tract of bold and gaily-coloured scenery, which extends toward Cape Campanella, crowned by fading ranges of mountains, lighted up with all the magic of Italian sunshine. The Marchesa reclined on a sofa before an open lattice; her eyes were fixed upon the prospect without, but her attention was wholly occupied by the visions that evil passions painted to her imagination. On her still beautiful features was the languor of discontent and indisposition; and, though her manners, like her dress, displayed the elegant negligence of the graces, they concealed the movements of a careful, and even a tortured heart. On perceiving Schedoni, a faint smile lightened upon her countenance, and she held forth her hand to him; at the touch of which he shuddered.

“My good father, I rejoice to see you,” said the Marchesa; “I have felt the want of your conversation much, and at this moment of indisposition especially.”

She waved the attendant to withdraw; while Schedoni, stalking to a window, could with difficulty conceal the perturbation with which he now, for the first time, consciously beheld the willing destroyer of his child. Some farther compliment from the Marchesa recalled him; he soon recovered all his address, and approaching her, said,

“Daughter! you always send me away a worse Dominican than I come; I approach you with humility, but depart elated with pride, and am obliged to suffer much from self-infliction before I can descend to my proper level.”

After some other flatteries had been exchanged, a silence of several moments followed, during which neither of the parties seemed to have sufficient courage to introduce the subjects that engaged their thoughts,

subjects upon which their interests were now so directly and unexpectedly opposite. Had Schedoni been less occupied by his own feelings, he might have perceived the extreme agitation of the Marchesa, the tremor of her nerves, the faint flush that crossed her cheek, the wanness that succeeded, the languid movement of her eyes, and the laborious sighs that interrupted her breathing, while she wished, yet dared not ask, whether Ellena was no more, and averted her regards from him, whom she almost believed to be a murderer.

Schedoni, not less affected, though apparently tranquil, as sedulously avoided the face of the Marchesa, whom he considered with a degree of contempt almost equal to his indignation: his feelings had reversed, for the present, all hi opinions on the subject of their former arguments, and had taught him, for once, to think justly. Every moment of silence now increased his embarrassment, and his reluctance even to name Ellena. He feared to tell that she lived, yet despised himself for suffering such fear, and shuddered at a recollection of the conduct, which had made any assurance concerning her life necessary. The insinuations, that he had discovered her family to be such as would not degrade that of the Marchesa, he knew not how to introduce with such delicacy of gradation as might win upon the jealousy of her pride, and soothe her disappointment; and he was still meditating how he might lead to this subject, when the Marchesa herself broke the silence.

“Father,” she said, with a sigh, “I always look to you for consolation, and am seldom disappointed. You are too well acquainted with the anxiety which has long oppressed me; may I understand that the cause of it is removed?” She paused; and then added, “May I hope that my son will no longer be led from the observance of his duty?”

Schedoni, with his eyes fixed on the ground, remained silent, but, at length, said, “The chief occasion of your anxiety is certainly removed;” — and he was again silent.

“How!” exclaimed the Marchesa, with the quick-sightedness of suspicion, while all her dissimulation yielded to the urgency of her fear, “Have you failed? Is she not dead?”

In the earnestness of the question, she fixed her eyes on Schedoni’s face, and, perceiving there symptoms of extraordinary emotion, added, “Relieve

me from my apprehensions, good father, I entreat; tell me that you have succeeded, and that she has paid the debt of justice."

Schedoni raised his eyes to the Marchesa, but instantly averted them; indignation had lifted them, and disgust and stifled horror turned them away. Though very little of these feelings appeared, the Marchesa perceived such expression as she had never been accustomed to observe in his countenance; and, her surprize and impatience increasing, she once more repeated the question, and with a yet more decisive air than before.

"I have not failed in the grand object," replied Schedoni: "your son is no longer in danger of forming a disgraceful alliance."

"In what, then, have you failed?" asked the Marchesa; "for I perceive that you have not been completely successful."

"I ought not to say that I have failed in any respect," replied Schedoni, with emotion, "since the honour of your house is preserved, and — a life is spared."

His voice faultered as he pronounced the last words, and he seemed to experience again the horror of that moment, when, with an uplifted poniard in his grasp, he had discovered Ellena for his daughter.

"Spared!" repeated the Marchesa, doubtingly; "explain yourself, good father!"

"She lives," replied Schedoni; "but you have nothing, therefore, to apprehend."

The Marchesa, surprized no less by the tone in which he spoke, than shocked at the purport of his words, changed countenance, while she said, impatiently —

"You speak in enigmas, father."

"Lady! I speak plain truth — she lives."

"I understand that sufficiently," said the Marchesa; "but when you tell me, I have nothing to apprehend— "

"I tell you truth, also," rejoined the Confessor; "and the benevolence of your nature may be permitted to rejoice, for justice no longer has forbade the exercise of mercy."

"This is all very well in its place," said the Marchesa, betrayed by the vexation she suffered; "such sentiments and such compliments are like gala suits, to be put on in fine weather. My day is cloudy; let me have a little plain strong sense: inform me of the circumstances which have

occasioned this change in the course of your observations, and, good father! be brief.”

Schedoni then unfolded, with his usual art, such circumstances relative to the family of Ellena as he hoped would soften the aversion of the Marchesa to the connection, and incline her, in consideration of her son’s happiness, finally to approve it; with which disclosure he mingled a plausible relation of the way, in which the discovery had been made.

The Marchesa’s patience would scarcely await the conclusion of his narrative or her disappointment submit to the curb of discretion. When, at length, he had finished his history, “Is it possible,” said she, with fretful displeasure, “that you have suffered yourself to be deceived by the plausibility of a girl, who might have been expected to utter any falshood, which should appear likely to protect her! Has a man of your discernment given faith to the idle and improbable tale! Say, rather, father, that your resolution failed in the critical moment, and that you are now anxious to form excuses to yourself for a conduct so pusillanimous.”

“I am not apt to give an easy faith to appearances,” replied Schedoni, gravely, “and still less, to shrink from the performance of any act, which I judge to be necessary and just. To the last intimation, I make no reply; it does not become my character to vindicate myself from an implication of falshood.”

The Marchesa, perceiving that her passion had betrayed her into imprudence, condescended to apologize for that which she termed an effect of her extreme anxiety, as to what might follow from an act of such indiscreet indulgence; and Schedoni as willingly accepted the apology, each believing the assistance of the other necessary to success.

Schedoni then informed her, that he had better authority for what he had advanced than the assertion of Ellena; and he mentioned some circumstances, which proved him to be more anxious for the reputation than for the truth of his word. Believing that his origin was entirely unknown to the Marchesa, he ventured to disclose some particulars of Ellena’s family, without apprehending that it could lead to a suspicion of his own.

The Marchesa, though neither appeased or convinced, commanded her feelings so far as to appear tranquil, while the Confessor represented, with the most delicate address, the unhappiness of her son, and the satisfaction,

which must finally result to herself from an acquiescence with his choice, since the object of it was known to be worthy of his alliance. He added, that, while he had believed the contrary, he had proved himself as strenuous to prevent, as he was now sincere in approving their marriage; and concluded with gently blaming her for suffering prejudice and some remains of resentment to obscure her excellent understanding. “Trusting to the natural clearness of your perceptions,” he added, “I doubt not that when you have maturely considered the subject, every objection will yield to a consideration of your son’s happiness.”

The earnestness, with which Schedoni pleaded for Vivaldi, excited some surprize; but the Marchesa, without condescending to reply either to his argument or remonstrance, inquired whether Ellena had a suspicion of the design, with which she had been carried into the forests of the Garganus, or concerning the identity of her persecutor. Schedoni, immediately perceiving to what these questions tended, replied, with the facility with which he usually accommodated his conscience to his interest, that Ellena was totally ignorant as to who were her immediate persecutors, and equally unsuspicious of any other evil having been intended her, than that of a temporary confinement.

The last assertion was admitted by the Marchesa to be probable, till the boldness of the first made her doubt the truth of each; and occasioned her new surprize and conjecture as to the motive, which could induce Schedoni to venture these untruths. She then inquired where Ellena was now disposed of, but he had too much prudence to disclose the place of her retreat, however plausible might be the air with which the inquiry was urged; and he endeavoured to call off her attention to Vivaldi. The Confessor did not, however, venture, at present, to give a hint as to the pretended discovery of his situation in the inquisition, but reserved to a more favourable opportunity such mention, together with the zealous offer of his services to extricate the prisoner. The Marchesa, believing that her son was still engaged in pursuit of Ellena, made many inquiries concerning him, but without expressing any solicitude for his welfare; resentment appearing to be the only emotion she retained towards him. While Schedoni replied with circumspection to her questions, he urged inquiries of his own, as to the manner in which the Marchesa endured the long absence of Vivaldi; thus endeavouring to ascertain how far he might

hereafter venture to appear in any efforts for liberating him, and how shape his conduct respecting Ellena. It seemed that the Marchese was not indifferent as to his son’s absence; and, though he had at first believed the search for Ellena to have occasioned it, other apprehensions now disturbed him, and taught him the feelings of a father. His numerous avocations and interests, however, seemed to prevent such anxiety from preying upon his mind; and, having dismissed persons in search of Vivaldi, he passed his time in the usual routine of company and the court. Of the actual situation of his son it was evident that neither he, nor the Marchesa, had the least apprehension, and this was a circumstance, which the Confessor was very careful to ascertain.

Before he took leave, he ventured to renew the mention of Vivaldi’s attachment, and gently to plead for him. The Marchesa, however, seemed inattentive to what he represented, till, at length, awaking from her reverie, she said— “Father, you have judged ill — ,” and, before she concluded the sentence, she relapsed again into thoughtful silence. Believing that he anticipated her meaning, Schedoni began to repeat his own justification respecting his conduct towards Ellena.

“You have judged erroneously, father,” resumed the Marchesa, with the same considering air, “in placing the girl in such a situation; my son cannot fail to discover her there.”

“Or wherever she may be,” replied the Confessor, believing that he understood the Marchesa’s aim. “It may not be possible to conceal her long from his search.”

“The neighbourhood of Naples ought at least to have been avoided,” observed the Marchesa.

Schedoni was silent, and she added, “So near, also, to his own residence! How far is the Santa della Piéta from the Vivaldi palace?”

Though Schedoni had thought that the Marchesa, while displaying a pretended knowledge of Ellena’s retreat, was only endeavouring to obtain a real one, this mention of the place of her actual residence shocked him; but he replied almost immediately, “I am ignorant of the distance, for, till now, I was unacquainted that there is a convent of the name you mention. It appears, however, that this Santa della Piéta is the place, of all other, which ought to have been avoided. How could you suspect me, lady, of imprudence thus extravagant!”

While Schedoni spoke, the Marchesa regarded him attentively, and then replied, “I may be allowed, good father, to suspect your prudence in this instance, since you have just given me so unequivocal a proof of it in another.”

She would then have changed the subject, but Schedoni, believing this inclination to be the consequence of her having assured herself, that she had actually discovered Ellena’s asylum, and too reasonably suspecting the dreadful use she designed to make of the discovery, endeavoured to unsettle her opinion, and mislead her as to the place of Ellena’s abode. He not only contradicted the fact of her. present residence at the Santa della Piéta, but, without scruple, made a positive assertion, that she was at a distance from Naples, naming, at the same time, a fictitious place, whose obscurity, he added, would be the best protection from the pursuit of Vivaldi.

“Very true, father,” observed the Marchesa; “I believe that my son will not readily discover the girl in the place you have named,”

Whether the Marchesa believed Schedoni’s assertion or not, she expressed no farther curiosity on the subject, and appeared considerably more tranquil than before. She now chatted with ease on general topics, while the Confessor dared no more to urge the subject of his secret wishes; and, having supported, for some time, a conversation most uncongenial with his temper, he took his leave, and returned to Naples. On the way thither, he reviewed, with exactness, the late behaviour of the Marchesa, and the result of this examination was a resolution — never to renew the subject of their conversation, but to solemnize, without her consent, the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena.

The Marchesa, meanwhile, on the departure of Schedoni, remained in the attitude in which he had left her, and absorbed by the interest, which his visit excited. The sudden change in his conduct no less astonished and perplexed, than, disappointed her. She could not explain it by the supposition of any principle, or motive. Sometimes it occurred to her, that Vivaldi had bribed him with rich promises, to promote the marriage, which he contributed to thwart; but, when she considered the high expectations she had herself encouraged him to cherish, the improbability of the conjecture was apparent. That Schedoni, from whatever cause, was no longer to be trusted in this business, was sufficiently clear, but she

endeavoured to console herself with a hope that a more confidential person might yet be discovered. A part of Schedoni's resolution she also adopted, which was, never again to introduce the subject of their late conversation. But, while she should silently pursue her own, plans, she determined to conduct herself towards Schedoni in every other respect, as usual, not suffering him to suspect that she had withdrawn her confidence, but inducing him to believe that she had relinquished all farther design, against Ellena.

Chapter 2 4

— “We
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Through shades and plains, along the smoothest stream
Of rural life; or, snatch’d away by hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness and wonder, where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world.”
Thomson.

Ellena, obedient to the command of Schedoni, withdrew from her home on the day that followed her arrival there, to the Santa della Piéta. The Superiour, who had known her from her infancy, and, from the acquaintance which such long observation afforded, had both esteemed and loved her, received Ellena with a degree of satisfaction proportionate to the concern she had suffered when informed of her disastrous removal from the Villa Altieri.

Among the quiet groves of this convent, however, Ellena vainly endeavoured to moderate her solicitude respecting the situation of Vivaldi; for, now that she had a respite from immediate calamity, she thought with more intense anxiety as to what might be his sufferings, and her fears and impatience increased, as each day disappointed her expectation of intelligencé from Schedoni.

If the soothings of sympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have restored the serenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all these were offered her by the abbess and the sisters of the Santa della Piéta. They were not acquainted with the cause of her sorrow, but they perceived that she was unhappy, and wished her to be otherwise. The society of Our Lady of Pity, was such as a convent does not often shroud; to the wisdom and virtue of the Superiour, the sisterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happiness which distinguished

them. This lady was a shining example to governesses of religious houses, and a striking instance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extensive good that it may thus diffuse. She was dignified without haughtiness, religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm. She possessed penetration to discover what was just, resolution to adhere to it, and temper to practise it with gentleness and grace; so that even correction from her, assumed the winning air of courtesy: the person, whom she admonished, wept in sorrow for the offence, instead of being secretly irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother, rather than feared her as a judge. Whatever might be her failings, they were effectually concealed by the general benevolence of her heart, and the harmony of her mind; a harmony, not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accomplishment of correct and vigilant judgment. Her religion was neither gloomy, nor bigotted; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delights in the happiness of his creatures; and she conformed to the customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation. This opinion, however, she was obliged to conceal, lest her very virtue should draw upon her the punishment of a crime, from some fierce ecclesiastics, who contradicted in their practice the very essential principles, which the christianity they professed would have taught them.

In her lectures to the nuns she seldom touched upon points of faith, but explained and enforced the moral duties, particularly such as were most practicable in the society to which she belonged; such as tended to soften and harmonize the affections, to impart that repose of mind, which persuades to the practice of sisterly kindness, universal charity, and the most pure and elevated devotion. When she spoke of religion, it appeared so interesting, so beautiful, that her attentive auditors revered and loved it as a friend, a refiner of the heart, a sublime consoler; and experienced somewhat of the meek and holy ardour, which may belong to angelic natures.

The society appeared like a large family, of which the lady abbess was the mother, rather than an assemblage of strangers; and particularly when gathered around her, they listened to the evening sermon, which she delivered with such affectionate interest, such persuasive eloquence, and sometimes with such pathetic energy, as few hearts could resist.

She encouraged in her convent every innocent and liberal pursuit, which might sweeten the austerities of confinement, and which were generally rendered instrumental to charity. The Daughters of Pity particularly excelled in music; not in those difficulties of the art, which display florid graces, and intricate execution, but in such eloquence of sound as steals upon the heart, and awakens its sweetest and best affections. It was probably the well-regulated sensibility of their own minds, that enabled these sisters to diffuse through their strains a character of such finely-tempered taste, as drew crowds of visitors, on every festival, to the church of the Santa della Piéta.

The local circumstances of this convent were scarcely less agreeable than the harmony of its society was interesting. These extensive domains included olive-grounds, vineyards, and some cornland; a considerable tract was devoted to the pleasures of the garden, whose groves supplied walnuts, almonds, oranges, and citrons, in abundance, and almost every kind of fruit and flower, which this luxurious climate nurtured. These gardens hung upon the slope of a hill, about a mile within the shore, and afforded extensive views of the country round Naples, and of the gulf. But from the terraces, which extended along a semicircular range of rocks, that rose over the convent, and formed a part of the domain, the prospects were infinitely finer. They extended on the south to the isle of Capræa, where the gulf expands into the sea; in the west, appeared the island of Ischia, distinguished by the white pinnacles of the lofty mountain Epomeo; and near it Prosida, with its many-coloured cliffs, rose out of the waves. Overlooking many points towards Puzzuoli, the eye caught beyond other promontories, and others further still, to the north, a glimpse of the sea, that bathes the now desolate shores of Baia; with Capua, and all the towns and villas, that speckle the garden-plains between Caserta and Naples.

In the nearer scene were the rocky heights of Pausilippo, and Naples itself, with all its crowded suburbs ascending among the hills, and mingling with vineyards and overtopping cypress; the castle of San Elmo, conspicuous on its rock, overhanging the magnificent monastery of the Chartreux; while in the scene below appeared the Castel Nuovo, with its clustered towers, the long-extended Corso, the mole, with its tall pharos, and the harbour gay with painted shipping, and full to the brim with the blue waters of the bay. Beyond the hills of Naples, the whole horizon to the

north and east was bounded by the mountains of the Appenine, an amphitheatre proportioned to the grandeur of the plain, which the gulf spread out below.

These terraces, shaded with acacias and plane-trees, were the favourite haunt of Ellena. Between the opening branches, she looked down upon Villa Altieri, which brought to her remembrance the affectionate Bianchi, with all the sportive years of her childhood; and where some of her happiest hours had been passed in the society of Vivaldi. Along the windings of the coast, too, she could distinguish many places rendered sacred by affection, to which she had made excursions with her lamented relative, and Vivaldi; and, though sadness mingled with the recollections a view of them restored, they were precious to her heart. Here, alone and unobserved, she frequently yielded to the melancholy which she endeavoured to suppress in society; and at other times tried to deceive, with books and the pencil, the lingering moments of uncertainty concerning the state of Vivaldi; for day after day still elapsed without bringing any intelligence from Schedoni. Whenever the late scenes connected with the discovery of her family recurred to Ellena, she was struck with almost as much amazement as if she was gazing upon a vision, instead of recalling realities. Contrasted with the sober truth of her present life, the past appeared like romance; and there were moments when she shrunk from the relationship of Schedoni with unconquerable affright. The first emotions his appearance had excited were so opposite to those of filial tenderness, that she perceived it was now nearly impossible to love and revere him as her father, and she endeavoured, by dwelling upon all the obligations, which she believed he had lately conferred upon her, to repay him in gratitude, what was withheld in affection.

In such melancholy considerations, she often lingered under the shade of the accacias, till the sun had sunk behind the far distant promontory of Miseno, and the last bell of vespers summoned her to the convent below.

Among the nuns, Ellena had many favourites, but not one that she admired and loved equally with Olivia of San Stefano, the remembrance of whom was always accompanied with a fear lest she should have suffered from her generous compassion, and a wish that she had taken up her abode with the happy society of the Daughters of Pity, instead of being subjected to the tyranny of the abbess of San Stefano. To Ellena, the magnificent

scenes of the Santa della Piéta seemed to open a secure, and, perhaps, a last asylum; for, in her present circumstances, she could not avoid perceiving how menacing and various were the objections to her marriage with Vivaldi, even should Schedoni prove propitious to it. The character of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, such as it stood unfolded by the late occurrences, struck her with dismay, for her designs appeared sufficiently atrocious, whether they had extended to the utmost limit of Ellena's suspicions, or had stopped where the affected charity of Schedoni had pointed out. In either case, the pertinacity of her aversion, and the vindictive violence of her nature, were obvious.

In this view of her character, however, it was not the inconvenience threatened to those who might become connected with her, that principally affected Ellena, but the circumstance of such a woman being the mother of Vivaldi; and, to alleviate so afflicting a consideration, she endeavoured to believe all the palliating suggestions of Schedoni, respecting the Marchesa's late intentions. But if Ellena was grieved on discovering crime in the character of Vivaldi's parent, what would have been her suffering, had she suspected the nature of Schedoni? — what, if she had been told that he was the adviser of the Marchesa's plans? — if she had known that he had been the partner of her intentional guilt? From such suffering she was yet spared, as well as from that, which a knowledge of Vivaldi's present situation, and of the result of Schedoni's efforts to procure a release from the perils, among which he had precipitated him, would have inflicted. Had she known this, it is probable that in the first despondency of her mind, she would have relinquished what is called the world, and sought a lasting asylum with the society of the holy sisters. Even as it was, she sometimes endeavoured to look with resignation upon the events which might render such a step desirable; but it was an effort that seldom soothed her even with a temporary self-delusion. Should the veil, however, prove her final refuge, it would be by her own choice; for the lady abbess of the Santa della Piéta employed no art to win a recluse, nor suffered the nuns to seduce votaries to the order.

Chapter 2 5

“Sullen and sad to fancy’s frighted eye
Did shapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of gesture strange,
And passing horrible.”
Caractacus.

While the late events had been passing in the Garganus, and at Naples, Vivaldi and his servant Paulo remained imprisoned in distinct chambers of the Inquisition. They were again separately interrogated. From the servant no information could be obtained; he asserted only his master’s innocence, without once remembering to mention his own; clamoured, with more justness than prudence, against the persons who had occasioned his arrest; seriously endeavouring to convince the inquisitors, that he himself had no other motive in having demanded to be brought to these prisons than that he might comfort his master, he gravely remonstrated on the injustice of separating them, adding, that he was sure when they knew the rights of the matter, they would order him to be carried to the prison of Signor Vivaldi.

“I do assure your Serenissimo Illustrissimo,” continued Paulo, addressing the chief inquisitor with profound gravity, “that this is the last place I should have thought of coming to, on any other account; and if you will only condescend to ask your officials, who took my master up, they will tell you as good. They knew well enough all along, what I came here for, and if they had known it would be all in vain, it would have been but civil of them to have told me as much, and not have brought me; for this is the last place in the world I would have come to, otherwise, of my own accord.”

Paulo was permitted to harangue in his own way, because his examiners hoped that his prolixity would be a means of betraying circumstances connected with his master. By this view, however, they were misled, for Paulo, with all his simplicity of heart, was both vigilant and shrewd in Vivaldi’s interest. But, when he perceived them really convinced, that his sole motive for visiting the Inquisition was that he might console his

master, yet still persisting in the resolution of separately confining him, his indignation knew no bounds. He despised alike their reprehension, their thundering menaces, and their more artful exhibitions; told them of all they had to expect both here and hereafter, for their cruelty to his dear master, and said they might do what they would with him; he defied them to make him more miserable than he was.

It was not without difficulty that he was removed from the chamber; where he left his examiners in a state of astonishment at his rashness, and indignation of his honesty, such as they had, probably, never experienced before.

When Vivaldi was again called up to the table of the Holy Office, he underwent a longer examination than on a former occasion. Several inquisitors attended, and every art was employed to induce him to confess crimes, of which he was suspected, and to draw from him a discovery of others, which might have eluded even suspicion. Still the examiners cautiously avoided informing him of the subject of the accusation on which he had been arrested, and it was, therefore, only on the former assurances of the Benedictine, and the officials in the chapel of San Sebastian, that Vivaldi understood he was accused of having carried off a nun. His answers on the present occasion were concise and firm, and his whole deportment undaunted. He felt less apprehension for himself, than indignation of the general injustice and cruelty, which the tribunal was permitted to exercise upon others; and this virtuous indignation gave a loftiness, a calm heroic grandeur to his mind, which never, for a moment, forsook him, except when he conjectured what might be the sufferings of Ellena. Then, his fortitude and magnanimity failed, and his tortured spirit rose almost to frenzy.

On this, his second examination, he was urged by the same dark questions, and replied to them with the same open sincerity, as during the first. Yet the simplicity and energy of truth failed to impress conviction on minds, which, no longer possessing the virtue themselves, were not competent to understand the symptoms of it in others. Vivaldi was again threatened with the torture, and again dismissed to his prison.

On the way to this dreadful abode, a person passed him in one of the avenues, of whose air and figure he thought he had some recollection; and, as the stranger stalked away, he suddenly knew him to be the prophetic

monk, who had haunted him among the ruins of Paluzzi. In the first moment of surprize, Vivaldi lost his presence of mind so far, that he made no attempt to interrupt him. In the next instant, however, he paused and looked back, with an intention of speaking; but this mysterious person was already at the extremity of the avenue. Vivaldi called, and besought him to stop. Without either speaking, or turning his head, however, he immediately disappeared beyond a door that opened at his approach. Vivaldi, on attempting to take the way of the monk, was withheld by his guards, and, when he inquired who was the stranger he had seen, the officials asked, in their turn, what stranger he alluded to.

“He who has just passed us,” replied Vivaldi.

The officials seemed surprized, “Your spirits are disordered, Signor,” observed one of them, “I saw no person pass!”

“He passed so closely,” said Vivaldi, “that it was hardly possible you could avoid seeing him!”

“I did not even hear a footstep!” added the man.

“I do not recollect that I did,” answered Vivaldi, “but I saw his figure as plainly as I now see your’s; his black garments almost touched me! Was he an inquisitor?”

The official appeared astonished; and, whether his surprize was real, or affected for the purpose of concealing his knowledge of the person alluded to, his embarrassment and awe seemed natural. Vivaldi observed, with almost equal curiosity and surprize, the fear which his face expressed; but perceived also, that it would avail nothing to repeat his questions.

As they proceeded along the avenue, a kind of half-stifled groan was sometimes audible from a distance. “Whence come those sounds?” said Vivaldi, “they strike to my heart!”

“They should do so,” replied the guard.

“Whence come they?” repeated Vivaldi, more impatiently, and shuddering.

“From the place of torture,” said the official.

“O God! O God!” exclaimed Vivaldi, with a deep groan.

He passed with hasty steps the door of that terrible chamber, and the guard did not attempt to stop him. The officials had brought him, in obedience to the customary orders they had received, within hearing of those doleful sounds, for the purpose of impressing upon his mind the

horrors of the punishment, with which he was threatened, and of inducing him to confess without incurring them.

On this same evening, Vivaldi was visited, in his prison, by a man whom he had never consciously seen before. He appeared to be between forty and fifty; was of a grave and observant physiognomy, and of manners, which, though somewhat austere, were not alarming. The account he gave of himself, and of his motive for this visit, was curious. He said that he also was a prisoner in the inquisition, but, as the ground of accusation against him was light, he had been favoured so far as to be allowed some degree of liberty within certain bounds; that, having heard of Vivaldi's situation, he had asked and obtained leave to converse with him, which he had done in compassion; and with a desire of assuaging his sufferings, so far as an expression of sympathy and commiseration might relieve them.

While he spoke, Vivaldi regarded him with deep attention, and the improbability that these pretensions should be true, did not escape him; but the suspicion which they occasioned he prudently concealed. The stranger conversed on various subjects. Vivaldi's answers were cautious and concise; but not even long pauses of silence wearied the compassionate patience of his visitor. Among other topics he, at length, introduced that of religion.

"I have, myself, been accused of heresy," said he, "and know how to pity others in the same situation."

"It is of heresy, then, that I am accused!" interrupted Vivaldi, "of heresy!"

"It availed me nothing that I asserted my innocence," continued the stranger, without noticing Vivaldi's exclamation,

"I was condemned to the torture. My sufferings were too terrible to be endured! I confessed my offence— "

"Pardon me," interrupted Vivaldi, "but allow me to observe, that since your sufferings were so severe, your's, against whom the ground of accusation was light, what may be the punishment of those, whose offences are more serious?"

The stranger was somewhat embarrassed. "My offence was slight," he continued, without giving a full answer.

"Is it possible," said Vivaldi, again interrupting him, "that heresy can be considered as a slight offence before the tribunal of the Inquisition?"

“It was only of a slight degree of heresy,” replied the visitor, reddening with displeasure, “that I was suspected, and— “

“Does then the Inquisition allow of degrees in heresy?” said Vivaldi.

“I confessed my offence,” added the stranger with a louder emphasis, and the consequence of this confession was a remission of punishment. After a trifling penance I shall be dismissed, and probably, in a few days, leave the prison. Before I left it, I was desirous of administering some degree of consolation to a fellow sufferer; if you have any friends whom you wish to inform of your situation, do not fear to confide their names and your message to me.”

The latter part of the speech was delivered in a low voice, as if the stranger feared to be overheard. Vivaldi remained silent, while he examined, with closer attention, the countenance of his visitor. It was of the utmost importance to him, that his family should be made acquainted with his situation; yet he knew not exactly how to interpret, or/to confide in this offer. Vivaldi had heard that informers sometimes visited the prisoners, and, under the affectation of kindness and sympathy, drew from them a confession of opinions, which were afterwards urged against them; and obtained discoveries relative to their connections and friends, who were, by these insidious means, frequently involved in their destruction. Vivaldi, conscious of his own innocence, had, on his first examination, acquainted the inquisitor with the names and residence of his family; he had, therefore, nothing new to apprehend from revealing them to this stranger; but he perceived that if it should be known he had attempted to convey a message, however concise and harmless, the discovery would irritate the jealous inquisitors against him, and might be urged as a new presumption of his guilt. These considerations, together with the distrust which the inconsistency of his visitor’s assertions, and the occasional embarrassment of his manner, had awakened, determined Vivaldi to resist the temptation now offered to him; and the stranger, having received his thanks, reluctantly withdrew, observing, however, that should any unforeseen circumstance detain him in the Inquisition longer than he had reason to expect, he should beg leave to pay him another visit. In reply to this, Vivaldi only bowed, but he remarked that the stranger’s countenance changed, and that some dark brooding appeared to cloud his mind, as he quitted the chamber.

Several days elapsed, during which Vivaldi heard no more of his new acquaintance. He was then summoned to another examination, from which he was dismissed as before; and some weeks of solitude and of heavy uncertainty succeeded, after which he was a fourth time called up to the table of the Holy Office. It was then surrounded by inquisitors, and a more than usual solemnity appeared in the proceedings.

As proofs of Vivaldi's innocence had not been obtained, the suspicions of his examiners, of course, were not removed; and, as he persisted in denying the truth of the charge which he understood would be exhibited against him, and refused to make any confession of crimes, it was ordered that he should, within three hours, be put to the question. Till then, Vivaldi was once more dismissed to his prison chamber. His resolution remained unshaken, but he could not look, unmoved, upon the horrors which might be preparing for him. The interval of expectation between the sentence and the accomplishment of this preliminary punishment, was, indeed, dreadful. The seeming ignominy of his situation, and his ignorance as to the degree of torture to be applied, overcame the calmness he had before exhibited, and as he paced his cell, cold damps, which hung upon his forehead, betrayed the agony of his mind. It was not long, however, that he suffered from a sense of ignominy; his better judgment shewed him, that innocence cannot suffer disgrace from any situation or circumstance, and he once more resumed the courage and the firmness which belong to virtue.

It was about midnight, that Vivaldi heard steps approaching, and a murmur of voices at the door of his cell. He understood these to be the persons come to summon him to the torture. The door was unbarred, and two men, habited in black, appeared at it. Without speaking, they advanced, and throwing over him a singular kind of mantle, led him from the chamber.

Along the galleries, and other avenues through which they passed, not any person was seen, and, by the profound stillness that reigned, it seemed as if death had already anticipated his work in these regions of horror, and had condemned alike the tortured and the torturer.

They descended to the large hall, where Vivaldi had waited on the night of his entrance, and thence through an avenue, and down a long flight of steps, that led to subterranean chambers. His conductors did not utter a

syllable during the whole progress; Vivaldi knew too well that questions would only subject him to greater severity, and he asked none.

The doors, through which they passed, regularly opened at the touch of an iron rod, carried by one of the officials, and without the appearance of any person. The other man bore a torch, and the passages were so dimly lighted, that the way could scarcely have been found without one. They crossed what seemed to be a burial vault, but the extent and obscurity of the place did not allow it to be ascertained; and, having reached an iron door, they stopped. One of the officials struck upon it three times with the rod, but it did not open as the others had done. While they waited, Vivaldi thought he heard, from within, low intermitting sounds, as of persons in their last extremity, but, though within, they appeared to come from a distance. His whole heart was chilled, not with fear, for at that moment he did not remember himself, but with horror.

Having waited a considerable time, during which the official did not repeat the signal, the door was partly opened by a person whom Vivaldi could not distinguish in the gloom beyond, and with whom one of his conductors communicated by signs; after which the door was closed.

Several minutes had elapsed, when tones of deep voices aroused the attention of Vivaldi. They were loud and hoarse, and spoke in a language unknown to him. At the sounds, the official immediately extinguished his torch. The voices drew nearer, and, the door again unfolding, two figures stood before Vivaldi, which, shewn by a glimmering light within, struck him with astonishment and dismay. They were cloathed, like his conductors, in black, but in a different fashion, for their habits were made close to the shape. Their faces were entirely concealed beneath a very peculiar kind of cowl, which descended from the head to the feet; and their eyes only were visible through small openings contrived for the sight. It occurred to Vivaldi that these men were torturers; their appearance was worthy of demons. Probably they were thus habited, that the persons whom they afflicted might not know them; or, perhaps, it was only for the purpose of striking terror upon the minds of the accused, and thus compelling them to confess without further difficulty. Whatever motive might have occasioned their horrific appearance, and whatever was their office, Vivaldi was delivered into their hands, and in the same moment heard the iron door shut, which enclosed him with them in a narrow

passage, gloomily lighted by a lamp suspended from the arched roof. They walked in silence on each side of their prisoner, and came to a second door, which admitted them instantly into another passage. A third door, at a short distance, admitted them to a third avenue, at the end of which one of his mysterious guides struck upon a gate, and they stopped. The uncertain sounds that Vivaldi had fancied he heard, were now more audible, and he distinguished, with inexpressible horror, that they were uttered by persons suffering.

The gate was, at length, opened by a figure habited like his conductors, and two other doors of iron, placed very near each other, being also unlocked, Vivaldi found himself in a spacious chamber, the walls of which were hung with black, duskily lighted by lamps that gleamed in the lofty vault. Immediately on his entrance, a strange sound ran along the walls, and echoed among other vaults, that appeared, by the progress of the sound, to extend far beyond this.

It was not immediately that Vivaldi could sufficiently recollect himself to observe any object before him; and, even when he did so, the gloom of the place prevented his ascertaining many appearances. Shadowy countenances and uncertain forms seemed to flit through the dusk, and many instruments, the application of which he did not comprehend, struck him with horrible suspicions. Still he heard, at intervals, half-suppressed groans, and was looking round to discover the wretched people from whom they were extorted, when a voice from a remote part of the chamber, called on him to advance.

The distance, and the obscurity of the spot whence the voice issued, had prevented Vivaldi from noticing any person there, and he was now slowly obeying, when, on a second summons, his conductors seized his arms, and hurried him forward.

In a remote part of this extensive chamber, he perceived three persons seated under a black canopy, on chairs raised several steps from the floor, and who appeared to preside there in the office of either judges or examiners, or directors of the punishments. Below, at a table, sat a secretary, over whom was suspended the only lamp that could enable him to commit to paper what should occur during the examination. Vivaldi now understood that the three persons who composed the tribunal were the vicar general, or grand inquisitor, the advocate of the exchequer, and an

ordinary inquisitor, who was seated between the other two, and who appeared more eagerly to engage in the duties of his cruel office. A portentous obscurity enveloped alike their persons and their proceedings.

At some distance from the tribunal stood a large iron frame, which Vivaldi conjectured to be the rack, and near it another, resembling, in shape, a coffin, but, happily, he could not distinguish through the remote obscurity, any person undergoing actual suffering. In the vaults beyond, however, the diabolical decrees of the inquisitors seemed to be fulfilling; for, whenever a distant door opened for a moment, sounds of lamentation issued forth, and men, whom he judged to be familiars, habited like those who stood beside him, were seen passing to and fro within.

Vivaldi almost believed himself in the infernal regions; the dismal aspect of this place, the horrible preparation for punishment, and, above all, the disposition and appearance of the persons that were ready to inflict it, confirmed the resemblance. That any human being should willingly afflict a fellow being who had never injured, or even offended him; that, unswayed by passion, he should deliberately become the means of torturing him, appeared to Vivaldi nearly incredible! But when he looked at the three persons who composed the tribunal, and considered that they had not only voluntarily undertaken the cruel office they fulfilled, but had probably long regarded it as the summit of their ambition, his astonishment and indignation were unbounded.

The grand inquisitor, having again called on Vivaldi by name, admonished him to confess the truth, and avoid the suffering that awaited him.

As Vivaldi had on former examinations spoken the truth, which was not believed, he had no chance of escaping present suffering, but by asserting falshood: in doing so, to avoid such monstrous injustice and cruelty, he might, perhaps, have been justified, had it been certain that such assertion could affect himself alone; but since he knew that the consequence must extend to others, and, above all, believed that Ellena di Rosalba must be involved in it, he did not hesitate for an instant to dare whatever torture his firmness might provoke. But even if morality could have forgiven falshood in such extraordinary circumstances as these, policy, after all, would have forbidden it, since a discovery of the artifice would probably have led to the final destruction of the accused person.

Of Ellena’s situation he would now have asked, however desperate the question; would again have asserted her innocence, and supplicated for compassion, even to inquisitors, had he not perceived that, in doing so, he should only furnish them with a more exquisite means of torturing him than any other they could apply; for if, when all the terrors of his soul concerning her were understood, they should threaten to increase her sufferings, as the punishment of what was termed his obstinacy, they would, indeed, become the masters of his integrity, as well as of his person.

The tribunal again, and repeatedly, urged Vivaldi to confess himself guilty; and the inquisitor, at length, concluded with saying, that the judges were innocent of whatever consequence might ensue from his obstinacy; so that, if he expired beneath his sufferings, himself only, not they, would have occasioned his death.

“I am innocent of the charges which I understand are urged against me,” said Vivaldi, with solemnity; “I repeat, that I am innocent! If, to escape the horrors of these moments, I could be weak enough to declare myself guilty, not all your racks could alter truth, and make me so, except in that assertion. The consequence of your tortures, therefore, be upon your own heads!”

While Vivaldi spoke, the vicar general listened with attention, and, when he had ceased to speak, appeared to meditate; but the inquisitor was irritated by the boldness of his speech, instead of being convinced by the justness of his representation; and made a signal for the officers to prepare for the question. While they were obeying, Vivaldi observed, notwithstanding the agitation he suffered, a person cross the chamber; whom he immediately knew to be the same that had passed him in an avenue of the inquisition on a former night, and whom he had then fancied to be the mysterious stranger of Paluzzi. Vivaldi now fixed his eyes upon him, but his own peculiar situation prevented his feeling the interest he had formerly suffered concerning him.

The figure, air, and stalk, of this person were so striking, and so strongly resembled those of the monk of Paluzzi, that Vivaldi had no longer a doubt as to their identity. He pointed him out to one of the officials, and inquired who he was. While he spoke, the stranger, was passing forward, and, before any reply was given, a door leading to the farther vaults shut him

from view. Vivaldi, however, repeated the inquiry, which the official appeared unable to answer, and a reproof from the tribunal reminded him that he must not ask questions there. Vivaldi observed that it was the grand inquisitor who spoke, and that the manner of the official immediately changed.

The familiars, who were the same that had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, having made ready the instrument of torture, approached him, and, after taking off his cloak and vest, bound him with strong cords. They threw over his head the customary black garment, which entirely enveloped his figure, and prevented his observing what was farther preparing. In this state of expectation, he was again interrogated by the inquisitor.

“Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?” said he.

“Yes,” replied Vivaldi.

“Did you ever express there a contempt for the Catholic faith?”

“Never,” said Vivaldi.

“Neither by word or action?” continued the inquisitor.

“Never, by either!”

“Recollect yourself,” added the inquisitor. “Did you never insult there a minister of our most holy church?”

Vivaldi was silent: he began to perceive the real nature of the charge which was to be urged against him, and that it was too plausible to permit his escape from the punishment, which is adjudged for heresy. Questions so direct and minute had never been put to him here on his former examinations; they had been reserved for a moment when it was believed he could not evade them; and the real charge had been concealed from him, that he might not be prepared to elude it.

“Answer!” repeated the inquisitor.— “Did you ever insult a minister of the Catholic faith, in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?”

“Did you not insult him while he was performing an act of holy penance?” said another voice.

Vivaldi started, for he instantly recollected the wellknown tones of the monk of Paluzzi. “Who asks the question?” demanded Vivaldi.

“It is you who are to answer here,” resumed the inquisitor. “Answer to what I have required.”

“I have offended a minister of the church,” replied Vivaldi, “but never could intentionally insult our holy religion. You are not acquainted, fathers, with the injuries that provoked— “

“Enough!” interrupted the inquisitor; “speak to the question. Did you not, by insult and menace, force a pious brother to leave unperformed the act of penance in which he had engaged himself? Did you not compel him to quit the church, and fly for refuge to his convent?”

“No,” replied Vivaldi. “‘Tis true, he left the church, and that in consequence of my conduct there; but the consequence was not necessary; if he had only replied to my inquiry, or promised to restore her of whom he had treacherously robbed me, he might have remained quietly in the church till this moment, had that depended upon my forbearance.”

“What!” said the vicar-general, “would you have compelled him to speak, when he was engaged in silent penance? You confess, that you occasioned him to leave the church. That is enough.”

“Where did you first see Ellena di Rosalba?” said the voice, which had spoken once before.

“I demand again, who gives the question,” answered Vivaldi.

“Recollect yourself,” said the inquisitor, “a criminal cannot make a demand.”

“I do not perceive the connection between your admonition and your assertion,” observed Vivaldi.

“You appear to be rather too much at your ease,” said the inquisitor. “Answer to the question which was last put to you, or the familiars shall do their duty.”

“Let the same person ask it,” replied Vivaldi.

The question was repeated in the former voice.

“In the church of San Lorenzo, at Naples,” said Vivaldi, with a heavy sigh, “I first beheld Ellena di Rosalba.”

“Was she then professed?” asked the vicar general.

“She never accepted the veil,” replied Vivaldi, “nor ever intended to do so.”

“Where did she reside at that period?”

“She lived with a relative at Villa Altieri, and would yet reside there, had not the machinations of a monk occasioned her to be torn from her home, and confined in a convent, from which I had just assisted to release

her, when she was again seized, and upon a charge most false and cruel. — O reverend fathers! I conjure, I supplicate— “ Vivaldi restrained himself, for he was going to have betrayed, to the mercy of inquisitors, all the feelings of his heart.

“The name of the monk?” said the stranger, earnestly.

“If I mistake not,” replied Vivaldi, “you are already acquainted with it. The monk is called father Schedoni. He is of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, in Naples, and the same who accuses me of having insulted him in the church of that name.”

“How did you know him for your accuser?” asked the same voice.

“Because he is my only enemy,” replied Vivaldi.

“Your enemy!” observed the inquisitor; “a former deposition says, you were unconscious of having one! You are inconsistent in your replies.”

“You were warned not to visit Villa Altieri,” said the unknown person. “Why did you not profit by the warning?”

“I was warned by yourself,” answered Vivaldi. “Now I know you well.”

“By me!” said the stranger, in a solemn tone.

“By you!” repeated Vivaldi: “you who also foretold the death of Signora Bianchi; and you are that enemy — that father Schedoni, by whom I am accused.”

“Whence come these questions?” demanded the vicar general. “Who has been authorised thus to interrogate the prisoner?”

No reply was made. A busy hum of voices from the tribunal succeeded the silence. At length, the murmuring subsided, and the monk’s voice was heard again.

“I will declare thus much,” it said, addressing Vivaldi; “I am not father Schedoni.”

The peculiar tone and emphasis, with which this was delivered, more than the assertion itself, persuaded Vivaldi that the stranger spoke truth; and, though he still recognized the voice of the monk of Paluzzi, he did not know it to be that of Schedoni. Vivaldi was astonished! He would have torn the veil from his eyes, and once more viewed this mysterious stranger, had his hands been at liberty. As it was, he could only conjure him to reveal his name, and the motives for his former conduct.

“Who is come amongst us?” said the vicar general, in the voice of a person, who means to inspire in others the awe he himself suffers.

“Who is come amongst us?” he repeated, in a louder tone. Still no answer was returned; but again a confused murmur sounded from the tribunal, and a general consternation seemed to prevail. No person spoke with sufficient preeminence to be understood by Vivaldi; something extraordinary appeared to be passing, and he awaited the issue with all the patience he could command. Soon after he heard doors opened, and the noise of persons quitting the chamber. A deep silence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were still beside him, waiting to begin their work of torture.

After a considerable time had elapsed, Vivaldi heard footsteps advancing, and a person give orders for his release, that he might be carried back to his cell.

When the veil was removed from his eyes, he perceived that the tribunal was dissolved, and that the stranger was gone. The lamps were dying away, and the chamber appeared more gloomily terrific than before.

The familiars conducted him to the spot at which they had received him; whence the officers who had led him thither, guarded him to his prison. There, stretched upon his bed of straw, in solitude and in darkness, he had leisure enough to reflect upon what had passed, and to recollect with minute exactness every former circumstance connected with the stranger. By comparing those with the present, he endeavoured to draw a more certain conclusion as to the identity of this person, and his motives for the very extraordinary conduct he had pursued. The first appearance of this stranger, among the ruins of Paluzzi, when he had said that Vivaldi’s steps were watched, and had cautioned him against returning to Villa Altieri, was recalled to his mind. Vivaldi re-considered, also, his second appearance on the same spot, and his second warning; the circumstances, which had attended his own adventures within the fortress; — the monk’s prediction of Bianchi’s death, and his evil tidings respecting Ellena, at the very hour when she had been seized and carried from her home. The longer he considered these several instances, as they were now connected in his mind, with the certainty of Schedoni’s evil disposition towards him, the more he was inclined to believe, notwithstanding the voice of seeming truth which had just affirmed the contrary, that the unknown person was Schedoni himself, and that he had been employed by the Marchesa, to prevent Vivaldi’s visits to Villa Altieri. Being thus an agent in the events

of which he had warned Vivaldi, he was too well enabled to predict them. Vivaldi paused upon the remembrance of Signor Bianchi's death; he considered the extraordinary and dubious cirumstances that had attended it, and shuddered as a new conjecture crossed his mind. — The thought was too dreadful to be permitted, and he dismissed it instantly.

Of the conversation, however, which he had afterwards held with the Confessor in the Marchesa's cabinet, he recollected many particulars that served to renew his doubts as to the identity of the stranger; the behaviour of Schedoni when he was obliquely challenged for the monk of Paluzzi, still appeared that of a man unconscious of disguise; and above all, Vivaldi was struck with the seeming candour of his having pointed out a circumstance, which removed the probability that the stranger was a brother of the Santa del Pianto.

Some particulars, also, of the stranger's conduct did not agree with what might have been expected from Schedoni, even though the Confessor had really been Vivaldi's enemy; a circumstance which the latter was no longer permitted to doubt. Nor did those particular circumstances accord, as he was inclined to believe, with the manner of a being of this world; and, when Vivaldi considered the suddenness and mystery, with which the stranger had always appeared and retired, he felt disposed to adopt again one of his earliest conjectures, which undoubtedly the horrors of his present abode disposed his imagination to admit, as those of his former situation in the vaults of Paluzzi, together with a youthful glow of curiosity concerning the marvellous, had before contributed to impress them upon his mind.

He concluded his present reflections as he had began them — in doubt and perplexity; but at length found a respite from thought and from suffering in sleep.

Midnight had been passed in the vaults of the Inquisition; but it was probably not yet two o'clock, when he was imperfectly awakened by a sound, which he fancied proceeded from within his chamber. He raised himself to discover what had occasioned the noise; it was, however, impossible to discern any object, for all was dark, but he listened for a return of the sound. The wind only, was heard moaning among the inner buildings of the prison, and Vivaldi concluded, that his dream had mocked him with a mimic voice.

Satisfied with this conclusion, he again laid his head on his pillow of straw, and soon sunk into a slumber. The subject of his waking thoughts still haunted his imagination, and the stranger, whose voice he had this night recognized as that of the monk of Paluzzi, appeared before him. Vivaldi, on perceiving the figure of this unknown, felt, perhaps, nearly the same degrees of awe, curiosity, and impatience that he would have suffered, had he beheld the substance of this shadow. The monk, whose face was still shrowded, he thought advanced, till, having come within a few paces of Vivaldi, he paused, and, lifting the awful cowl that had hitherto concealed him, disclosed — not the countenance of Schedoni, but one which Vivaldi did not recollect ever having seen before! It was not less interesting to curiosity, than striking to the feelings. Vivaldi at the first glance shrunk back; — something of that strange and indescribable air, which we attach to the idea of a supernatural being, prevailed over the features; and the intense and fiery eyes resembled those of an evil spirit, rather than of a human character. He drew a poniard from beneath a fold of his garment, and, as he displayed it, pointed with a stern frown to the spots which discoloured the blade; Vivaldi perceived they were of blood! He turned away his eyes in horror, and, when he again looked round in his dream, the figure was gone.

A groan awakened him, but what were his feelings, when, on looking up, he perceived the same sigure standing before him! It was not, however, immediately that he could convince himself the appearance was more than the phantom of his dream, strongly impressed upon an alarmed fancy. The voice of the monk, for his face was as usual concealed, recalled Vivaldi from his error; but his emotion cannot easily be conceived, when the stranger, slowly lifting that mysterious cowl, discovered to him the same awful countenance, which had characterized the vision in his slumber. Unable to inquire the occasion of this appearance, Vivaldi gazed in astonishment and terror, and did not immediately observe, that, instead of a dagger, the monk held a lamp, which gleamed over every deep furrow of his features, yet left their shadowdy markings to hint the passions and the history of an extraordinary life.

“You are spared for this night,” said the stranger, “but for tomorrow” — he paused.

“In the name of all that is most sacred,” said Vivaldi, endeavouring to recollect his thoughts, “who are you, and what is your errand?”

“Ask no questions,” replied the monk, solemnly;— “but answer me.”

Vivaldi was struck by the tone, with which he said this, and dared not to urge the inquiry at the present moment.

“How long have you known father Schedoni?” continued the stranger, “Where did you first meet?

“I have known him about a year, as my mother’s Confessor,” replied Vivaldi. “I first saw him in a corridor of the Vivaldi palace; it was evening, and he was returning from the Marchesa’s closet.”

“Are you certain as to this?” said the monk, with peculiar emphasis. “It is of consequence that you should be so.”

“I am certain,” repeated Vivaldi.

“It is strange,” observed the monk, after a pause, “that a circumstance, which must have appeared trivial to you at the moment, should have left so strong a mark on your memory! In two years we have time to forget many things!” He sighed as he spoke.

“I remember the circumstance,” said Vivaldi, “because I was struck with his appearance; the evening was far advanced — it was dusk, and he came upon me suddenly. His voice startled me; as he passed he said to himself— “It is for vespers.” At the same time I heard the bell of the Spirito Santo.”

“Do you know who he is?” said the stranger, solemnly.

“I know only what he appears to be,” replied Vivaldi.

“Did you never hear any report of his past life?”

“Never,” answered Vivaldi.

“Never any thing extraordinary concerning him,” added the monk.

Vivaldi paused a moment; for he now recollected the obscure and imperfect story, which Paulo had related while they were confined in the dungeon of Paluzzi, respecting a confession made in the church of the Black Penitents; but he could not presume to affirm, that it concerned Schedoni. He remembered also the monk’s garments, stained with blood, which he had discovered in the vaults of that fort. The conduct of the mysterious being, who now stood before him, with many other particulars of his own adventures there, passed like a vision over his memory. His mind resembled the glass of a magician, on which the apparitions of long-buried events arise, and as they fleet away, point portentously to shapes

half-hid in the duskiness of futurity. An unusual dread seized upon him; and a superstition, such as he had never before admitted in an equal degree, usurped his judgment. He looked up to the shadowy countenance of the stranger; and almost believed he beheld an inhabitant of the world of spirits.

The monk spoke again, repeating in a feverer tone, “Did you never hear any thing extraordinary concerning father Schedoni?”

“Is it reasonable,” said Vivaldi, recollecting his courage, “that I should answer the questions, the minute questions, of a person who refuses to tell me even his name?”

“My name is passed away — it is no more remembered,” replied the stranger, turning from Vivaldi,— “I leave you to your fate.”

“What fate?” asked Vivaldi, “and what is the purpose of this visit? I conjure you, in the tremendous name of the Inquisition, to say!”

“You will know full soon; have mercy on yourself!”

“What fate?” repeated Vivaldi.

“Urge me no further,” said the stranger; “but answer to what I shall demand. Schedoni— “

“I have told all that I certainly know concerning him,” interrupted Vivaldi, “the rest is only conjecture.”

“What is that conjecture? Does it relate to a consession made in the church of the Black Penitents of the Santa Maria del Pianto?

“It does!” replied Vivaldi with surprise.

“What was that confession?”

“I know not,” answered Vivaldi.

“Declare the truth,” said the stranger, sternly.

“A confession,” replied Vivaldi, “is sacred, and forever buried in the bosom of the priest to whom it is made. How, then, is it to be supposed, that I can be acquainted with the subject of this?”

“Did you never hear, that father Schedoni had been guilty of some great crimes, which he endeavours to erase from his conscience by the severity of penance?”

“Never!” said Vivaldi.

“Did you never hear that he had a wife — a brother?”

“Never!”

“Nor the means he used — no hint of — murder, of— “

The stranger paused, as if he wished Vivaldi to fill up his meaning, Vivaldi was silent and aghast.

“You know nothing then, of Schedoni,” resumed the monk after a deep pause— “nothing of his past life?

“Nothing, except what I have mentioned,” replied Vivaldi.

“Then listen to what I shall unfold!” continued the monk, with solemnity. “Tomorrow night you will be again carried to the place of torture; you will be taken to a chamber beyond that in which you were this night. You will there witness many extraordinary things, of which you have not now any suspicion. Be not dismayed; I shall be there, though, perhaps, not visible.”

“Not visible!” exclaimed Vivaldi.

“Interrupt me not, but listen. — When you are asked of father Schedoni, say — that he has lived for fifteen years in the disguise of a monk, a member of the Dominicans of the Spirito Santo, at Naples. When you are asked who he is, reply — Ferando Count di Bruno. You will be asked the motive, for such disguise. In reply to this, refer them to the Black Penitents of the Santa Maria del Pianto, near that city; bid the inquisitors summon before their tribunal one father Ansaldo di Rovalli, the grand penitentiary of the society, and command him to divulge the crimes confessed to him in the year 1752, on the evening of the twenty-fourth of April, which was then the vigil of Santo Marco, in a confessional of the Santa del Pianto.”

“It is probable he may have forgotten such confession, at this distance of time,” observed Vivaldi.

“Fear not but he will remember,” replied the stranger.

“But will his conscience suffer him to betray the secrets of a confession?” said Vivaldi.

“The tribunal command, and his conscience is absolved,” answered the monk, “He may not refuse to obey! You are further to direct your examiners to summon father Schedoni, to answer for the crimes which Ansaldo shall reveal.” The monk paused, and seemed waiting the reply of Vivaldi, who, after a momentary consideration, said,

“How can I do all this, and upon the instigation of a stranger! Neither conscience nor prudence will suffer me to assert what I cannot prove. It is true that I have reason to believe Schedoni is my bitter enemy, but I will

not be unjust even to him. I have no proof that he is the Count di Bruno, nor that he is the perpetrator of the crimes you allude to, whatever those may be; and I will not be made an instrument to summon any man before a tribunal, where innocence is no protection from ignominy, and where suspicion alone may inflict death."

"You doubt, then, the truth of what I assert?" said the monk, in a haughty tone.

"Can I believe that of which I have no proof?" replied Vivaldi.

"Yes, there are cases which do not admit of proof; under your peculiar circumstances, this is one of them; you can act only upon assertion. I attest," continued the monk, raising his hollow voice to a tone of singular solemnity, "I attest the powers which are beyond this earth, to witness to the truth of what I have delivered!"

As the stranger uttered this adjuration, Vivaldi observed, with emotion, the extraordinary expression of his eyes; Vivaldi's presence of mind, however, did not forsake him, and, in the next moment, he said, "But who is he that thus attests? It is upon the assertion of a stranger that I am to rely, in defect of proof! It is a stranger who calls upon me to bring solemn charges against a man, of whose guilt I know nothing!"

"You are not required to bring charges, you are only to summon him who will."

"I should still assist in bringing forward accusations, which may be founded in error," replied Vivaldi. "If you are convinced of their truth, why do not you summon Ansaldo yourself!"

"I shall do more," said the monk.

"But why not summon also?" urged Vivaldi.

"I shall appear," said the stranger, with emphasis.

Vivaldi, though somewhat awed by the manner, which accompanied these words, still urged his inquiries, "As a witness?" said he.

"Aye, as a dreadful witness!" replied the monk.

"But may not a witness summon others before the tribunal of the inquisition?" continued Vivaldi, faulteringly.

"He may," said the stranger.

"Why then," observed Vivaldi, "am I, a stranger to you, called upon to do that which you could perform yourself?"

“Ask no further,” said the monk, “but answer, whether you will deliver the summons?”

“The charges, which must follow,” replied Vivaldi, “appear to be of a nature too solemn to justify my promoting them. I resign the task to you.”

“When I summon,” said the stranger, “you shall obey!”

Vivaldi, again awed by his manner, again justified his refusal, and concluded with repeating his surprize, that he should be required to assist in this mysterious affair, “Since I neither know you, father,” he added, “nor the Penitentiary Ansaldo, whom you bid me admonish to appear.”

“You shall know me hereafter,” said the stranger, frowningly; and he drew from beneath his garment a dagger!

Vivaldi remembered his dream.

“Mark those spots,” said the monk.

Vivaldi looked, and beheld blood!

“This blood, added the stranger, pointing to the blade, “would have saved your’s! Here is some print of truth! Tomorrow night you will meet me in the chambers of death!”

As he spoke, he turned away; and, before Vivaldi had recovered from his consternation, the light disappeared. Vivaldi knew that the stranger had quitted the prison, only by the silence which prevailed there.

He remained sunk in thought, till, at the dawn of day, the man, on watch, unfastened the door of his cell, and brought, as usual, a jug of water, and some bread. Vivaldi inquired the name of the stranger who had visited him in the night. The centinel looked surpized, and Vivaldi repeated the question before he could obtain an answer.

“I have been on guard since the first hour,” said the man, and no person, in that time, has passed through this door!”

Vivaldi regarded the centinel with attention, while he made this assertion, and did not perceive in his manner any consciousness of falshood; yet he knew not how to believe what he had affirmed. “Did you hear no noise, either?” said Vivaldi. “Has all been silent during the night?”

“I have heard only the bell of San Dominico strike upon the hour,” replied the man, “and the watch word of the centinels.”

“This is incomprehensible!” exclaimed Vivaldi, “What! no footsteps, no voice?”

The man smiled contemptuously. “None, but of the centinels,” he replied.

“How can you be certain you heard only the centinel’s, friend?” added Vivaldi.

“They speak only to pass the watch word, and the clash of their arms is heard at the same time.”

“But their footsteps! — how are they distinguished from those of other persons?”

“By the heaviness of their tread; our sandals are braced with iron. But why these questions, Signor?”

“You have kept guard at the door of this chamber?” said Vivaldi.

“Yes, Signor.”

“And you have not once heard, during the whole night, a voice from within it?”

“None, Signor.”

“Fear nothing from discovery, friend; confess that you have slumbered.”

“I had a comrade,” replied the centinel, angrily, “has he, too, slumbered! and if he had, how could admittance be obtained without our keys?”

“And those might easily have been procured, friend, if you were overcome with sleep. You may rely upon my promise of secrecy.”

“What!” said the man, “have I kept guard for three years in the Inquisition, to be suspected, by a heretic, of neglecting my duty?”

“If you were suspected by an heretic,” replied Vivaldi, “you ought to console yourself by recollecting that his opinions are considered to be erroneous.”

“We were watchful every minute of the night,” said the centinel, going.

“This is incomprehensible!” said Vivaldi, “By what means could the stranger have entered my prison?”

“Signor, you still dream!” replied the centinel, pausing, “No person has been here.”

“Still dream!” repeated Vivaldi, “how do you know that I have dreamt at all?” His mind deeply affected by the extraordinary circumstances of the dream, and the yet more extraordinary incident that had followed, Vivaldi gave a meaning to the words of the centinel, which did not belong to them.

“When people sleep, they are apt to dream,” replied the man, dryly. “I supposed you had slept, Signor.”

“A person, habited like a monk, came to me in the night, “resumed Vivaldi, and he described the appearance of the stranger. The centinel, while he listened, became grave and thoughtful.

“Do you know any person resembling the one I have mentioned,” said Vivaldi.

“No!” replied the guard.

“Though you have not seen him enter my prison,” continued Vivaldi, “you may, perhaps, recollect such a person, as an inhabitant of the Inquisition.”

“San Dominico forbid!”

Vivaldi, surprized at this exclamation, inquired the reason for it.

“I know him not,” replied the centinel, changing countenance, and he abruptly left the prison. Whatever consideration might occasion this sudden departure, his assertion that he had been for three years a guard of the Inquisition could scarcely be credited, since he had held so long a dialogue with a prisoner, and was, apparently, insensible of the danger he incurred by so doing.

Chapter 2 6

— “Is it not dead midnight?
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear?”
Shakespeare.

At about the same hour, as on the preceding night, Vivaldi heard persons approaching his prison, and, the door unfolding, his former conductors appeared. They threw over him the same mantle as before, and, in addition, a black veil, that completely muffled his eyes; after which, they led him from the chamber. Vivaldi heard the door shut, on his departure, and the centinels followed his steps, as if their duty was finished, and he was to return thither no more. At this moment, he remembered the words of the stranger when he had displayed the poniard, and Vivaldi apprehended the worst, from having thwarted the designs of a person apparently so malignant; but he exulted in the rectitude, which had preserved him from debasement, and, with the magnanimous enthusiasm of virtue, he almost welcomed sufferings, which would prove the firmness of his justice towards an enemy; for he determined to brave every thing, rather than impute to Schedoni circumstances, the truth of which he possessed no means of ascertaining.

While Vivaldi was conducted, as on the preceding night, through many passages, he endeavoured to discover, by their length, and the abruptness of their turnings, whether they were the same he had traversed before. Suddenly, one of his conductors cried “Steps!” It was the first word Vivaldi had ever heard him utter. He immediately perceived that the ground sunk, and he began to descend; as he did which, he tried to count the number of the steps, that he might form some judgment whether this was the flight he had passed before. When he had reached the bottom, he inclined to believe that it was not so; and the care which had been observed in blinding him, seemed to indicate that he was going to some new place.

He passed through several avenues, and then ascended; soon after which, he again descended a very long staircase, such as he had not any remembrance of, and they passed over a considerable extent of level ground. By the hollow sounds which his steps returned, he judged that he was walking over vaults. The footsteps of the centinels who had followed from the cell were no longer heard, and he seemed to be left with his conductors only. A second flight appeared to lead him into subterraneous vaults, for he perceived the air change, and felt a damp vapour wrap round him. The menace of the monk, that he should meet him in the chambers of death, frequently occurred to Vivaldi.

His conductors stopped in this vault, and seemed to hold a consultation, but they spoke in such low accents, that their words were not distinguishable, except a few unconnected ones, that hinted of more than Vivaldi could comprehend. He was, at length, again led forward; and soon after, he heard the heavy grating of hinges, and perceived that he was passing through several doors, by the situation of which Vivaldi judged they were the same he had entered the night before, and concluded, that he was going to the hall of the tribunal.

His conductors stopped again, and Vivaldi heard the iron rod strike three times upon a door; immediately a strange voice spoke from within, and the door was unclosed. Vivaldi passed on, and imagined that he was admitted into a spacious vault; for the air was freer, and his steps sounded to a distance.

Presently, a voice, as on the preceding night, summoned him to come forward, and Vivaldi understood that he was again before the tribunal. It was the voice of the inquisitor who had been his chief examiner.

“You, Vincentio di Vivaldi,” it said, “answer to your name, and to the questions which shall be put to you, without equivocation, on pain of the torture.”

As the monk had predicted, Vivaldi was asked what he knew of father Schedoni, and, when he replied, as he had formerly done to his mysterious visitor, he was told that he knew more than he acknowledged.

“I know no more,” replied Vivaldi.

“You equivocate,” said the inquisitor. “Declare what you have heard, and remember that you formerly took an oath to that prupose.”

Vivaldi was silent, till a tremendous voice from the tribunal commanded him to respect his oath.

“I do respect it,” said Vivaldi; “and I conjure you to believe that I also respect truth, when I declare, that what I am going to relate, is a report to which I give no confidence, and concerning even the probability of which I cannot produce the smallest proof.”

“Respect truth!” said another voice from the tribunal, and Vivaldi fancied he distinguished the tones of the monk. He paused a moment, and the exhortation was repeated. Vivaldi then related what the stranger had said concerning the family of Schedoni, and the disguise which the father had assumed in the convent of the Spirito Santo; but forbore even to name the penitentiary Ansaldo, and any circumstance connected with the extraordinary confession. Vivaldi concluded, with again declaring, that he had not sufficient authority to justify a belief in those reports.

“On what authority do you repeat them?” said the vicar-general.

Vivaldi was silent.

“On what authority?” inquired the inquisitor, sternly.

Vivaldi, after a momentary hesitation, said, “What I am about to declare, holy fathers, is so extraordinary— “

“Tremble!” said a voice close to his ear, which he instantly knew to be the monk’s, and the suddenness of which electrified him. He was unable to conclude the sentence.

“What is your authority for the reports” demanded the inquisitor.

“It is unknown, even to myself!” answered Vivaldi.

“Do not equivocate!” said the vicar-general.

“I solemnly protest” rejoined Vivaldi, “that I know not either the name or the condition of my informer, and that I never even beheld his face, till the period when he spoke of father Schedoni.”

“Tremble!” repeated the same low, but emphatic voice in his ear. Vivaldi started, and turned involuntarily towards the sound, though his eyes could not assist his curiosity.

“You did well to say, that you had something extraordinary to add,” observed the inquisitor. “‘Tis evident, also, that you expected something extraordinary from your judges, since you supposed they would credit these assertions.”

Vivaldi was too proud to attempt the justifying himself against so gross an accusation, or to make any reply.

“Why do you not summon father Ansaldo?” said the voice. “Remember my words!”

Vivaldi, again awed by the voice, hesitated, for an instant, how to act, and in that instant his courage returned.

“My informer stands beside me!” said Vivaldi, boldy; “I know his voice! Detain him; it is of consequence.”

“Whose voice?” demanded the inquisitor. “No person spoke but myself!”

“Whose voice?” said the vicar-general.

“The voice was close beside me,” replied Vivaldi. “It spoke low, but I knew it well.”

“This is either the cunning, or the frenzy of despair!” observed the vicar-general.

“Not any person is now beside you, except the familiars,” said the inquisitor, “and they wait to do their office, if you shall refuse to answer the questions put to you.”

“I persist in my assertion,” replied Vivaldi; “and I supplicate that my eyes may be unbound, that I may know my enemy.”

The tribunal, after a long private consultation, granted the request; the veil was withdrawn, and Vivaldi perceived beside him — only the familiars! Their faces, as is usual, were concealed. It appeared that one of these torturers must be the mysterious enemy, who pursued him, if, indeed, that enemy was an inhabitant of the earth! and Vivaldi requested that they might be ordered to uncover their features. He was sternly rebuked for so presumptuous a requisition, and reminded of the inviolable law and faith, which the tribunal had pledged, that persons appointed to their awful office should never be exposed to the revenge of the criminal, whom it might be their duty to punish.

“Their duty!” exclaimed Vivaldi, thrown from his guard by strong indignation. “And is faith held sacred with demons!”

Without awaiting the order of the tribunal, the familiars immediately covered Vivaldi’s face with the veil, and he felt himself in their grasp. He endeavoured, however, to disentangle his hands, and, at length, shook

these men from their hold, and again unveiled his eyes; but the familiars were instantly ordered to replace the veil.

The inquisitor bade Vivaldi to recollect in whose presence he then was, and to dread the punishment which his resistance had incurred, and which would be inflicted without delay, unless he could give some instance, that might tend to prove the truth of his late assertions.

“If you expect that I should say more,” replied Vivaldi, “I claim, at least, protection from the unbidden violence of the men who guard me. If they are suffered, at their pleasure, to sport with the misery of their prisoner, I will be inflexibly silent; and, since I must suffer, it shall be according to the laws of the tribunal.”

The vicar-general, or, as he is called, the grand inquisitor, promised Vivaldi the degree of protection he claimed, and demanded, at the same time, what were the words he had just heard.

Vivaldi considered, that, though justice bade him avoid accusing an enemy of suspicious circumstances, concerning which he had no proof, yet, that neither justice nor common sense required he should make a sacrifice of himself to the dilemma in which he was placed: he, therefore, without further scruple, acknowledged, that the voice had bidden him require of the tribunal to summon one father Ansaldo, the grand penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, near Naples, and also father Schedoni, who was to answer to extraordinary charges, which would be brought against him by Ansaldo. Vivaldi anxiously and repeatedly declared, that he knew not the nature of the charges, nor that any just grounds for them existed.

These assertions seemed to throw the tribunal into new perplexity. Vivaldi heard their busy voices in low debate, which continued for a considerable time. In this interval, he had leisure to perceive the many improbabilities that either of the familiars should be the stranger who so mysteriously haunted him; and among these was the circumstance of his having resided so long at Naples.

The tribunal, after some time had elapsed in consultation, proceeded on the examination, and Vivaldi was asked what he knew of father Ansaldo. He immediately replied, that Ansaldo was an utter stranger to him, and that he was not even acquainted with a single person residing in the Santa del Pianto or who had any knowledge of the penitentiary.

“How!” said the grand inquisitor.

“You forget that the person, who bade you require of this tribunal to summon Ansaldo, has knowledge of him.”

“Pardon me, I do not forget,” replied Vivaldi; “and I request it may be remembered that I am not acquainted with that person. If, therefore, he had given me any account of Ansaldo, I could not have relied upon its authenticity.” Vivaldi again required of the tribunal to understand that he did not summon Ansaldo, or any other person, before them, but had merely obeyed their command, to repeat what the stranger had said.

The tribunal acknowledged the justness of this injunction, and exculpated him from any harm that should be the consequence of the summons. But this assurance of safety for himself was not sufficient to appease Vivaldi, who was alarmed left he should be the means of bringing an innocent person under suspicion. The grand inquisitor again addressed him, after a general silence had been commanded in the court.

“The account you have given of your informer,” said he, “is so extraordinary, that it would not deserve credit, but that you have discovered the utmost reluctance to reveal the charges he gave you, from which, it appears, that, on your part, at least, the summons is not malicious. But are you certain that you have not deluded yourself, and that the voice beside you was not an imaginary one, conjured up by your agitated spirits?”

“I am certain,” replied Vivaldi, with firmness.

“It is true,” resumed the grand inquisitor, “that several persons were near you, when you exclaimed, that you heard the voice of your informer; yet no person heard it besides yourself!”

“Where are those persons now?” demanded Vivaldi.

“They are dispersed: alarmed at your accusation.”

“If you will summon them,” said Vivaldi, “and order that my eyes may be uncovered, I will point out to you, without hesitation, the person of my informer, should he remain among them.”

The tribunal commanded that they should appear, but new difficulties arose. It was not remembered of whom the crowd consisted; a few individuals only were recollected, and these were summoned.

Vivaldi, in solemn expectation, heard steps and the hum of voices gathering round him, and impatiently awaited for the words that would

restore him to sight, and, perhaps, release him from uncertainty. In a few moments, he heard the command given; the veil was once more removed from his eyes, and he was ordered to point out the accuser. Vivaldi threw an hasty glance upon the surrounding strangers.

“The lights burn dimly,” said he, “I cannot distinguish these faces.”

It was ordered that a lamp should be lowered from the roof, and that the strangers should arrange themselves on either side of Vivaldi. When this was done, and he glanced his eyes again upon the crowd, “He is not here!” said Vivaldi; “not one of these countenances resembles the monk of Paluzzi. Yet, stay; who is he that stands in the shade behind those persons on the left? Bid him lift his cowl!”

The crowd fell back, and the person, to whom Vivaldi had pointed, was left alone within the circle.

“He is an officer of the Inquisition,” said a man near Vivaldi, “and he may not be compelled to discover his face, unless by an express command from the tribunal.”

“I call upon the tribunal to command it!” said Vivaldi.

“Who calls!” exclaimed a voice, and Vivaldi recognized the tones of the monk, but he knew not exactly whence they came.

“I, Vincentio di Vivaldi,” replied the prisoner, “I claim the privilege that has been awarded me, and bid you unveil your countenance.”

There was a pause of silence in the court, except that a dull murmur ran through the tribunal. Meanwhile, the figure within the circle stood motionless, and remained veiled.

“Spare him,” said the man, who had before addressed Vivaldi; “he has reasons for wishing to remain unknown, which you cannot conjecture. He is an officer of the Inquisition, and not the person you apprehend.”

“Perhaps I can conjecture his reasons,” replied Vivaldi, who, raising his voice, added, “I appeal to this tribunal, and command you, who stand alone within the circle, you in black garments, to unveil your features!”

Immediately a loud voice issued from the tribunal, and said,

“We command you, in the name of the most holy Inquisition, to reveal yourself!”

The stranger trembled, but, without presuming to hesitate, uplifted his cowl. Vivaldi’s eyes were eagerly fixed upon him; but the action disclosed, not the countenance of the monk! but of an official whom he recollected to

have seen once before, though exactly on what occasion he did not now remember.

“This is not my informer!” said Vivaldi, turning from him with deep disappointment, while the stranger dropped his cowl, and the crowd closed upon him. At the assertion of Vivaldi, the members of the tribunal looked upon each other doubtingly, and were silent, till the grand inquisitor, waving his hand, as if to command attention, addressed Vivaldi.

“It appears, then, that you have formerly seen the face of your informer!”

“I have already declared so,” replied Vivaldi.

The grand inquisitor demanded when, and where, he had seen it.

“Last night, and in my prison,” answered Vivaldi.

“In your prison!” said the ordinary inquisitor, contemptuously, who had before examined him, “and in your dreams, too, no doubt!”

“In your prison!” exclaimed several members of the lower tribunal.

“He dreams still!” observed an inquisitor. “Holy fathers! he abuses your patience, and the frenzy of terror has deluded his credulity. We neglect the moments.”

“We must inquire further into this,” said another inquisitor. “Here is some deception. If you, Vincentio di Vivaldi, have asserted a falshood — tremble!”

Whether Vivaldi’s memory still vibrated with the voice of the monk, or that the tone in which this same word was now pronounced did resemble it, he almost started, when the inquisitor had said tremble! and he demanded who spoke then.

“It is ourself,” answered the inquisitor.

After a short conversation among the members of the tribunal, the grand inquisitor gave orders that the centinels, who had watched on the preceding night at the prison door of Vivaldi, should be brought into the hall of justice. The persons, who had been lately summoned into the chamber, were now bidden to withdraw, and all further examination was suspended till the arrival of the centinels; Vivaldi heard only the low voices of the inquisitors, as they conversed privately together, and he remained silent, thoughtful, and amazed.

When the centinels appeared, and were asked who had entered the prison of Vivaldi during the last night, they declared, without hesitation, or

confusion, that not any person had passed through the door after the hour when the prisoner had returned from examination, till the following morning, when the guard had carried in the usual allowance of bread and water. In this assertion, they persisted, without the least equivocation, notwithstanding which they were ordered into confinement, till the affair should be cleared up.

The doubts, however, which were admitted, as to the integrity of these men, did not contribute to dissipate those, which had prevailed over the opposite side of the question. On the contrary, the suspicions of the tribunal, augmenting with their perplexity, seemed to fluctuate equally over every point of the subject before them, till, instead of throwing any light upon the truth, they only served to involve the whole in deeper obscurity. More doubtful than before of the honesty of Vivaldi's extraordinary assertions, the grand inquisitor informed him, that if, after further inquiry into this affair, it should appear he had been trifling with the credulity of his judges, he would be severely punished for his audacity; but that, on the other hand, should there be reason to believe that the centinels had failed in their duty, and that some person had entered his prison during the night, the tribunal would proceed in a different manner.

Vivaldi, perceiving that, to be believed, it was necessary he should be more circumstantial, described, with exactness, the person and appearance of the monk, without, however, mentioning the poniard which had been exhibited. A profound silence reigned in the chamber, while he spoke; it seemed a silence not merely of attention, but of astonishment. Vivaldi himself was awed, and, when he had concluded, almost expected to hear the voice of the monk uttering defiance, or threatening vengeance; but all remained hushed, till the inquisitor, who had first examined him, said, in a solemn tone,

"We have listened with attention to what you have delivered, and will give the case a full inquiry. Some points, on which you have touched, excite our amazement, and call for particular regard. Retire whence you came — and sleep this night without fear; — you will soon know more."

Vivaldi was immediately led from the chamber, and, still blindfolded, reconducted to the prison to which he had supposed it was designed he should return no more. When the veil was withdrawn, he perceived that his guard was changed.

Again left to the silence of his cell, he reviewed all that had passed in the chamber of justice; the questions which had been put to him; the different manners of the inquisitors; the occurrence of the monk's voice; and the similarity, which he had fancied he perceived between it and that of an inquisitor, when the latter pronounced the word tremble; but the consideration of all these circumstances did not in any degree relieve him from his perplexity. Sometimes he was inclined to think that the monk was an inquisitor, and the voice had more than once appeared to proceed from the tribunal; but he remembered, also, that, more than once, it had spoken close to his ear, and he knew that a member of this tribunal might not leave his station during the examination of a prisoner, and that, even if he had dared to do so, his singular dress would have pointed him out to notice, and consequently to suspicion, at the moment when Vivaldi had exclaimed, that he heard the voice of his informer.

Vivaldi, however, could not avoid meditating, with surprize, on the last words which the inquisitor, who had been his chief examiner, had addressed to him, when he was dismissed from before the tribunal. These were the more surprizing, because they were the first from him that had in any degree indicated a wish to console or quiet the alarm of the prisoner; and Vivaldi even fancied that they betrayed some fore-knowledge that he would not be disturbed this night by the presence of his awful visitor. He would entirely have ceased to apprehend, though not to expect, had he been allowed a light, and any weapon of defence, if, in truth, the stranger was of a nature to fear a weapon; but, to be thus exposed to the designs of a mysterious and powerful being, whom he was conscious of having offended, to sustain such a situation, without suffering anxiety, required somewhat more than courage, or less than reason.

Chapter 2 7

“ — It came o’er my soul as doth the thunder,
While distant yet, with an unexpected burst,
It threats the trembling ear. Now to the trial.”
Caractacus.

In consequence of what had transpired at the last examination of Vivaldi, the grand penitentiary Ansaldo, together with the father Schedoni, were cited to appear before the table of the holy office.

Schedoni was arrested on his way to Rome, whither he was going privately to make further efforts for the liberation of Vivaldi, whose release he had found it more difficult to effect, than his imprisonment; the person upon whose assistance the Confessor relied in the first instance, having boasted of more influence than he possessed, or perhaps thought it prudent to exert. Schedoni had been the more anxious to procure an immediate release for Vivaldi, lest a report of his situation should reach his family, notwithstanding the precautions, which are usually employed to throw an impenetrable shrowd over the prisoners of this dreadful tribunal, and bury them for ever from the knowledge of their friends. Such premature discovery of Vivaldi’s circumstances, Schedoni apprehended might include also a discovery of the persecutor, and draw down upon himself the abhorrence and the vengeance of a family, whom it was now, more than ever, his wish and his interest to conciliate. It was still his intention, that the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena should be privately solemnized immediately on the release of the prisoner, who, even if he had reason to suspect Schedoni for his late persecutor, would then be interested in concealing his suspicions for ever, and from whom therefore, no evil was to be apprehended.

How little did Vivaldi foresee, that in repeating to the tribunal the stranger’s summons of father Schedoni, he was deferring, or, perhaps, wholly preventing his own marriage with Ellena di Rosalba! How little, also, did he apprehend what would be the further consequences of a disclosure, which the peculiar circumstances of his situation had hardly

permitted him to withhold, though, could he have understood the probable event of it, he would have braved all the terrors of the tribunal, and death itself, rather than incur the remorse of having promoted it.

The motive for his arrestation was concealed from Schedoni, who had not the remotest suspicion of its nature, but attributed the arrest, to a discovery, which the tribunal had made of his being the accuser of Vivaldi. This disclosure he attributed to his own imprudence, in having stated, as an instance of Vivaldi's contempt for the Catholic faith, that he had insulted a priest while doing penance in the church of the Spirito Santo. But by what art the tribunal had discovered that he was the priest alluded to, and the author of the accusation, Schedoni could by no means conjecture. He was willing to believe that this arrest was only for the purpose of obtaining proof of Vivaldi's guilt; and the Confessor knew that he could so conduct himself in evidence, as in all probability to exculpate the prisoner, from whom, when he should explain himself, no resentment on account of his former conduct was to be apprehended. Yet Schedoni was not perfectly at ease; for it was possible that a knowledge of Vivaldi's situation, and of the author of it, had reached his family, and had produced his own arrest. On this head, however, his fears were not powerful; since, the longer he dwelt upon the subject, the more improbable it appeared that such a disclosure, at least so far as it related to himself, could have been affected.

Vivaldi, from the night of his late examination, was not called upon, till Schedoni and father Ansaldo appeared together in the hall of the tribunal. The two latter had already been separately examined, and Ansaldo had privately stated the particulars of the confession he had received on the vigil of the Santo Marco, in the year 1752, for which disclosure he had received formal absolution. What had passed at that examination does not appear, but on this his second interrogation, he was required to repeat the subject and the circumstances of the confession. This was probably with a view of observing its effect upon Schedoni and on Vivaldi, which would direct the opinion of the tribunal as to the guilt of the Confessor, and the veracity of the young prisoner.

On this night a very exact inquiry was made, concerning every person, who had obtained admission into the hall of justice; such officials as were not immediately necessary to assist in the ceremonies of the tribunal were

excluded, together with every other person belonging to the Inquisition not material to the evidence, or to the judges. When this scrutiny was over, the prisoners were brought in, and their conductors ordered to withdraw. A silence of some moments prevailed in the hall; and, however different might be the reflections of the several prisoners, the degree of anxious expectation was in each, probably, nearly the same,

The grand-vicar having spoken a few words in private to a person on his left hand, an inquisitor rose.

“If any person in this court,” said he, “is known by the name of father Schedoni, belonging to the Dominican society of the Spirito Santo at Naples, let him appear!”

Schedoni answered to the summons. He came forward with a firm step, and, having crossed himself, and bowed to the tribunal, awaited in silence its commands.

The penitentiary Ansaldo was next called upon. Vivaldi observed that he faultered as he advanced; and that his obeisance to the tribunal was more profound than Schedoni’s had been. Vivaldi himself was then summoned; his air was calm and dignified, and his countenance expressed the solemn energy of his feelings, but nothing of dejection.

Schedoni and Ansaldo were now, for the first time, confronted. Whatever might be the feelings of Schedoni on beholding the penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, he effectually concealed them.

The grand-vicar himself opened the examination, “You, father Schedoni, of the Spirito Santo,” he said, “answer and say, whether the person who now stands before you, bearing the title of grand penitentiary of the order of the Black Penitents, and presiding over the convent of the Santa Maria del Pianto at Naples, is known to you.

To this requisition Schedoni replied with firmness in the negative.

“You have never, to your knowledge, seen him before this hour?”

“Never!” said Schedoni.

“Let the oath be administered,” added the grand-vicar. Schedoni having accepted it; the same questions were put to Ansaldo concerning the Confessor, when, to the astonishment of Vivaldi and of the greater part of the court, the penitentiary denied all knowledge of Schedoni. His negative was given, however, in a less decisive manner than that of the Confessor, and when the usual oath was offered, Ansaldo declined to accept it.

Vivaldi was next called upon to identify Schedoni: he declared, that the person who was then pointed out to him, he had never known by any other denomination than that of father Schedoni; and that he had always understood him to be a monk of the Spirito Santo; but Vivaldi was at the same time careful to repeat, that he knew nothing further relative to his life.

Schedoni was somewhat surprized at this apparent candour of Vivaldi towards himself, but accustomed to impute an evil motive to all conduct, which he could not clearly comprehend, he did not scruple to believe, that some latent mischief was directed against him in this seemingly honest declaration.

After some further preliminary forms had passed, Ansaldo was ordered to relate the particulars of the confession, which had been made to him on the eve of the Santo Marco. It must be remembered, that this was still what is called in the Inquisition, a private examination.

After he had taken the customary oaths to relate neither more nor less than the truth of what had passed before him, Ansaldo's depositions were written down nearly in the following words; to which Vivaldi listened with almost trembling attention, for, besides the curiosity which some previous circumstances had excited respecting them, he believed that his own fate in a great measure depended upon a discovery of the fact to which they led. What, if he had surmised how much! and that the person, whom he had been in some degree instrumental in citing before this tremendous tribunal, was the father of his Ellena di Rosalba!

Ansaldo, having again answered to his name and titles, gave his deposition as follows: "It was on the eve of the twenty-fifth of April, and in the year 1752, that as I sat, according to my custom, in the confessional of San Marco, I was alarmed by deep groans, which came from the box on my left hand."

Vivaldi observed, that the date now mentioned agreed with that recorded by the stranger, and he was thus prepared to believe what might follow, and to give his confidence to this extraordinary and unseen personage.

Ansaldo continued, "I was the more alarmed by these sounds, because I had not been prepared for them; I knew not that any person was in the confessional, nor had even observed any one pass along the aisle — but the duskiness of the hour may account for my having failed to do so; it

was after sun-set, and the tapers at the shrine of San Antonio as yet burned feebly in the twilight."

"Be brief, holy father," said the inquisitor who had formerly been most active in examining Vivaldi; "speak closely to the point."

"The groans would sometimes cease," resumed Ansaldo, "and long pauses of silence follow; they were those of a soul in agony, struggling with the consciousness of guilt, yet wanting resolution to confess it. I tried to encourage the penitent, and held forth every hope of mercy and forgiveness which my duty would allow, but for a considerable time without effect; — the enormity of the sin seemed too big for utterance, yet the penitent appeared equally unable to endure the concealment of it. His heart was bursting with the secret, and required the comfort of absolution, even at the price of the severest penance."

"Facts!" said the inquisitor, "these are are only surmises."

"Facts will come full soon!" replied Ansaldo, and bowed his head, "the mention of them will petrify you, holy fathers! as they did me, though not for the same reasons. While I endeavoured to encourage the penitent, and assured him, that absolution should follow the acknowledgment of his crimes, however heinous those crimes might be, if accompanied by sincere repentance, he more than once began his confession, and abruptly dropt it. Once, indeed, he quitted the confessional; his agitated spirit required liberty; and it was then, as he walked with perturbed steps along the aisle, that I first observed his figure. He was in the habit of a white friar, and, as nearly as I can recollect, was about the stature of him, the father Schedoni, who now stands before me."

As Ansaldo delivered these words, the attention of the whole tribunal was turned upon Schedoni, who stood unmoved, and with his eyes bent towards the ground.

"His face," continued the penitentiary, "I did not see; he was, with good reason, careful to conceal it; other resemblance, therefore, than the stature, I cannot point out between them. The voice, indeed, the voice of the penitent, I think I shall never forget; I should know it again at any distance of time."

"Has it not struck your ear, since you came within these walls?" said a member of the tribunal.

“Of that hereafter,” observed the inquisitor, “you wander from the point, father.”

The vicar-general remarked, that the circumstances just related were important, and ought not to be passed over as irrelevant. The inquisitor submitted to this opinion, but objected that they were not pertinent to the moment; and Ansaldo was again bidden to repeat what he had heard at confession.

“When the stranger returned to the steps of the confessional, he had acquired sufficient resolution to go through with the task he had imposed upon himself, and a thrilling voice spoke through the grate the facts I am about to relate.”

Father Ansaldo paused, and was somewhat agitated; he seemed endeavouring to recollect courage to go through with what he had begun. During this pause, the silence of expectation rapt the court, and the eyes of the tribunal were directed alternately to Ansaldo and Schedoni, who certainly required something more than human firmness to support unmoved the severe scrutiny, and the yet severer suspicions, to which he stood exposed. Whether, however, it was the fortitude of conscious innocence, or the hardihood of atrocious vice, that protected the Confessor, he certainly did not betray any emotion. Vivaldi, who had unceasingly observed him from the commencement of the depositions, felt inclined to believe that he was not the penitent described. Ansaldo, having, at length, recollected himself, proceeded as follows:

“I have been through life,’ said the penitent, ‘the slave of my passions, and they have led me into horrible excesses. I had once a brother!’ — He stopped, and deep groans again told the agony of his soul; at length, he added— ‘That brother had a wife! — Now listen, father, and say, whether guilt like mine may hope for absolution! She was beautiful — I loved her; she was virtuous, and I despaired. You, father,’ he continued in a frightful tone, ‘never knew the fury of despair! It overcame or communicated its own force to every other passion of my soul, and I sought to release myself from its tortures by any means. My brother died!— ‘ The penitent paused again,” continued Ansaldo, “I trembled while I listened; my lips were sealed. At length, I bade him proceed, and he spoke as follows.— ‘My brother died at a distance from home.’ — Again the penitent paused, and the silence continued so long, that I thought it proper to inquire of

what disorder the brother had expired. ‘Father, I was his murderer!’ said the penitent in a voice which I never can forget; it sunk into my heart.”

Ansaldo appeared affected by the remembrance, and was for a moment silent. At the last words Vivaldi had particularly noticed Schedoni, that he might judge by their effect upon him, whether he was guilty; but he remained in his former attitude, and his eyes were still fixed upon the ground.

“Proceed, father!” said the inquisitor, “what was your reply to this confession?”

“I was silent,” said Ansaldo; “but at length I bade the penitent go on. ‘I contrived said he, that my brother should die at a distance from home, and I so conducted the affair, that his widow never suspected the cause of his death. It was not till long after the usual time of mourning had expired, that I ventured to solicit her hand: but she had not yet forgotten my brother, and she rejected me. My passion would no longer be trifled with. I caused her to be carried from her house, and she was afterwards willing to retrieve her honour by the marriage vow. I had sacrificed my conscience, without having found happiness; — she did not even condescend to conceal her disdain. Mortified, exasperated by her conduct, I begun to suspect that some other emotion than resentment occasioned this disdain; and last of all jealousy — jealousy came to crown my misery — to light up all my passions into madness!’

“The penitent,” added Ansaldo, “appeared by the manner in which he uttered this, to be nearly frantic at the moment, and convulsive sobs soon stifled his words. When he resumed his confession, he said, ‘I soon found an object for my jealousy. Among the few persons, who visited us in the retirement of our country residence, was a gentleman, who, I fancied, loved my wife; I fancied too, that, whenever he appeared, an air of particular satisfaction was visible on her countenance. She seemed to have pleasure in conversing with, and shewing him distinction. I even sometimes thought, she had pride in displaying to me the preference she entertained for him, and that an air of triumph, and even of scorn, was addressed to me, whenever she mentioned his name. Perhaps, I mistook resentment for love, and she only wished to punish me, by exciting my jealousy. Fatal error! she punished herself also!”

“Be less circumstantial, father,” said the inquisitor.

Ansaldo bowed his head, and continued. “One evening,’ continued the penitent, ‘that I returned home unexpectedly, I was told that a visitor was with my wife! As I approached the apartment where they sat, I heard the voice of Sacchi; it seemed mournful and supplicating. I stopped to listen, and distinguished enough to fire me with vengeance. I restrained myself, however, so far as to step softly to a lattice that opened from the passage, and overlooked the apartment. The traitor was on his knee before her. Whether she had heard my step, or observed my face, through the high lattice, or that she resented his conduct, I know not, but she rose immediately from her chair. I did not pause to question her motive; but, seizing my stiletto, I rushed into the room, wish intent to strike it to the villain’s heart. The supposed assassin of my honour escaped into the garden, and was heard of no more.’ — But your wife? said I. ‘Her bosom received the poniard!’ replied the penitent.”

Ansaldo’s voice faultered, as he repeated this part of the confession, and he was utterly unable to proceed. The tribunal, observing his condition, allowed him a chair, and, after a struggle of some moments, he added, “Think, holy fathers. O think! what must have been my feelings at that instant! I was myself the lover of the woman, whom he confessed himself to have murdered.”

“Was she innocent?” said a voice; and Vivaldi, whose attention had latterly been fixed upon Ansaldo, now, on looking at Schedoni, perceived that it was he who had spoken. At the sound of his voice, the penitentiary turned instantly towards him. There was a pause of general silence, during which Ansaldo’s eyes were earnestly fixed upon the accused. At length, he spoke, “She was innocent!” He replied, with solemn emphasis, “She was most virtuous!”

Schedoni had shrunk back within himself; he asked no further. A murmur ran through the tribunal, which rose by degrees, till it broke forth into audible conversation; at length, the secretary was directed to note the question of Schedoni.

“Was that the voice of the penitent, which you have just heard?” demanded the inquisitor of Ansaldo. “Remember, you have said that you should know it again!”

“I think it was,” replied Ansaldo; “but I cannot swear to that.”

“What infirmity of judgment is this!” said the same inquisitor, who himself was seldom troubled with the modesty of doubt, upon any subject. Ansaldo was bidden to resume the narrative.

“On this discovery of the murderer,” said the penitentiary, “I quitted the confessional, and my senses forsook me before I could deliver orders for the detection of the assassin. When I recovered, it was too late; he had escaped! From that hour to the present, I have never seen him, nor dare I affirm that the person now before me is he.”

The inquisitor was about to speak, but the grand-vicar waved his hand, as a signal for attention, and, addressing Ansaldo, said, “Although you may be unacquainted with Schedoni, the monk of the Spirito Santo, reverend father, can you not recollect the person of the Count di Bruno, your former friend?”

Ansaldo again looked at Schedoni, with a scrutinizing eye; he fixed it long; but the countenance of Schedoni suffered no change.

“No!” said the penitentiary, at length, “I dare not take upon me to assert, that this is the Count di Bruno. If it is he, years have wrought deeply on his features. That the penitent was the Count di Bruno I have proof; he mentioned my name as his visitor, and particular circumstances known only to the Count and myself; but that father Schedoni was the penitent, I repeat it, I dare not affirm.”

“But that dare I!” said another voice; and Vivaldi, turning towards it, beheld the mysterious stranger advancing, his cowl now thrown back, and an air of menace overspreading every terrific feature. Schedoni, in the instant that he perceived him, seemed agitated; his countenance, for the first time, suffered some change.

The tribunal was profoundly silent, but surprize, and a kind of restless expectation, marked every brow. Vivaldi was about to exclaim, “That is my informer!” when the voice of the stranger checked him.

“Dost thou know me?” said he, sternly, to Schedoni, and his attitude became fixed.

Schedoni gave no reply.

“Dost thou know me?” repeated his accuser, in a steady solemn voice.

“Know thee!” uttered Schedoni, faintly.

“Dost thou know this?” cried the stranger, raising his voice, as he drew from his garment what appeared to be a dagger. “Dost thou know these

indelible stains?” said he, lifting the poniard, and, with an outstretched arm, pointing it towards Schedoni.

The Confessor turned away his face; it seemed as if his heart sickened.

“With this dagger was thy brother slain!” said the terrible stranger. “Shall I declare myself?”

Schedoni’s courage forsook him, and he sunk against a pillar of the hall for support.

The consternation was now general; the extraordinary appearance and conduct of the stranger seemed to strike the greater part of the tribunal, a tribunal of the inquisition itself! with dismay. Several of the members rose from their seats; others called aloud for the officials, who kept guard at the doors of the hall, and inquired who had admitted the stranger, while the vicar-general and a few inquisitors conversed privately together, during which they frequently looked at the stranger and at Schedoni, as if they were the subjects of the discourse. Meanwhile the monk remained with the dagger in his grasp, and his eyes fixed on the Confessor, whose face was still averted, and who yet supported himself against the pillar.

At length, the vicar-general called upon the members who had arisen to return to their seats, and ordered that the officials should withdraw to their posts.

“Holy brethren!” said the vicar, “we recommend to you, at this important hour, silence and deliberation. Let the examination of the accused proceed; and hereafter let us inquire as to the admittance of the accuser. For the present, suffer him also to have hearing, and the father Schedoni to reply.

“We suffer him!” answered the tribunal, and bowed their heads.

Vivaldi, who, during the tumult, had ineffectually endeavoured to make himself heard, now profited by the pause which followed the assent of the inquisitors, to claim attention: but the instant he spoke several members impatiently bade that the examination should proceed, and the grand-vicar was again obliged to command silence, before the request of Vivaldi could be understood. Permission to speak being granted him, “That person,” said he, pointing to the stranger, “is the same who visited me in my prison; and the dagger the same he now displays! It was he, who commanded me to summon the penitentiary Ansaldo, and the father Schedoni. I have acquitted myself, and have nothing further to do in this struggle.”

The tribunal was again agitated, and the murmurs of private conversation again prevailed. Meanwhile Schedoni appeared to have recovered some degree of self-command; he raised himself, and, bowing to the tribunal, seemed preparing to speak; but waited till the confusion of sound that filled the hall should subside. At length he could be heard, and, addressing the tribunal, he said,

“Holy fathers! the stranger who is now before you is an impostor! I will prove that my accuser was once my friend; — you may perceive how much the discovery of his perfidy affects me. The charge he brings is most false and malicious!”

“Once the friend!” replied the stranger, with peculiar emphasis, “and what has made me the enemy! View these spots,” he continued, pointing to the blade of the poniard, “are they also false and malicious? are they not, on the contrary, reflected on the conscience?”

“I know them not,” replied Schedoni, “my conscience is unstained.”

“A brother’s blood has stained it!” said the stranger, in a hollow voice.

Vivaldi, whose attention was now fixed upon Schedoni, observed a livid hue overspread his complexion, and that his eyes were averted from this extraordinary person with horror: the spectre of his deceased brother could scarcely have called forth a stronger expression. It was not immediately that he could command his voice; when he could, he again appealed to the tribunal.

“Holy fathers!” said he, “suffer me to defend myself.”

“Holly fathers!” said the accuser, with solemnity, “hear! hear what I shall unfold!”

Schedoni, who seemed to speak by a strong effort only, again addressed the inquisitors; “I will prove,” said he, “that this evidence is not of a nature to be trusted.”

“I will bring such proof to the contrary!” said the monk. “And here,” pointing to Ansaldo, “is sufficient testimony that the Count di Bruno did confess himself guilty of murder.”

The court commanded silence, and upon the appeal of the stranger to Ansaldo, the penitentiary was asked whether he knew him. He replied, that he did not.

“Recollect yourself,” said the grand inquisitor, “it is of the utmost consequence that you should be correct on this point.”

The penitentiary observed the stranger with deep attention, and then repeated his assertion.

“Have you never seen him before?” said an inquisitor.

“Never, to my knowledge!” replied Ansaldo.

The inquisitors looked upon each other in silence.

“He speaks the truth,” said the stranger.

This extraordinary fact did not fail to strike the tribunal, and to astonish Vivaldi. Since the accuser confirmed it, Vivaldi was at a loss to understand the means by which he could have become acquainted with the guilt of Schedoni, who, it was not to be supposed, would have acknowledged crimes of such magnitude as those contained in the accusation, to any person, except, indeed, to his Confessor, and this Confessor, it appeared, was so far from having betrayed his trust to the accuser, that he did not even know him. Vivaldi was no less perplexed as to what would be the nature of the testimony with which the accuser designed to support his charges: but the pause of general amazement, which had permitted Vivaldi these considerations, was now at an end; the tribunal resumed the examination, and the grand inquisitor called aloud,

“You, Vincentio di Vivaldi, answer with exactness to the questions that shall be put to you.”

He was then asked some questions relative to the person, who had visited him in prison. In his answers, Vivaldi was clear and concise, constantly affirming, that the stranger was the same, who now accused Schedoni.

When the accuser was interrogated, he acknowledged, without hesitation, that Vivaldi had spoken the truth. He was then asked his motive for that extraordinary visit.

“It was,” replied the monk, “that a murderer might be brought to justice.”

“This,” observed the grand inquisitor, “might have been accomplished by fair and open accusation. If you had known the charge to be just, it is probable that you would have appealed directly to this tribunal, instead of endeavouring infidiously to obtain an influence over the mind of a prisoner, and urging him to become the instrument of bringing the accused to punishment.”

“Yet I have not shrunk from discovery,” observed the stranger, calmly; “I have voluntarily appeared.”

At these words, Schedoni seemed again much agitated, and even drew his hood over his eyes.

“That is just,” said the grand inquisitor, addressing the stranger: “but you have neither declared your name, or whence you come!”

To this remark the monk made no reply; but Schedoni, with reviving spirit, urged the circumstance, in evidence of the malignity and falshood of the accuser.

“Wilt thou compel me to reveal my proof?” said the stranger: “Darest thou to do so?”

“Why should I fear thee?” answered Schedoni.

“Ask thy conscience!” said the stranger, with a terrible frown.

The tribunal again suspended the examination, and consulted in private together.

To the last exhortation of the monk, Schedoni was silent. Vivaldi observed, that during this short dialogue, the Confessor had never once turned his eyes towards the stranger, but apparently avoided him, as an object too affecting to be looked upon. He judged, from this circumstance, and from some other appearances in his conduct, that Schedoni was guilty; yet the consciousness of guilt alone did not perfectly account, he thought, for the strong emotion, with which he avoided the sight of his accuser — unless, indeed, he knew that accuser to have been, not only an accomplice in his crime, but the actual assassin. In this case, it appeared natural even for the stern and subtle Schedoni to betray his horror, on beholding the person of the murderer, with the very instrument of crime in his grasp. On the other hand, Vivaldi could not but perceive it to be highly improbable, that the very man who had really committed the deed should come voluntarily into a court of justice, for the purpose of accusing his employer; that he should dare publicly to accuse him, whose guilt, however enormous, was not more so than his own.

The extraordinary manner, also, in which the accuser had proceeded in the commencement of the affair, engaged Vivaldi’s consideration; his apparent reluctance to be seen in this process, and the artful and mysterious plan by which he had caused Schedoni to be summoned before the tribunal, and had endeavoured that he should be there accused by

Ansaldo, indicated, at least to Vivaldi's apprehension, the fearfulness of guilt, and, still more, that malice, and a thirst of vengeance, had instigated his conduct in the prosecution. If the stranger had been actuated only by a love of justice, it appeared that he would not have proceeded toward it in a way thus dark and circuitous, but have sought it by the usual process, and have produced the proofs, which he even now asserted he possessed, of Schedoni's crimes. In addition to the circumstances, which seemed to strengthen a supposition of the guiltlessness of Schedoni, was that of the accuser's avoiding to acknowledge who he was, and whence he came. But Vivaldi paused again upon this point; it appeared to be inexplicable, and he could not imagine why the accuser had adopted a style of secrecy, which, if he persisted in it, must probably defeat the very purpose of the accusation; for Vivaldi did not believe that the tribunal would condemn a prisoner upon the testimony of a person who, when called upon, should publicly refuse to reveal himself, even to them. Yet the accuser must certainly have considered this circumstance before he ventured into court; notwithstanding which, he had appeared!

These reflections led Vivaldi to various conjectures relative to the visit he had himself received from the monk, the dream that had preceded it, the extraordinary means by which he had obtained admittance to the prison, the declaration of the centinels, that not any person had passed the door, and many other unaccountable particulars; and, while Vivaldi now looked upon the wild physiognomy of the stranger, he almost fancied, as he had formerly done, that he beheld something not of this earth.

"I have heard of the spirit of the murdered," said he, to himself— "restless for justice, becoming visible in our world— " But Vivaldi checked the imperfect thought, and, though his imagination inclined him to the marvellous, and to admit ideas which, filling and expanding all the faculties of the soul, produce feelings that partake of the sublime, he now resisted the propensity, and dismissed, as absurd, a supposition, which had begun to thrill his every nerve with horror. He awaited, however, the result of the examination, and what might be the further conduct of the stranger, with intense expectation.

When the tribunal had, at length, finally determined on the method of their proceedings, Schedoni was first called upon, and examined as to his knowledge of the accuser. It was the same inquisitor who had formerly

interrogated Vivaldi, that now spoke. “You, father Schedoni, a monk of the Spirito Santo convent, at Naples, otherwise Ferando Count di Bruno, answer to the questions which shall be put to you. Do you know the name of this man who now appears as your accuser?”

“I answer not to the title of Count di Bruno,” replied the Confessor, “but I will declare that I know this man. His name is Nicola di Zampari.”

“What is his condition?”

“He is a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo,” replied Schedoni. “Of his family I know little.”

“Where have you seen him?”

“In the city of Naples, where he has resided, during some years, beneath the same roof with me, when I was of the convent of San Angiolo, and since that time, in the Spirito Santo.”

“You have been a resident at the San Angiolo?” said the inquisitor.

“I have,” replied Schedoni; “and it was there that we first lived together in the confidence of friendship.”

“You now perceive how ill placed was that confidence,” said the inquisitor, “and repent, no doubt, of your imprudence?”

The wary Schedoni was not entrapped by this observation.

“I must lament a discovery of ingratitude,” he replied, calmly, “but the subjects of my confidence were too pure to give occasion for repentance.”

“This Nicola di Zampari was ungrateful, then? You had rendered him services?” said the inquisitor.

“The cause of his enmity I can well explain,” observed Schedoni, evading, for the present, the question.

“Explain,” said the stranger, solemnly.

Schedoni hesitated; some sudden consideration seemed to occasion him perplexity.

“I call upon you, in the name of your deceased brother,” said the accuser, “to reveal the cause of my enmity!”

Vivaldi, struck by the tone in which the stranger spoke this, turned his eyes upon him, but knew not how to interpret the emotion visible on his countenance.

The inquisitor commanded Schedoni to explain himself; the latter could not immediately reply, but, when he recovered a self-command, he added,

“I promised this accuser, this Nicola di Zampari, to assist his preferment with what little interest I possessed; it was but little. Some succeeding circumstances encouraged me to believe that I could more than fulfil my promise. His hopes were elevated, and, in the fulness of expectation — he was disappointed, for I was myself deceived, by the person in whom I had trusted. To the disappointment of a choleric man, I am to attribute this unjust accusation.” Schedoni paused, and an air of dissatisfaction and anxiety appeared upon his features. His accuser remained silent, but a malicious smile announced his triumph.

“You must declare, also, the services,” said the inquisitor, “which merited the reward you promised.”

“Those services were inestimable to me,” resumed Schedoni, after a momentary hesitation; “though they cost di Zampari little: they were the consolations of sympathy, the intelligence of friendship, which he administered, and which gratitude told me never could be repaid.”

“Of sympathy! of friendship!” said the grand-vicar. “Are we to believe that a man, who brings false accusation of so dreadful a nature as the one now before us, is capable of bestowing the consolations of sympathy, and of friendship? You must either acknowledge, that services of a less disinterested nature won your promises of reward; or we must conclude that your acenser’s charge is just. Your assertions are inconsistent, and your explanation too trivial, to deceive for a moment.”

“I have declared the truth,” said Schedoni, haughtily.

“In which instance?” asked the inquisitor; “for your assertions contradict each other!”

Schedoni was silent. Vivaldi could not judge whether the pride which occasioned his silence was that of innocence, or of remorse.

“It appears, from your own testimony,” said the inquisitor, “that the ingratitude was your’s, not your accuser’s, since he consoled you with kindness, which you have never returned him! — Have you any thing further to say?”

Schedoni was still silent.

“This, then, is your only explanation?” added the inquisitor.

Schedoni bowed his head, The inquisitor then, addressing the accuser, demanded what he had to reply.

“I have nothing to reply,” said the stranger, with malicious triumph; “the accused has replied for me!”

“We are to conclude, then, that he has spoken truth, when he asserted you to be a monk of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?” said the inquisitor.

“You, holy father,” said the stranger, gravely, appealing to the inquisitor, “can answer for me, whether I am.”

Vivaldi listened with emotion.

The inquisitor rose from his chair, and with solemnity replied, “I answer, then, that you are not a monk of Naples.”

“By that reply,” said the vicar-general, in a low voice, to the inquisitor, “I perceive you think father Schedoni is guilty.”

The rejoinder of the inquisitor was delivered in so low a tone, that Vivaldi could not understand it. He was perplexed to interpret the answer given to the appeal of the stranger. he thought that the inquisitor would not have ventured an assertion thus positive, if his opinion had been drawn from inference only; and that he should know the accuser, while he was conducting himself towards him as a stranger, amazed Vivaldi, no less than if he had understood the character of an inquisitor to be as artless as his own. On the other hand, he had so frequently seen the stranger at Paluzzi, and in the habit of a monk, that he could hardly question the assertion of Schedoni, as to his identity.

The inquisitor, addressing Schedoni, said, “Your evidence we know to be in part erroneous; your accuser is not a monk of Naples, but a servant of the most holy Inquisition. Judging, from this part of your evidence, we must suspect the whole.”

“A servant of the Inquisition!” exclaimed Schedoni, with unaffected surprize. “Reverend father! your assertion astonishes me! You are deceived, however strange it may appear, trust me, you are deceived! You doubt the credit of my word; I, therefore, will assert no more. But inquire of Signor Vivaldi; ask him, whether he has not often, and lately, seen my accuser at Naples, and in the habit of a monk.”

“I have seen him at the ruins of Paluzzi, near Naples, and in the ecclesiastical dress,” replied Vivaldi, without waiting for the regular question, “and under circumstances no less extraordinary than those which have attended him here. But, in return for this frank acknowledgment, I require of you, father Schedoni, to answer some questions which I shall

venture to suggest to the tribunal — By what means were you informed that I have often seen the stranger at Paluzzi — and was you interested or not in his mysterious conduct towards me there?”

To these questions, though formally delivered from the tribunal, Schedoni did not deign to reply.

“It appears, then,” said the vicar-general, “that the accuser and the accused were once accomplices.”

The inquisitor objected, that this did not certainly appear; and that, on the contrary, Schedoni seemed to have given his last questions in despair; an observation which Vivaldi thought extraordinary from an inquisitor.

“Be it accomplices, if it so please you,” said Schedoni, bowing to the grand vicar, without noticing the inquisitor: “you may call us accomplices, but I say, that we were friends. Since it is necessary to my own peace, that I should more fully explain some circumstances attending our intimacy, I will own that my accuser was occasionally my agent, and assisted in preserving the dignity of an illustrious family at Naples, the family of the Vivaldi. And there, holy father,” added Schedoni, pointing to Vincentio, “is the son of that ancient house, for whom I have attempted so much!”

Vivaldi was almost overwhelmed by this confession of Schedoni, though he had already suspected a part of the truth. In the stranger he believed he saw the slanderer of Ellena, the base instrument of the Marchesa’s policy, and of Schedoni’s ambition; and the whole of his conduct at Paluzzi, at least, seemed now intelligible. In Schedoni he beheld his secret accuser, and the inexorable enemy whom he believed to have occasioned the imprisonment of Ellena. At this latter consideration, all circumspection, all prudence forsook him: he declared, with energy, that, from what Schedoni had just acknowledged to be his conduct, he knew him for his secret accuser, and the accuser, also, of Ellena di Rosalba; and he called upon the tribunal to examine into the Confessor’s motives for the accusation, and afterwards to give hearing to what he would himself unfold.

To this, the grand-vicar replied, that Vivaldi’s appeal would be taken into consideration; and he then ordered that the present business should proceed.

The inquisitor, addressing Schedoni, said, “The disinterested nature of your friendship is now sufficiently explained, and the degree of credit,

which is due to your late assertions understood. Of you we ask no more, but turn to father Nicola di Zampari, and demand what he has to say in support of his accusation. What are your proofs, Nicola di Zampari, that he who calls himself father Schedoni is Ferando Count di Bruno; and that he has been guilty of murder, the murder of his brother, and of his wife? Answer to our charge!”

“To your first question,” said the monk, “I reply that he has himself acknowledged to me, on an occasion, which it is not necessary to mention, that he was the Count di Bruno; to the last, I produce the poniard which I received, with the dying confession of the assassin whom he employed.”

“Still, there are not proofs, but assertion,” observed the vicar-general, “and the first forbids our confidence in the second. — If, as you declare, Schedoni himself acknowledged to you that he was Count di Bruno, you must have been to him the intimate friend he has declared you were, or he would not have confided to you a secret so dangerous to himself. And, if you were that friend, what confidence ought we to give to your assertions respecting the dagger? since, whether your accusations be true or false, you prove yourself guilty of treachery in bringing them forward at all.”

Vivaldi was surprized to hear such candour from an inquisitor.

“Here is my proof,” said the stranger, who now produced a paper, containing what he asserted to be the dying confession of the assassin. It was signed by a priest of Rome, as well as by himself, and appeared from the date to have been given only a very few weeks before. The priest, he said, was living, and might be summoned. The tribunal issued an order for the apprehension of this priest, and that he should be brought to give evidence on the following evening; after which, the business of this night proceeded, without further interruption, towards its conclusion.

The vicar-general spoke again, “Nicola di Zampari, I call upon you to say, why, if your proof of Schedoni’s guilt is so clear, as the confession of the assassin himself must make it, — why you thought it necessary to summon father Ansaldo to attest the criminality of the Count di Bruno? The dying confession of the assassin is certainly of more weight than any other evidence.”

“I summoned the father Ansaldo,” replied the stranger, “as a means of proving that Schedoni is the Count di Bruno. The confession of the

assassin sufficiently proves the Count to have been the instigator of the murder, but not that Schedoni is the Count."

"But that is more than I will engage to prove," replied Ansaldo, "I know it was the Count di Bruno who confessed to me, but I do not know that the father Schedoni, who is now before me, was the person who so confessed."

"Conscientiously observed!" said the vicar-general, interrupting the stranger, who was about to reply, "but you, Nicola di Zampari, have not on this head been sufficiently explicit. — How do you know that Schedoni is the penitent who confessed to Ansaldo on the vigil of San Marco?"

"Reverend father, that is the point I was about to explain," replied the monk. "I myself accompanied Schedoni, on the eve of San Marco, to the church of the Santa Maria del Pianto, at the very hour when the confession is said to have been made. Schedoni told me he was going to confession; and, when I observed to him his unusual agitation, his behaviour implied a consciousness of extraordinary guilt; he even betrayed it by some words, which he dropt in the confusion of his mind. I parted with him at the gates of the church. He was then of an order of white friars, and habited as father Ansaldo has described. Within a few weeks after this confession, he left his convent, for what reason I never could learn, though I have often surmised it, and came to reside at the Spirito Santo, whither I also had removed,"

"Here is no proof," said the vicar-general, "other friars of that order might confess at the same hour, in the same church."

"But here is strong presumption for proof," observed the inquisitor. "Holy father, we must judge from probabilities, as well as from proof."

"But probabilities themselves," replied the vicar-general, "are strongly against the evidence of a man, who would betray another by means of words dropped in the unguarded moments of powerful emotion."

"Are these the sentiments of an inquisitor!" said Vivaldi to himself, "can such glorious candour appear amidst the tribunal of an Inquisition!" Tears sell fast on Vivaldi's cheek while he gazed upon this just judge, whose candour, had it been exerted in his cause, could not have excited more powerful sensations of esteem and admiration. "An inquisitor!" he repeated to himself, "an inquisitor!"

The inferior inquisitor, however, was so far from possessing any congeniality of character with his superior, that he was evidently

disappointed by the appearance of liberality, which the vicar-general discovered, and immediately said, “Has the accuser any thing further to urge in evidence, that the father Schedoni is the penitent, who confessed to the penitentiary Ansaldo?”

“I have,” replied the monk, with asperity. “When I had left Schedoni in the church, I lingered without the walls for his return, according to appointment. But the appeared considerably sooner than I expected, and in a state of disorder, such as I had never witnessed in him before. In an instant he passed me, nor could my voice arrest his progress. Confusion seemed to reign within the church and the convent, and, when I would have entered, for the purpose of inquiring the occasion of it, the gates were suddenly closed, and all entrance forbidden. It has since appeared, that the monks were then searching for the penitent. A rumour afterwards reached me, that a confession had caused this disturbance; that the father Confessor, who happened at that time to be the grand penitentiary Ansaldo, had left the chair in horror of what had been divulged from the grate, and had judged it necessary that a search should be made for the penitent, who was a white friar. This report, reverend fathers, excited general attention; with me it did more — for I thought I knew the penitent. When on the following day, I questioned Schedoni as to his sudden departure from the church of the Black Penitents, his answers were dark, but emphatic, and he extorted from me a promise, thoughtless that I was! never to disclose his visit of the preceding evening to the Santa del Pianto. I then certainly discovered who was the penitent”

“Did he, then, confess to you also?” said the Vicar-general.

“No father. I understood him to be the penitent to whom the report alluded, but I had no suspicion of the nature of his crimes, till the assassin began his confession, the conclusion of which clearly explained the subject of Schedoni’s; it explained also his motive for endeavouring ever after to attach me to his interest.”

“You have now,” said the vicar-general, “you have now, confessed yourself a member of the convent of the Spirito Santo at Naples, and an intimate of the father Schedoni; one whom for many years he has endeavoured to attach to him. Not an hour has passed since you denied all this; the negative to the latter circumstance was given, it is true, by

implication only; but to the first a direct and absolute denial was pronounced!”

“I denied that I am a monk of Naples,” replied the accuser, “and I appealed to the Inquisitor for the truth of my denial. He has said, that I am now a servant of the most holy Inquisition.”

The vicar-general, with some surprise, looked at the inquisitor for explanation; other members of the tribunal did the same; the rest appeared to understand more than they had thought it necessary to avow. The inquisitor, who had been called upon, rose, and replied, “Nicola di Zampari has spoken the truth. It is not many weeks since he entered the holy office. A certificate from his convent at Naples bears testimony to the truth of what I advance, and procured him admittance here.”

“It is extraordinary that you should not have disclosed your knowledge of this person before!” said the vicar-general.

“Holy father, I had reasons,” replied the inquisitor, “you will recollect that the accused was present, and you will understand them.”

“I comprehend you,” said the vicar-general, “but I do neither approve of, nor perceive any necessity for your countenancing the subterfuge of this Nicola di Zampari, relative to his identity. But more of this in private.”

“I will explain all there,” answered the inquisitor.

“It appears then,” resumed the vicar-general, speaking aloud, “that this Nicola di Zampari was formerly the friend and confidant of father Schedoni, whom he now accuses. The accusation is evidently malicious; whether it be also false remains to be decided. A material question naturally arises out of the subject — Why was not the accusation brought forward before this period?”

The monk’s visage brightened with the satisfaction of anticipated triumph, and he immediately replied, “Most holy father! as soon as I ascertained the crime, I prepared to prosecute the perpetrator of it. A short period only has elapsed since the assassin gave his confession. In this interval I diseovored, in these prisons, Signor Vivaldi, and immediately comprehended by whose means he was confined. I knew enough both of the accuser and accused, to understand which of these was innocent, and had then a double motive for causing Schedoni to be summoned; — I wished equally to deliver the innocent and punish the criminal. The question as to the motive for my becoming the enemy of him, who was

once my friend, is already answered; — it was a sense of justice, not a suggestion of malice.”

The grand-vicar smiled, but asked no further; and this long examination concluded with committing Schedoni again into close custody, till cull evidence should be obtained of his guilt, or his innocence should appear. Respecting the manner of his wife’s death, there was yet no other evidence than that which was asserted to be his own confession, which, though perhaps sufficient to condemn a criminal before the tribunal of the Inquisition, was not enough to satisfy the present vicar-general, who gave direction that means might be employed towards obtaining proof of each article of the accusation; in order that, should Schedoni be acquitted of the charge of having murdered his brother, documents might appear for prosecuting him respecting the death of his wife.

Schedoni, when he withdrew from the hall, bowed respectfully to the tribunal, and whether, not withstanding late appearances, he were innocent, or that subtlety enabled him to reassume his usual address, it is certain his manner no longer betrayed any symptom of conscious guilt. His countenance was firm and even tranquil, and his air dignified. Vivaldi, who, during the greater part of this examination, had been convinced of his criminality, now only doubted his innocence. Vivaldi was himself reconducted to his prison, and the sitting of the tribunal was dissolved.

Chapter 2 8

“The time shall come when Glo’ster’s heart shall bleed
In life’s last hours with horrors of the deed;
When dreary visions shall at last present
Thy vengeful image.” —
Collins.

When the night of Schedoni’s trial arrived, Vivaldi was again summoned to the hall of the tribunal. Every circumstance was now arranged according to the full ceremonies of the place; the members of the tribunal were more numerous than foremerly at the examinations; the chief inquisitors wore habits of a fashion different from those, which before distinguished them, and their turbans, of a singular form and larger size, seemed to give an air of sterner ferocity to their features. The hall, as usual, was hung with black, and every person who appeared there, whether inquisitor, official, witness or prisoner, was habited in the same dismal hue, which, together with the kind of light diffused through the chamber from lamps hung high in the vaulted roof, and from torches held by parties of officials who kept watch at the several doors, and in different parts of this immense hall, gave a character of gloomy solemnity to the assembly, which was almost horrific.

Vivaldi was situated in a place, whence he beheld the whole of the tribunal, and could distinguish whatever was passing in the hall. The countenance of every member was now fully displayed to him by the torchmen, who, arranged at the steps of the platform on which the three chief inquisitors were elevated, extended in a semicircle on either hand of the place occupied by the inferior members. The red glare, which the torches threw upon the latter, certainly did not soften the expression of faces, for the most part sculptured by passions of dark malignity, or fiercer cruelty; and Vivaldi could not bear even to examine them long.

Before the bar of the tribunal, he distinguished Schedoni, and little did he suspect, that in him, a criminal brought thither to answer for the guilt of

murder — the murder of a brother, and of a wife, he beheld the parent of Ellena di Rosalba!

Near Schedoni was seated the penitentiary Ansaldo, the Roman priest, who was to be a principal witness, and father Nicolah di Zampari, upon whom Vivaldi could not even now look without experiencing somewhat of the awe, which had prevailed over his mind when he was inclined to consider the stranger, rather as the vision of another world, than as a being of this. The same wild and indescribable character still distinguished his air, his every look and movement, and Vivaldi could not but believe that something in the highest degree extraordinary would yet be discovered concerning him.

The witnesses being called over, Vivaldi understood that he was placed among them, though he had only repeated the words which father Nicola had spoken, and which, since Nicola himself was present as a witness against Schedoni, he did not perceive could be in the least material on the trial.

When Vivaldi had, in his turn, answered to his name, a voice, bursting forth from a distant part of the hall, exclaimed, “It is my master! my dear master!” and on directing his eyes whence it came, he perceived the faithful Paulo struggling with his guard. Vivaldi called to him to be patient, and to forbear resistance, an exhortation, however, which served only to increase the efforts of the servant for liberty, and in the next instant he broke from the grasp of the officials, and, darting towards Vivaldi, fell at his feet, sobbing; and clasping his knees, and exclaiming, “O my master! my master! have I found you at last?”

Vivaldi, as much affected by this meeting as Paulo, could not immediately speak. He would, however, have raised and embraced his affectionate servant, but Paulo, still clinging to his knees and sobbing, was so much agitated that he scarcely understood any thing said to him, and to the kind assurances and gentle remonstrances of Vivaldi, constantly replied as if to the officers, whom he fancied to be forcing him away.

“Remember your situation, Paulo,” said Vivaldi, “consider mine also, and be governed by prudence.”

“You shall not force me hence!” cried Paulo, “you can take my life only once; if I must die, it shall be here.”

“Recollect yourself, Paulo, and be composed. Your life, I trust, is in no danger.”

Paulo looked up, and again bursting into a passion of tears, repeated, “O! my master! my master! where have you been all this while? are you indeed alive? I thought I never should see you again! I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried! and I wished to be dead and buried with you. I thought you was gone out of this world into the next. I feared you was gone to heaven, and so believed we should never meet again. But now, I see you once more, and know that you live! O! my master! my master!”

The officers who had followed Paulo, now endeavouring to withdraw him, he became more outrageous.

“Do your worst at once,” said he; “but you shall find tough work of it, if you try to force me from hence, so you had better be contented with killing me here.”

The incensed officials were laying violent hands upon him, when Vivaldi interposed. “I entreat, I supplicate you,” said he, “that you will suffer him to remain near me.”

“It is impossible,” replied an officer, “we dare not.”

“I will promise that he shall not even speak to me, if you will only allow him to be near,” added Vivaldi.

“Not speak to you, master!” exclaimed Paulo, “but I will stay by you, and speak to you as long as I like, till my last gasp. Let them do their worst at once; I defy them all, and all the devils of inquisitors at their heels too, to force me away. I can die but once, and they ought to be satisfied with that, — so what is there to be afraid of? Not speak!”

“He knows not what he says,” said Vivaldi to the officials, while he endeavoured to silence Paulo with his hand, “I am certain that he will submit to whatever I shall require of him, and will be entirely silent; or, if he does speak now and then, it shall be only in a whisper.”

“A whisper!” said an officer sneeringly, “do you suppose Signor, that any person is suffered to speak in a whisper here?”

“A whisper!” shouted Paulo, “I scorn to speak in a whisper. I will speak so loud, that every word I say shall ring in the ears of all those old black devils on the benches yonder; aye, and those on that mountebank stage too,

that sit there looking so grim and angry as if they longed to tear us in pieces. They” —

“Silence,” said Vivaldi with emphasis, “Paulo, I command you to be silent.”

“They shall know a bit of my mind,” continued Paulo, without noticing Vivaldi, “I will tell them what they have to expect for all their cruel usage of my poor master. Where do they expect to go when they die, I wonder? Though for that matter, they cannot go to a worse place than they are in already, and I suppose it is, knowing that, which makes them not afraid of being ever so wicked. They shall hear a little plain truth, for once in their lives, however, they shall hear” — During the whole of this harangue, Vivaldi, alarmed for the consequence of such imprudent, though honest indignation, had been using all possible effort to silence him, and was the more alarmed, since the officials made no further attempt to interrupt Paulo, a forbearance, which Vivaldi attributed to malignity, and to a wish that Paulo might be entrapped by his own act. At length he made himself heard.

“I entreat,” said Vivaldi.

Paulo stopped for a moment.

“Paulo!” rejoined Vivaldi earnestly, “do you love your master?”

“Love my master!” said Paulo resentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finish his sentence, “Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myself into the Inquisition, and all on his account? and now to be asked, ‘Do I love my master!’ If you believe, Signor, that any thing else made me come here, into these dismal holes, you are quite entirely out; and when they have made an end of me, as I suppose they will do, before all is over, you will, perhaps, think better of me than to suspect that I came here for my own pleasure.”

“All that may be as you say, Paulo,” replied Vivaldi coldly, while he with difficulty commanded his tears, “but your immediate submission is the only conduct that can convince me of the sincerity of your professions. I entreat you to be silent.”

“Entreat me!” said Paulo, “O my master! what have I done that it should come to this? Entreat me!” he repeated, sobbing.

“You will then give me this proof of your attachment?” asked Vivaldi.

“Do not use such a heart breaking word again, master,” replied Paulo, while he dashed the tears from his cheek, “such a heart breaking word, and I will do any thing.”

“You submit to what I require then, Paulo?”

“Aye, Signor, if — if it is even to kneel at the feet of that devil of an inquisitor, yonder.”

“I shall only require you to be silent,” replied Vivaldi, “and you may then be permitted to remain near me.”

“Well, Signor, well; I will do as you bid me, then, and only just say” —

“Not a syllable! Paulo,” interrupted Vivaldi.

“Only just say, master” —

“Not a word I entreat you!” added Vivaldi, “or you will be removed immediately.”

“His removal does not depend on that,” said one of the officials, breaking from his watchful silence, “he must go, and that without more delay.”

“What! after I have promised not to open my lips!” said Paulo, “do you pretend to break your agreement?”

“There is no presence, and there was no agreement,” replied the man sharply, “so obey directly, or it will be the worse for you.”

The officials were provoked, and Paulo became still more enraged and clamorous, till at length the uproar reached the tribunal at the other end of the hall, and silence having been commanded, an inquiry was made into the cause of the confusion. The consequence of this was, an order that Paulo should withdraw from Vivaldi; but as at this moment he feared no greater evil, he gave his refusal to the tribunal with as little ceremony as he had done before to the officials.

At length, after much difficulty, a sort of compromise was made, and Paulo being soothed by his master into some degree of compliance, was suffered to remain within a short distance of him.

The business of the trial soon after commenced. Ansaldo the penitentiary, and father Nicola, appeared as witnesses, as did, also, the Roman priest, who had assisted in taking the depositions of the dying assassin. He had been privately interrogated, and had given clear and satisfactory evidence as to the truth of the paper produced by Nicola.

Other witnesses, also, had been subpoenaed, whom Schedoni had no expectation of meeting.

The deportment of the Confessor, on first entering the hall, was collected and firm; it remained unchanged when the Roman priest was brought forward; but, on the appearance of another witness, his courage seemed to faulter. Before this evidence was, however, called for, the depositions of the assassin were publicly read. They stated, with the closest conciseness, the chief facts, of which the following is a somewhat more dilated narrative.

It appeared, that about the year 1742, the late Count di Bruno had passed over into Greece, a journey which his brother, the present Confessor, having long expected, had meditated to take advantage of. Though a lawless passion had first suggested to the dark mind of Schedoni the atrocious act, which should destroy a brother, many circumstances and considerations had conspired to urge him towards its accomplishment. Among these was the conduct of the late Count towards himself, which, however reasonable, as it had contradicted his own selfish gratifications, and added strong reproof to opposition, had excited his most inveterate hatred. Schedoni, who, as a younger brother of his family, bore, at that time, the title of Count di Marinella, had dissipated his small patrimony at a very early age; but, though suffering might then have taught him prudence, it had only encouraged him in duplicity, and rendered him more eager to seek a temporary refuge in the same habits of extravagance which had led to it. The Count di Bruno, though his fortune was very limited, had afforded frequent supplies to his brother; till, finding that he was incorrigible, and that the sums which he himself spared with difficulty from his family were lavished, without remorse, by Marinella, instead of being applied, with economy, to his support, he refused further aid than was sufficient for his absolute necessities.

It would be difficult for a candid mind to believe how a conduct so reasonable could possibly excite hatred in any breast, or that the power of selfishness could so far warp any understanding, as to induce Marinella, whom we will, in future, again call Schedoni, to look upon his brother with detestation, because he had refused to ruin himself that his kinsman might revel! Yet it is certain that Schedoni, terming the necessary prudence of di Bruno to be meanness and cold insensibility to the comfort of others,

suffered full as much resentment towards him from system, as he did from passion, though the meanness and the insensibility he imagined in his brother’s character were not only real traits in his own, but were displaying themselves in the very arguments he urged against them.

The rancour thus excited was cherished by innumerable circumstances, and ripened by envy, that meanest and most malignant of the human passions; by envy of di Bruno’s blessings, of an unencumbered estate, and of a beautiful wife, he was tempted to perpetrate the deed, which might transfer those blessings to himself. Spalatro, whom he employed to this purpose, was well known to him, and he did not fear to confide the conduct of the crime to this man, who was to purchase a little habitation on the remote shore of the Adriatic, and, with a certain stipend, to reside there. The ruinous dwelling, to which Ellena had been carried, as its solitary situation suited Schedoni’s views, was taken for him.

Schedoni, who had good intelligence of all di Bruno’s movements, acquainted Spalatro, from time to time, with his exact situation; and it was after di Bruno, on his return, had crossed the Adriatic, from Ragusi to Manfredonia, and was entering upon the woods of the Garganus, that Spalatro, with his comrade, overtook him. They fired at the Count and his attendants, who were only a valet, and a guide of the country; and, concealed among the thickets, they securely repeated the attack. The shot did not immediately succeed, and the Count, looking round to discover his enemy, prepared to defend himself, but the firing was so rapidly sustained, that, at length, both di Bruno and his servant fell, covered with wounds. The guide fled.

The unfortunate travellers were buried by their assassins on the spot; but, whether the suspicion which attends upon the consciousness of guilt, prompted Spalatro to guard against every possibility of being betrayed by the accomplice of his crime, or whatever was the motive, he returned to the forest alone; and, shrouded by night, removed the bodies to a pit, which he had prepared under the flooring of the house where he lived; thus displacing all proof, should his accomplice hereafter point out to justice the spot in which he had assisted to deposit the mangled remains of di Bruno.

Schedoni contrived a plausible history of the shipwreck of his brother upon the Adriatic, and of the loss of the whole crew; and, as no persons but

the assassins were acquainted with the real cause of his death, the guide, who had fled, and the people at the only town he had passed through, since he landed, being ignorant even of the name of di Bruno, there was not any circumstance to contradict the falshood. It was universally credited, and even the widow of the Count had, perhaps, never doubted its truth; or if, after her compelled marriage with Schedoni, his conduct did awaken a suspicion, it was too vague to produce any serious consequence.

During the reading of Spalatro's confession, and particularly at the conclusion of it, the surprize and dismay of Schedoni were too powerful for concealment; and it was not the least considerable part of his wonder, that Spalatro should have come to Rome for the purpose of making these depositions; but further consideration gave him a conjecture of the truth.

The account, which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the priest, was, that, having lately understood Schedoni to be resident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of relieving his conscience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a disclosure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The design of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty Confessor; a design, from which the latter believed he had protected himself, as well as from every other evil consequence, when he misled his late accomplice, respecting his place of residence; little foreseeing that the very artifice, which should send this man in search of him to Rome, instead of Naples, would be the means of bringing his crimes before the public.

Spalatro had followed the steps of Schedoni as far as the town at which he slept, on the first night of his journey; and, having there passed him, had reached the villa di Cambrusca, when, perceiving the Confessor approaching, he had taken shelter from observation, within the ruin. The motive, which before made him shrink from notice, had contributed, and still did so, to a suspicion that he aimed at the life of Schedoni, who, in wounding him, believed he had saved himself from an assassin. The wounds, however, of Spalatro did not so much disable him, but that he proceeded towards Rome from the town whence the parting road had conducted his master towards Naples.

The fatigue of a long journey, performed chiefly on foot, in Spalatro's wounded condition, occasioned a fever, that terminated together his journey and his life; and in his last hours he had unburdened his

conscience by a full confession of his guilt. The priest, who, on this occasion, had been sent for, alarmed by the importance of the confession, since it implicated a living person, called in a friend as witness to the depositions. This witness was father Nicola, the former intimate of Schedoni, and who was of a character to rejoice in any discovery, which might punish a man from whose repeated promises he had received only severe disappointments.

Schedoni now perceived that all his designs against Spalatro had failed, and he had meditated more than have yet been fully disclosed. It may be remembered, that on parting with the peasant, his conductor, the Confessor, gave him a stiletto to defend him, as he said, from the attack of Spalatro, in case of encountering him on the road. The point of this instrument was tipped with poison; so that a scratch from it was sufficient to inflict death. Schedoni had for many years secretly carried about him such an envenomed instrument, for reasons known only to himself. He had hoped, that, should the peasant meet Spalatro, and be provoked to defend himself, this stiletto would terminate the life of his accomplice, and relieve him from all probability of discovery, since the other assassin, whom he employed, had been dead several years. The expedient failed in every respect; the peasant did not even see Spalatro; and, before he reached his home, he luckily lost the fatal stiletto, which, as he had discovered himself to be acquainted with some circumstances connected with the crimes of Schedoni, the Confessor would have wished him to keep, from the chance, that he might some time injure himself in using it. The poniard, as he had no proper means of fastening it to his dress, had fallen, and was carried away by the torrent he was crossing at that moment.

But, if Schedoni had been shocked by the confession of the assassin, his dismay was considerably greater, when a new witness was brought forward, and he perceived an ancient domestic of his house. This man identified Schedoni for Ferando Count di Bruno, with whom he had lived as a servant after the death of the Count his brother. And not only did he bear testimony to the person of Schedoni, but to the death of the Countess, his wife. Giovanni declared himself to be one of the domestics who had assisted in conveying her to her apartment, after she had been struck by the poniard of Schedoni, and who had afterwards attended her funeral in

the church of the Santa del Miracoli, a convent near the late residence of di Bruno. He further affirmed, that the physicians had reported her death to be in consequence of the wound she had received, and he bore witness to the flight of his master, previous to the death of the Countess, and immediately upon the assassination, and that he had never publicly appeared upon his estate since that period.

An inquisitor asked, whether any measures had been taken by the relations of the deceased lady, toward a prosecution of the Count.

The witness replied, that a long search had been made for the Count, for such a purpose, but that he had wholly eluded discovery, and that, of course, no further step had been taken in the affair. This reply appeared to occasion dissatisfaction: the tribunal was silent, and seemed to hesitate; the vicar-general then addressed the witness.

“How can you be certain that the person now before you, calling himself father Schedoni, is the Count di Bruno, your former master, if you have never seen him during the long interval of years you mention?”

Giovanni; without hesitation, answered, that, though years had worn the features of the Count, he recollected them the moment he beheld him; and not the Count only, but the person of the penitentiary Ansaldo, whom he had seen a frequent visitor at the house of di Bruno, though his appearance, also, was considerably changed by time, and by the ecclesiastical habit which he now wore.

The vicar-general seemed still to doubt the evidence of this man, till Ansaldo himself, on being called upon, remembered him to have been a servant of the Count, though he could not identify the Count himself.

The grand-inquisitor remarked, that it was extraordinary he should recollect the face of the servant, yet forget that of the master, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy. To this Ansaldo replied, that the stronger passions of Schedoni, together with his particular habits of life, might reasonably be supposed to have wrought a greater change upon the features of the Count than the character and circumstances of Giovanni’s could have effected on his.

Schedoni, not without reason, was appalled, on the appearance of this servant, whose further testimony gave such clearness and force to some other parts of the evidence, that the tribunal pronounced sentence upon Schedoni, as the murderer of the Count his brother; and as this, the first

charge, was sufficient for his condemnation to death, they did not proceed upon the second, that which related to his wife.

The emotion betrayed by Schedoni, on the appearance of the last witness, and during the delivery of the evidence, disappeared when his fate became certain; and when the dreadful sentence of the law was pronounced, it made no visible impression on his mind. From that moment, his firmness or his hardihood never forsook him.

Vivaldi, who witnessed this condemnation, appeared infinitely more affected by it than himself, and, though in revealing the circumstance of father Nicola's summons, which had eventually led to the discovery of Schedoni's crimes, he had not been left a choice in his conduct, he felt, at this moment, as miserable as if he had actually borne witness against the life of a fellow being: what, then, would have been his feelings, had he been told that this Schedoni, thus condemned, was the father of Ellena di Rosalba! But, whatever these might be, he was soon condemned to experience them. One of the most powerful of Schedoni's passions appeared even in this last scene; and as, in quitting the tribunal, he passed near Vivaldi, he uttered these few words— "In me you have murdered the father of Ellena di Rosalba!"

Not with any hope that the intercession of Vivaldi, himself also a prisoner, could in the least mitigate a sentence pronounced by the Inquisition, did he say this, but for the purpose of revenging himself for the evil, which Vivaldi's evidence had contributed to produce, and inflicting the exquisite misery such information must give. The attempt succeeded too well.

At first, indeed, Vivaldi judged this to be only the desperate assertion of a man, who believed his last chance of escaping the rigour of the law to rest with him; and, at the mention of Ellena, forgetting every precaution, he loudly demanded to know her situation. Schedoni, throwing upon him an horrible smile of triumph and derision, was passing forward without replying, but Vivaldi, unable to support this state of uncertainty, asked permission of the tribunal to converse, for a few moments, with the prisoner; and request which was granted with extreme reluctance, and only on condition that the conversation should be public.

To Vivaldi's questions, as to the situation of Ellena, Schedoni only replied, that she was his daughter, and the solemnity, which accompanied

these repeated assertions, though it failed to convince Vivaldi of this truth, occasioned him agonizing doubt and apprehension: but when the Confessor, perceiving the policy of disclosing her place of residence to Vivaldi, softened from his desire of vengeance to secure the interest of his family, and named the Santa della Piéta as her present asylum, the joy of such intelligence overcame, for a time, every other consideration.

To this dialogue, however, the officials put a speedy conclusion; Schedoni was led back to his cell, and Vivaldi was soon after ordered to his former close confinement.

But Paulo became again outrageous, when he was about to be separated from his master, till the latter, having petitioned the tribunal, that his servant might accompany him to his prison, and received an absolute refusal, endeavoured to calm the violence of his despair. He fell at his master's feet, and shed tears, but he uttered no further complaints. When he rose, he turned his eyes in silence upon Vivaldi, and they seemed to say, "Dear master! I shall never see you more!" and with this sad expression, he continued to gaze on him till he had left the hall.

Vivaldi, notwithstanding the various subjects of his distress, could not bear to meet the piteous looks of this poor man, and he withdrew his eyes; yet, at every other step he took, they constantly returned to his faithful servant, till the doors solded him from sight.

When he had quitted the hall, Vivaldi pleaded, however hopelessly, to the officials, in favour of Paulo, entreating that they would speak to the persons, who kept guard over him, and prevail with them to shew him every allowable indulgence.

"No indulgence can be allowed him," replied one of the men, "except bread and water, and the liberty of walking in his cell."

"No other!" said Vivaldi.

"None," repeated the official. "This prisoner has been near getting one of his guards into a scrape already, for, somehow or other, he so talked him over, and won upon him, (for he is but a young one here) that the man let him have a light, and a pen and ink; but, luckily, it was found out, before any harm was done."

"And what became of this honest fellow?" inquired Vivaldi.

"Honest! he was none so honest, either, Signor, if he could not mind his duty."

“Was he punished, then?”

“No, Signor,” replied the man, pausing, and looking back upon the long avenue they were passing, to inquire whether he was observed to hold this conversation with a prisoner: “no, Signor, he was a younker, so they let him off for once, and sent him to guard a man, who was not so sull of his coaxing ways.”

“Paulo made him merry, perhaps?” asked Vivaldi. “What were the coaxing ways you spoke of?”

“Merry, Signor! no! he made him cry, and that was as bad.”

“Indeed!” said Vivaldi. “The man must have been here, then, a very short time.”

“Not more than a month, or so, Signor.”

“But the coaxing ways you talked of,” repeated Vivaldi, “what were they? — a ducat, or so?”

“A ducat!” exclaimed the man, “no! not a paolo!”

“Are you sure of that?” cried Vivaldi, shrewdly.

“Aye, sure enough, Signor. This fellow is not worth a ducat in the world!”

“But his master is, friend,” observed Vivaldi, in a very low voice, while he put some money into his hand.

The officer made no answer, but concealed the money, and nothing further was said.

Vivaldi had given this as a bribe, to procure some kindness for his servant, not from any consideration of himself, for his own critical situation had ceased at this time to be a subject of anxiety with him. His mind was at present strangely agitated between emotions the most opposite in their nature, the joy which a discovery of Ellena’s safety inspired, and the horrible suspicion that Schedoni’s assurances of relationship occasioned. That his Ellena was the daughter of a murderer, that the father of Ellena should be brought to ignominious death, and that he himself, however unintentionally, should have assisted to this event, were considerations almost too horrible to be sustained! Vivaldi sought refuge from them in various conjectures as to the motive, which might have induced Schedoni to assert a falshood in this instance; but that of revenge alone appeared plausible; and even this surmise was weakened, when he considered that the Confessor had assured him of Ellena’s safety,

an assurance which, as Vivaldi did not detect the selfish policy connected with it, he believed Schedoni would not have given, had his general intent towards him been malicious. But it was possible, that this very information, on which all his comfort reposed, might be false, and had been given only for the purpose of inflicting the anguish a discovery of the truth must lead to! With an anxiety so intense, as almost to overcome his faculty of judging, he examined every minute probability relative to this point, and concluded with believing that Schedoni had, in this last instance, at least, spoken honestly.

Whether he had done so in his first assertion was a question, which had raised in Vivaldi’s mind a tempest of conjecture and of horror; for, while the subject of it was too astonishing to be fully believed, it was, also, too dreadful, not to be apprehended even as a possibility.

Chapter 2 9

O holy nun! why bend the mournful head?
Why fall those tears from lids uplift in pray’r?
Why o’er thy pale cheek steals the feeble blush,
Then fades, and leaves it wan as the lily
On which a moonbeam falls?

While these events were passing in the prisons of the Inquisition at Rome, Ellena, in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Pity, remained ignorant of Schedoni’s arrest, and of Vivaldi’s situation. She understood that the Confessor was preparing to acknowledge her for his daughter, and believed that she comprehended also the motive for his absence; but, though he had forbidden her to expect a visit from him till his arrangement should be completed, he had promised to write in the mean time, and inform her of all the present circumstances of Vivaldi; his unexpected silence had excited, therefore, apprehensions as various, though not so terrible, as those which Vivaldi had suffered for her; nor did the silence of Vivaldi himself appear less extraordinary.

“His confinement must be severe indeed,” said the afflicted Ellena, “since he cannot relieve my anxiety by a single line of intelligence. Or, perhaps, harassed by unceasing opposition, he has submitted to the command of his family, and has consented to forget me. Ah! why did I leave the opportunity for that command to his family; why did I not enforce it myself!”

Yet, while she uttered this self-reproach, the tears she shed contradicted the pride which had suggested it; and a conviction lurking in her heart that Vivaldi could not so resign her, soon dissipated those tears. But other conjectures recalled them; it was possible that he was ill — that he was dead!

In such vague and gloomy surmise her days passed away; employment could no longer withdraw her from herself, nor music, even for a moment, charm away the sense of sorrow; yet she regularly partook of the various occupations of the nuns; and was so far from permitting herself to indulge

in any useless expression of anxiety, that she had never once disclosed the sacred subject of it; so that, though she could not assume an air of cheerfulness, she never appeared otherwise than tranquil. Her most soothing, yet perhaps most melancholy hour, was when about sun-set she could withdraw unnoticed, to the terrace among the rocks, that overlooked the convent, and formed a part of its domain. There, alone and relieved from all the ceremonial restraints of the society, her very thoughts seemed more at liberty. As, from beneath the light foliage of the accacias, or the more majestic shade of the plane-trees that waved their branches over the many-coloured cliffs of this terrace, Ellena looked down upon the magnificent scenery of the bay, it brought back to memory, in sad yet pleasing detail, the many happy days she had passed on those blue waters, or on the shores, in the society of Vivaldi and her departed relative Bianchi; and every point of the prospect marked by such remembrance, which the veiling distance stole, was rescued by imagination, and pictured by affection in tints more animated than those of brightest nature.

One evening Ellena had lingered on the terrace later than usual. She had watched the rays retiring from the highest points of the horizon, and the fading imagery of the lower scene, till, the sun having sunk into the waves, all colouring was withdrawn, except an empurpling and reposing hue, which overspread the waters and the heavens, and blended in soft confusion every feature of the landscape The roofs and slender spires of the Santa della Pieta, with a single tower of the church rising loftily over every other part of the buildings that composed the convent, were fading fast from the eye; but the solemn tint that invested them accorded so well with their style, that Ellena was unwilling to relinquish this interesting object. Suddenly she perceived through the dubious light an unusual number of moving figures in the court of the great cloister, and listening, she fancied she could distinguish the murmuring of many voices. The white drapery of the nuns rendered them conspicuous as they moved, but it was impossible to ascertain who were the individuals engaged in this bustle. Presently the assemblage dispersed; and Ellena, curious to understand the occasion of what she had observed, prepared to descend to the convent.

She had left the terrace, and was about to enter a long avenue of chesnuts that extended to a part of the convent, communicating

immediately with the great court, when she heard approaching steps, and, on turning into the walk, perceived several persons advancing in the shady distance. Among the voices, as they drew nearer, she distinguished one whose interesting tone engaged all her attention, and began also to awaken memory. She listened, wondered, doubted, hoped, and feared! It spoke again! Ellena thought she could not be deceived in those tender accents, so full of intelligence, so expressive of sensibility and refinement. She proceeded with quicker steps, yet faltered as she drew near the group, and paused to discern whether among them was any figure that might accord with the voice and justify her hopes.

The voice spoke again; it pronounced her name; pronounced it with the tremblings of tenderness and impatience, and Ellena scarcely dared to trust her senses, when she beheld Olivia, the nun of San Stefano, in the cloisters of the Della Pieta!

Ellena could find no words to express her joy and surprise on beholding her preserver in safety, and in these quiet groves; but Olivia repaid all the affectionate caresses of her young friend, and, while she promised to explain the circumstance that had led to her present appearance here, she, in her turn, made numerous inquiries relative to Ellena’s adventures after she had quitted San Stefano. They were now, however, surrounded by too many auditors to allow of unreserved conversation; Ellena, therefore, led the nun to her apartment, and Olivia then explained her reasons for having left the convent of San Stefano, which were indeed sufficient to justify, even with the most rigid devotee, her conduct as to the change. This unfortunate recluse, it appeared, persecuted by the suspicions of the abbess, who understood that she had assisted in the liberation of Ellena, had petitioned the bishop of her diocese for leave to remove to the Santa della Pieta. The abbess had not proof to proceed formally against her, as an accomplice in the escape of a novice, for though Jeronimo could have supplied the requisite evidence, he was too deeply implicated in this adventure to do so without betraying his own conduct. From his having withheld such proof, it appears, however, that accident rather than design had occasioned his failure on the evening of Ellena’s departure from the monastery. But, though the abbess had not testimony enough for legal punishment, she was acquainted with circumstances sufficient to justify

suspicion, and had both the inclination and the power to render Olivia very miserable.

In her choice of the Santa della Pieta, the nun was influenced by many considerations, some of which were the consequence of conversations she had held with Ellena respecting the state of that society. Her design she had been unable to disclose to her friend, lest, by a discovery of such correspondence, the abbess of San Stefano should obtain grounds on which to proceed against her. Even in her appeal to the bishop the utmost caution and secrecy had been necessary, till the order for her removal, procured not without considerable delay and difficulty, arrived, and when it came, the jealous anger of the superior rendered an immediate departure necessary.

Olivia, during many years, had been unhappy in her local circumstances, but it is probable she would have concluded her days within the walls of San Stefano, had not the aggravated oppression of the abbess aroused her courage and activity, and dissipated the despondency, with which severe misfortune had obscured her views.

Ellena was particular in her inquiries whether any person of the monastery had suffered for the assistance they had given her; but learned that not one, except Olivia, had been suspected of befriending her; and then understood, that the venerable friar, who had dared to unfasten the gate which restored her with Vivaldi to liberty, had not been involved by his kindness.

“It is an embarrassing and rather an unusual circumstance,” concluded Olivia, “to change one’s convent; but you perceive the strong reasons which determined me upon a removal. I was, however, perhaps, the more impatient of severe treatment, since you, my sister, had described to me the society of Our Lady of Pity, and since I believed it possible that you might form a part of it. When, on my arrival here, I learned that my wishes had not deceived me on this point, I was impatient to see you once more, and as soon as the ceremonies attending an introduction to the superior were over, I requested to be conducted to you, and was in search of you when we met in the avenue. It is unnecessary for me to insist upon the satisfaction, which this meeting gives me; but you may not, perhaps, understand how much the manners of our lady abbess, and of the sisterhood in general, as far as a first interview will allow me to judge of

them, have reanimated me. The gloom, which has long hung over my prospects, seems now to open, and a distant gleam promises to light up the evening of my stormy day."

Olivia paused and appeared to recollect herself; this was the first time she had made so direct a reference to her own misfortunes; and, while Ellena silently remarked it, and observed the dejection, which was already stealing upon the expressive countenance of the nun, she wished, yet feared to lead her back towards the subject of them.

Endeavouring to dismiss some painful remembrance, and assuming a smile of languid gaiety, Olivia said, "Now that I have related the history of my removal; and sufficiently indulged my egotism, will you let me hear what adventures have be fallen you, my young friend, since the melancholy adieu you gave me in the gardens of San Stefano."

This was a task, to which Ellena's spirits, though revived by the presence of Olivia, were still unequal. Over the scenes of her past distress Time had not yet drawn his shadowing veil; the colours were all too fresh and garish for the meek dejection of her eye, and the subject was too intimately connected with that of her present anxiety, to be reviewed without very painful feelings. She therefore requested Olivia to spare her from a detail of particulars, which she could not recollect but with extreme reluctance; and, scrupulously observing the injunction of Schedoni, she merely mentioned her separation from Vivaldi upon the banks of the Celano, and that a variety of distressing circumstances had intervened before she could regain the sanctuary of the della Pieta.

Olivia understood too well the kind of feelings, from which Ellena was desirous of escaping, willingly to subject her to a renewal of them; and felt too much generous compassion for her sufferings not to endeavour to soothe the sense of them by an exertion of those delicate and nameless arts which, while they mock detection, fascinate the weary spirit as by a charm of magic!

The friends continued in conversation, till a chime from a chapel of the convent summoned them to the last vespers; and, when the service had concluded, they separated for the night.

With the society of the Santa della Pieta, Olivia had thus found an asylum such as till lately she had never dared to hope for; but, though she frequently expressed her sense of this blessing, it was seldom without

tears; and Ellena observed, with some surprise and more disappointment, within a very few days after her arrival, a cloud of melancholy spreading again over her mind.

But a nearer interest soon withdrew Ellena's attention from Olivia to fix it upon Vivaldi; and, when she saw her infirm old servant, Beatrice, enter a chamber of the convent, she anticipated that the knowledge of some extraordinary, and probably unhappy, event had brought her. She knew too well the circumspection of Schedoni to believe that Beatrice came commissioned from him; and as the uncertain situation of Vivaldi was so constantly the subject of her anxiety, she immediately concluded that her servant came to announce some evil relative to him. — His indisposition, perhaps his actual confinement in the Inquisition, which lately she had sometimes been inclined to think might not have been a mere menace to Vivaldi, though it had proved to be no more to herself; — or possibly she came to tell of his death — his death in those prisons! This last was a possibility that almost incapacitated her for inquiring what was the errand of Beatrice.

The old servant, trembling and wan, either from the fatigue of her walk, or from a consciousness of disastrous intelligence, seated herself without speaking, and some moments elapsed before she could be prevailed with to answer the repeated inquiries of Ellena.

"O Signora!" said she, at length, "you do not know what it is to walk up hill such a long way, at my age! Well! heaven protect you, I hope you never will!"

"I perceive you bring ill news," said Ellena; "I am prepared for it, and you need not fear to tell me all you know."

"Holy San Marco!" exclaimed Beatrice, "if death be ill news, you have guessed right, Signora, for I do bring news of that, it is certain. How came you, Lady, to know my errand? They have been beforehand with me, I see, though I have not walked so fast up hill this many a day, as I have now, to tell you what has happened."

She stopped on observing the changing countenance of Ellena, who tremulously called upon her to explain what had happened — who was dead; and entreated her to relate the particulars as speedily as possible.

"You said you was prepared, Signora," said Beatrice, "but your looks tell another tale." —

“What is the event you would disclose?” said Ellena, almost breathless. “When did it happen? — be brief,”

“I cannot tell exactly when it happened, Signora, but it was an own servant of the Marchese’s that I had it from.”

“The Marchese’s?” interrupted Ellena in a faltering voice.

“Aye, Lady; you will say that is pretty good authority.

“Death! and in the Marchese’s family!” exclaimed Ellena.

“Yes, Signora, I had it from his own servant. He was passing by the garden-gate just as I happened to be speaking to the maccaroni-man. — But you are ill, Lady!” —

“I am very well, if you will but proceed,” replied Ellena, faintly, while her eyes were fixed upon Beatrice, as if they only had power to enforce her meaning.

“‘Well, dame,’ he says to me, ‘I have not seen you of a long time.’ ‘No,’ says I, ‘that is a great grievance truly! for old women now-a-days are not much thought of; out of sight out of mind with them, now-a-days!” —

“I beseech you to the purpose,” interrupted Ellena. “Whose death did he announce?” She had not courage to pronounce Vivaldi’s name.

“You shall hear, Signora. I saw he looked in a sort of a bustle, so I asked him how all did at the Palazzo: so he answers, ‘Bad enough, Signora Beatrice, have not you heard?’ ‘Heard,’ says I; ‘what should I have heard?’ ‘Why,’ says he, ‘of what has just happened in our family.”

“O heavens!” exclaimed Ellena, “he is dead! Vivaldi is dead!”

“You shall hear, Signora,” continued Beatrice.

“Be brief!” said Ellena, “answer me simply yes or no.”

“I cannot, till I come to the right place, Signora; if you will but have a little patience, you shall hear all. But if you fluster me so, you will put me quite out.”

“Grant me patience!” said Ellena, endeavouring to calm her spirits.

“With that, Signora, I asked him to walk in and rest himself, and tell me all about it. He answered, he was in a great hurry, and could not stay a moment, and a great deal of that sort; but I, knowing that whatever happened in that family, Signora, was something to you, would not let him go off so easily; and so, when I asked him to refresh himself with a glass of lemon-ice, he forgot all his business in a minute, and we had a long chat.”

And Beatrice might now have continued her circumlocution, perhaps as long as she had pleased, for Ellena had lost all power to urge inquiry, and was scarcely sensible of what was said. She neither spoke, nor shed a tear; the one image that possessed her fancy, the image of Vivaldi dead seemed to hold all her faculties, as by a spell.

“So when I asked him,” added Beatrice, “again what had happened, he was ready enough to tell all about it. ‘It is near a month ago,’ said he, ‘since she was first taken; the Marchesa had been” —

“The Marchesa!” repeated Ellena, with whom that one word had dissolved the spell of terror— “the Marchesa!”

“Yes Signora, to be sure. Who else did I say it was!”

“Go on, Beatrice; the Marchesa?” —

“What makes you look so glad all of a sudden, Signora? I thought just now you was very sorry about it. What! I warrant you was thinking about my young lord, Vivaldi.”

“Proceed,” said Ellena.

“Well!” added Beatrice, ‘It was about a month ago that the Marchesa was first taken,’ continued the varlet. ‘She had seemed poorly a long time, but it was from a conversazione at the di Voglio palazzo, that she came home so ill. It is supposed she had been long in a bad state of health, but nobody thought her so near her end, till the doctors were called together; and then matters looked very bad indeed. They found out that she had been dying, or as good, for many years, though nobody else had suspected it, and the Marchesa’s own physician was blamed for not finding it out before. But he,’ added the rogue, ‘had a regard for my lady. He was very obstinate, too, for he kept saying almost to the last, there was no danger, when every body else saw how it was going. The other doctors soon made their words good, and my lady died.”

“And her son” — said Ellena, “was he with the Marchesa when she expired?”

“What, Signor Vivaldi, lady? No, the Signor was not there.”

“That is very extraordinary!” observed Ellena with emotion. “Did the servant mention him?”

“Yes, Signora; he said what a sad thing it was that he should be out of the way at that time, and nobody know where!”

“Are his family then ignorant where he is?” asked Ellena, with increased emotion.

“To be sure they are, lady, and have been for these many weeks. They have heard nothing at all of the Signor, or one Paulo Mendrico, his servant, though the Marchesa’s people have been riding post after them from one end of the kingdom to the other all the time!”

Shocked with the conviction of a circumstance, which, till lately she scarcely believed was possible, the imprisonment of Vivaldi in the Inquisition, Ellena lost for a while all power of further inquiry; but Beatrice proceeded.

“The Lady Marchesa seemed to lay something much to heart, as the man told me, and often inquired for Signor Vincentio.”

“The Marchesa you are sure then was ignorant where he was?” said Ellena, with now astonishment and perplexity as to the person who, after betraying him into the Inquisition, could yet have suffered her, though arrested at the same time, to escape.

“Yes, Signora, for she wanted sadly to see him. And when she was dying, she sent for her Confessor, one father Schedoni, I think they call him, and” —

“What of him?” said Ellena incautiously.

“Nothing, Signora, for he could not be found.”

“Not be found!” repeated Ellena.

“No, Signora, not just then; he was Confessor, I warrant, to other people beside the Marchesa, and I dare say they had sins enough to confess, so he could not get away in a hurry.”

Ellena recollected herself sufficiently to ask no further of Schedoni; and, when she considered the probable cause of Vivaldi’s arrest, she was again consoled by a belief that he had not fallen into the power of real officials, since the comrades of the men who had arrested him, had proved themselves otherwise; and she thought it highly probable, that, while undiscovered by his family, he had been, and was still engaged in searching for the place of her confinement.

“But I was saying,” proceeded Beatrice, “what a bustle there was when my lady, the Marchesa was dying. As this father Schedoni was not to be found, another Confessor was sent for, and shut up with her for a long while indeed! And then my Lord Marchese was called in, and there

seemed to be a deal going forward, for my Lord was heard every now and then by the attendants in the anti-chamber, talking loud, and sometimes my Lady Marchesa's voice was heard too, though she was so ill! At last all was silent, and after some time my Lord came out of the room, and he seemed very much flustered, they say, that is, very angry and yet very sorrowful. But the Confessor remained with my Lady for a long while after; and, when he departed, my Lady appeared more unhappy than ever. She lived all that night and part of the next day, and something seemed to lie very heavy at her heart, for she sometimes wept, but oftener groaned, and would look so, that it was piteous to see her. She frequently asked for the Marchese, and when he came, the attendants were sent away, and they held long conferences by themselves. The Confessor also was sent for again, just at the last, and they were all shut up together. After this, my Lady appeared more easy in her mind, and not long after she died."

Ellena, who had attended closely to this little narrative, was prevented for the present from asking the few questions which it had suggested, by the entrance of Olivia, who, on perceiving a stranger, was retiring, but Ellena, not considering these inquiries as important, prevailed with the nun to take a chair at the embroidery frame she had lately quitted.

After conversing for a few moments with Olivia, she returned to a consideration of her own interests. The absence of Schedoni still appeared to her as something more than accidental; and, though she could not urge any inquiry with Beatrice, concerning the monk of the Spirito Santo, she ventured to ask whether she had lately seen the stranger, who had restored her to Altieri, for Beatrice knew him only in the character of Ellena's deliverer.

"No, Signora," replied Beatrice rather sharply, "I have never seen his face since he attended you to the villa, though for that matter, I did not see much of it there; and then how he contrived to let himself out of the house that night without my seeing him, I cannot divine, though I have thought of it, often enough since. I am sure he need not to have been ashamed to have shewn his face to me, for I should only have blessed him for bringing you safe home again!"

Ellena was somewhat surprized to find that Beatrice had noticed a circumstance apparently so trivial, and replied, that she had herself opened the door for her protector.

While Beatrice spoke, Olivia raising her eyes from the embroidery, had fixed them upon the old servant, who respectfully withdrew her's; but, when the nun was again engaged on her work, she resumed her observation. Ellena fancied she perceived something extraordinary in this mutual examination, although the curiosity of strangers towards each other might have accounted for it.

Beatrice then received directions from Ellena as to some drawings, which she wished to have sent to the convent, and when the servant spoke in reply, Olivia again raised her eyes, and fixed them on her face with intense curiosity.

"I certainly ought to know that voice," said the nun with great emotion, "though I dare not judge from your features. Is it, — can it be possible! — is it Beatrice Olca, to whom I speak? So many years have passed" —

Beatrice with equal surprize answered, "It is, Signora; you are right in my name. But, lady, who are you that know me?"

While she earnestly regarded Olivia, there was an expression of dismay in her look, which increased Ellena's perplexity. The nun's complexion varied every instant, and her words failed when she attempted to speak. Beatrice meanwhile exclaimed, "My eyes deceive me! yet there is a strange likeness. Santa della Pieta! how it has fluttered me! my heart beats still — you are so like her, lady, yet you are very different too."

Olivia, whose regards were now entirely fixed upon Ellena, said in a voice that was scarcely articulate, while her whole frame seemed sinking beneath some irresistible feeling, "Tell me, Beatrice, I conjure you, quickly say, who is this?" — She pointed to Ellena, and the sentence died on her lips.

Beatrice, wholly occupied by interests of her own, gave no reply, but exclaimed, "It is in truth the Lady Olivia! It is herself! In the name of all that is sacred, how came you here? O! how glad you must have been to find one another out!" She looked, still gasping with astonishment, at Olivia, while Ellena, unheard, repeatedly inquired the meaning of her words, and in the next moment found herself pressed to the bosom of the nun, who seemed better to have understood them, and who weeping, trembling, and almost fainting, held her there in silence.

Ellena, after some moments had thus passed, requested an explanation of what she witnessed, and Beatrice at the same time demanded the cause

of all this emotion. “For can it be that you did not know one another?” she added.

“What new discovery is this?” said Ellena, fearfully to the nun. “It is but lately that I have found my father! O tell me by what tender name I am to call you?”

“Your father!” exclaimed Olivia.

“Your father, lady!” echoed Beatrice.

Ellena, betrayed by strong emotion into this premature mention of Schedoni, was embarrassed and remained silent.

“No, my child!” said Olivia, softening from amazement into tones of ineffable sorrow, while she again pressed Ellena to her heart— “No! — thy father is in the grave!”

Ellena no longer returned her caresses; surprize and doubt suspended every tender emotion; she gazed upon Olivia with an intenseness that partook of wildness. At length she said slowly— “It is my mother, then, whom I see! When will these discoveries end!”

“It is your mother!” replied Olivia solemnly, “a mother’s blessing rests with you!”

The nun endeavoured to soothe the agitated spirits of Ellena, though she was herself nearly overwhelmed by the various and acute feelings this disclosure occasioned: For a considerable time they were unable to speak but in short sentences of affectionate exclamation, but joy was evidently a more predominant feeling with the parent than with the child. When, however, Ellena could weep, she became more tranquil, and by degrees was sensible of a degree of happiness, such as she had perhaps never experienced.

Meanwhile Beatrice seemed lost in amazement mingled with fear. She expressed no pleasure, notwithstanding the the joy she witnessed, but was uniformly grave and observant.

Olivia, when she recovered some degree of composure, inquired for her sister Bianchi. The silence and sudden dejection of Ellena indicated the truth. On this mention of her late mistress, Beatrice recovered the use of speech.

“Alas! lady,” said the old servant, “she is now where I believed you were! and I should as soon have expected to see my dear mistress here as yourself!”

Olivia, though affected by this intelligence, did not feel it with the acuteness she would have done probably at any other moment. After she had indulged her fears, she added, that from the unusual silence of Bianchi, she had suspected the truth, and particularly since not any answer had been returned to the letter she had sent to Altieri upon her arrival at the Santa della Pieta.

“Alas!” said Beatrice, “I wonder much my lady abbess failed to tell you the sad news, for she knew it too well! — My dear mistress is buried in the church here! as for the letter, I have brought it with me for Signora Ellena to open.”

“The lady abbess is not informed of our relationship,” replied Olivia, “and I have particular reasons for wishing that at present she should remain ignorant of it. Even you, my Ellena, must appear only as my friend, till some inquiries have been made, which are essential to my peace.”

Olivia required an explanation of Ellena’s late extraordinary assertion respecting her father, but this was a request made with emotions very different from those which hope or joy inspire. Ellena, believing that the same circumstances which had deceived herself during so many years, as to his death, had also misled Olivia, was not surprized at the incredulity her mother had shewn, but she was considerably embarrassed how to answer her inquiries. It was now too late to observe the promise of secrecy extorted from her by Schedoni; the first moments of surprize had betrayed her; yet, while she trembled further to transgress his injunction, she perceived that a full explanation was now unavoidable. And, since Ellena considered, that as Schedoni could not have foreseen her present peculiar situation, his command had no reference to her mother, her seruples on this head disappeared. When, therefore, Beatrice had withdrawn, Ellena repeated her assertion, that her father still lived; which, though it increased the amazement of Olivia, did not vanquish her incredulity. Olivia’s tears flowed fast, while in contradiction to this assurance, she mentioned the year in which the Count de Bruno died, with some circumstances relative to his death; which, however, as Ellena understood that her mother had not witnessed it, she still believed had not happened. To confirm her late assertion, Ellena then related a few particulars of her second interview with Schedoni, and as some confirmation that he lived, offered to produce the portrait, which he had claimed as his own. Olivia, in

great agitation, requested to see the miniature, and Ellena left the apartment in search of it.

Every moment of her absence was to Olivia's expectation lengthened to an hour; she paced the room; listened for a footstep; endeavoured to tranquillize her spirits, and still Ellena did not return. Some strange mystery seemed to lurk in the narrative she had just heard, which she wished, yet dreaded to develope; and when, at length, Ellena appeared with the miniature, she took it in trembling eagerness, and having gazed upon it for an instant, her complexion faded and she fainted.

Ellena had now no doubt respecting the truth of Schedoni's declaration, and blamed herself for not having more gradually prepared her mother for the knowledge of a circumstance, which she believed had overwhelmed her with joy. The usual applications, however, soon restored Olivia, who, when she was again alone with her daughter, desired to behold once more the portrait. Ellena, attributing the strong emotion, with which she still regarded it, to surprize, and fear lest she was admitting a fallacious hope, endeavoured to comfort her by renewed assurances, that not only the Count di Bruno yet existed, but that he lived at this very time in Naples, and further, that he would probably be in her presence within the hour, "When I quitted the room for the miniature," added Ellena, "I dispatched a person with a note, requesting to see my father immediately, being impatient to realize the joy, which such a meeting between my long lost parents must occasion."

In this instance Ellena had certainly suffered her generous sympathy to overcome her discretion, for, though the contents of the note to Schedoni could not positively have betrayed him, had he even been in Naples at this time, her sending it to the Spirito Santo, instead of the place which he had appointed for his letters, might have led to a premature inquiry respecting herself.

While Ellena had acquainted Olivia that Schedoni would probably be with them soon, she watched eagerly for the joyful surprize she expected would appear on her countenance; how severe then was her disappointment when only terror and dismay were expressed there! and, when, in the next moment, her mother uttered exclamations of distress and even of despair!

“If he sees me,” said Olivia, “I am irrecoverably lost! O! unhappy Ellena! your precipitancy has destroyed me. The original of this portrait is not the Count di Bruno, my dear lord, nor your parent, but his brother, the cruel husband” — Olivia left the sentence unfinished, as if she was betraying more than was at present discreet; but Ellena, whom astonishment had kept silent, now entreated that she would explain her words, and the cause of her distress.

“I know not,” said Olivia, “by what means that portrait has been conveyed to you; but it is the resemblance of the Count Ferando di Bruno, the brother of my lord, and my” — second husband she should have said, but her lips refused to honour him with the title.

“She paused and was much affected, but presently added— “I cannot at present explain the subject more fully, for it is to me a very distressing one. Let me rather consider the means of avoiding an interview with di Bruno, and even of concealing, if possible, that I exist.”

Olivia was, however, soothed when she understood that Ellena had not named her in the note, but had merely desired to see the Confessor upon a very particular occasion.

While they were consulting upon the excuse it would be necessary to form for this imprudent summons, the messenger returned with the note unopened, and with information, that father Schedoni was abroad on a pilgrimage, which was the explanation the brothers of the Spirito Santo chose to give of his absence; judging it prudent, for the honour of their convent, to conceal his real situation.

Olivia, thus released from her fears, consented to explain some points of the subject so interesting to Ellena; but it was not till several days after this discovery, that she could sufficiently command her spirits to relate the whole of her narrative. The first part of it agreed perfectly with the account delivered in the confession to the penitentiary Ansaldo; that which follows was known only to herself, her sister Bianchi, a physician, and one faithful servant, who had been considerably entrusted with the conduct of the plan.

It may be recollected that Schedoni left his house immediately after the act, which was designed to be fatal to the Countess his wife, and that she was carried senseless to her chamber. The wound, as appears, was not mortal. But the atrocity of the intent determined her to seize the

opportunity thus offered by the absence of Schedoni, and her own peculiar circumstances, to release herself from his tyranny without having recourse to a court of justice, which would have covered with infamy the brother of her first husband. She withdrew, therefore, from his house for ever, and with the assistance of the three persons before-mentioned, retired to a remote part of Italy, and sought refuge in the convent of San Stefano, while at home the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral Bianchi remained for some time after the departure of Olivia, in her own residence near the Villa di Bruno, having taken under her immediate care the daughter of the Countess and of the first Count di Bruno, as well as an infant daughter of the second.

After some time had elapsed, Bianchi withdrew with her young charge, but not to the neighbourhood of San Stefano. The indulgence of a mother's tenderness was denied to Olivia, for Bianchi could could not reside near the convent without subjecting her to the hazard of a discovery, since Schedoni, though he now believed the report of her death, might be led to doubt it, by the conduct of Bianchi, whose steps would probably be observed by him. She chose a residence, therefore, at a distance from Olivia, though not yet at Altieri. At this period, Ellena was not two years old; the daughter of Schedoni was scarcely as many months, and she died before the year concluded. It was this his child, for whom the Confessor, who had too well concealed himself to permit Bianchi to acquaint him with her death, had mistaken Ellena, and to which mistake his own portrait, affirmed by Ellena to be that of her father, had contributed. This miniature she had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's decease, and, observing it inscribed with the title of Count di Bruno, she had worn it with a filial fondness ever since that period.

Bianchi, when she had acquainted Ellena with the secret of her birth, was withheld, both by prudence and humanity, from intrusting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumstance she appeared so anxious to disclose on her deathbed, when the suddenness of her disorder had deprived her of the power. The abruptness of that event had thus contributed to keep the mother and daughter unknown to each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, to which concealment the name of Rosalba, given to Ellena from her infancy by Bianchi, for the purpose of protecting her from discovery by her uncle, had assisted.

Beatrice, who was not the domestic intrusted with the escape of Olivia, had believed the report of her death, and thus, though she knew Ellena to be the daughter of the Countess di Bruno, she could never have been a means of discovering them to each other, had it not happened that Olivia recognized this ancient servant of Bianchi, while Ellena was present.

When Bianchi came to reside in the neighbourhood of Naples, she was unsuspicious that Schedoni, who had never been heard of since the night of the assassination, inhabited there; and she so seldom left her house, that it is not surprizing she should never happen to meet him, at least consciously; for her veil, and the monk's cowl, might easily have concealed them from each other if they had met.

It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to disclose to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were solemnized; since, on the evening of their last conversation, she had declared, when her spirits were exhausted by the exertion she had made, that much remained for her to say, which weakness obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting. That she had not sooner intended to make a communication, which might have removed, in a considerable degree, the objection of the Vivaldi to a connection with Ellena, appears extraordinary, till other circumstances of her family, than that of its nobility, are considered. Her present indigence, and yet more, the guilt attached to an individual of the di Bruno, it was reasonable to suppose would operate as a full antidote to the allurement of rank, however jealous of birth the Vivaldi had proved themselves.

Ferando di Bruno had contrived, even in the short interval between the death of his brother and the supposed decease of his wife, again to embarrass his affairs, and soon after his flight, the income arising from what remained of his landed property had been seized upon by his creditors, whether lawfully or not, he was then in a situation which did not permit him to contest, and Ellena was thus left wholly dependent upon her aunt. The small fortune of Bianchi had been diminished by the assistance she afforded Olivia, for whose admittance into the convent of San Stefano it had been necessary to advance a considerable sum; and her original income was afterwards reduced by the purchase of the villa Altieri. This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, since she preferred the comforts and independence of a pleasant home, with industry, to the

indulgence of an indolence which must have confined her to an inferior residence; and was acquainted with the means of making this industry profitable without being dishonourable. She excelled in many elegant and ingenious arts, and the productions of her pencil and needle were privately disposed of to the nuns of the Santa della Pieta. When Ellena was of an age to assist her, she resigned much of the employment and the profit to her niece, whose genius having unfolded itself, the beauty of her designs and the elegance of her execution, both in drawings and embroidery, were so highly valued by the purchasers at the grate of the convent, that Bianchi committed to Ellena altogether the exercise of her art.

Olivia meanwhile had dedicated her life to devotion in the monastery of San Stefano, a choice which was willingly made while her mind was yet softened by grief for the death of her first lord, and wearied by the cruelty she had afterwards experienced. The first years of her retirement were passed in tranquillity, except when the remembrance of her child, whom she did not dare to see at the convent, awakened a parental pang. With Bianchi she, however, corresponded as regularly as opportunity would allow, and had at least the consolation of knowing, that the object most dear to her lived, till, within a short period of Ellena’s arrival at the very asylum chosen by her mother, her apprehensions were in some degree excited by the unusual silence of Bianchi.

When Olivia had first seen Ellena in the chapel of San Stefano, she was struck with a slight resemblance she bore to the late Count di Bruno, and had frequently afterwards examined her features with a most painful curiosity; but, circumstanced as she was, Olivia could not reasonably suspect the stranger to be her daughter. Once, however, a sense of this possibility so far overcame her judgment, as to prompt an inquiry for the sirname of Ellena; but the mention of Rosalba had checked all further conjecture. What would have been the feelings of the nun, had she been told when her generous compassion was assisting a stranger to escape from oppression that she was preserving her own child! It may be worthy of observation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cause, had thus led her unconsciously to the happiness of saving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconsciously urged him nearly to destroy his niece, and had always been preventing, by the means they prompted him to employ, the success of his constant aim.

Chapter 3 0

“Those hours, which lately smil’d, where are they now?
Pallid to thought and ghastly!”
Young.

The Marchesa di Vivaldi, of whose death Beatrice had given an imperfect account, struck with remorse of the crime she had meditated against Ellena, and with terror of the punishment due to it, had sent, when on her deathbed, for a Confessor, to whom she unburthened her conscience, and from whom she hoped to receive, in return; an alleviation of her despair. This Confessor was a man of good sense and humanity; and, when he fully understood the story of Vivaldi and Ellena di Rosalba, he declared, that her only hope of forgiveness, both for the crime she had meditated, and the undeserved sufferings she had occasioned, rested upon her willingness to make those now happy, whom she had formerly rendered miserable. Her conscience had already given her the same lesson; and, now that she was sinking to that grave which levels all distinctions, and had her just fear of retribution no longer opposed by her pride, she became as anxious to promote the marriage of Vivaldi with Ellena as she had ever been to prevent it. She sent, therefore, for the Marchese; and, having made an avowal of the arts she had practised against the peace and reputation of Ellena, without, however, confessing the full extent of her intended crimes, she made it her last request, that he would consent to the happiness of his son.

The Marchese, however, shocked as he was at this discovery of the duplicity and cruelty of his wife, had neither her terror of the future, or remorse for the past, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena; and he resisted all her importunity, till the anguish of her last hours overcame every consideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a solemn promise, in the presence of the Confessor, that he would no longer oppose the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, should the former persist in his attachment to her. This promise was sufficient for the Marchesa, and she died with some degree of resignation. It did not, however, appear probable,

that the Marchese would soon be called upon to fulfil the engagements, into which he had so unwillingly entered, every inquiry after Vivaldi having been hitherto ineffectual.

During the progress of this fruitless search for his son, and while the Marchese was almost lamenting him as dead, the inhabitants of the Vivaldi palace were, one night, aroused from sleep by a violent knocking at the great gate of the court. The noise was so loud and inceffant, that, before the porter could obey the summons, the Marchese, whose apartment looked upon the court, was alarmed, and sent an attendant from his anti-room, to inquire the occasion of it.

Presently a voice was heard from the first anti-chamber, exclaiming, “I must see my Lord Marchese directly; he will not be angry to be waked, when he knows all about it;” and, before the Marchese could order that no person, on whatever pretence, should be admitted, Paulo, haggard, ragged, and covered with dirt, was in the chamber. His wan and affrighted countenance, his disordered dress, and his very attitude, as on entering he half turned to look back upon the anti-rooms, like one, who, just escaped from bondage, listens to the fancied sounds of pursuit, were altogether so striking and terrific, that the Marchese, anticipating some dreadful news of Vivaldi, had scarcely power to inquire for him. Paulo, however, rendered questions unnecessary; for, without any circumlocution, or preface, he immediately informed the Marchese, that the Signor, his dear master, was in the prisons of the Inquisition, at Rome, if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time.”

“Yes, my Lord,” said Paulo, “I am just got out myself, for they would not let me be with the Signor, so it was of no use to stay there any longer. Yet it was a hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear master within those dismal walls; and nothing should have persuaded me to do so, but that I hoped, when your Lordship knew where the Signor was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be lost, my Lord, for when once a gentleman has got within the claws of those inquisitors, there is no knowing how soon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces. Shall I order horses for Rome, my Lord? I am ready to set off again directly.”

The suddenness of such intelligence, concerning an only son, might have agitated stronger nerves than those of the Marchese, and so much was

he shocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any answer to Paulo's repeated questions. When, however, he became sufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the situation of Vivaldi, he perceived the necessity of an immediate journey; but first it would be prudent to consult with some friends, whose connections at Rome might be a means of greatly faoilitating the important purpose, which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning. Yet he gave orders, that preparation should be made for his fetting out at a moment's notice; and, having listened to as full an account as Paulo could give of the past and present circumstances of Vivaldi, he dismissed him to repose for the remainder of the night.

Paulo, however, though much in want of rest, was in too great an agitation of spirits either to seek or to find it; and the fear he had indicated, on entering the Marchese's apartment, proceede from the hurry of his mind, rather than from any positive apprehension of new evil. For his liberty he was indebied to the young centinel, who had on a former occasion been removed from the door of his prison, but who, by means of the guard, to whom Vivaldi had given money, as he returned one night from the tribunal, had since been able to communicate with him. This man, of a nature too humane for his situation, was become wretched in it, and he determined mined to escape from his office before the expiration of the time for which he had been engaged. He thought that to be a guard over prisoners was nearly as miserable as being a prisoner himself. "I see no difference between them," said he, "except that the prisoner watches on one side of the door, and the centinel on the other."

With the resolution to release himself; he conferred with Paulo, whose good nature and feeling heart, among so many people of a contrary character, had won his confidence and affection, and he laid his plan of escape so well, that it was on the point of succeeding, when Paulo's obstinacy in attempting an impossibility had nearly counteracted the whole. It went to his heart, he said, to leave his master in prison, while he himself was to march off in safety, and he would run the risk of his neck, rather than have such a deed upon his head. He proposed, therefore, as Vivaldi's guards were of too ferocious a nature to be tampered with, to scale a wall of the court into which a grate of Vivaldi's dungeon looked.

But had this lofty wall been practicable, the grate was not; and the attempt had nearly cost Paulo not only his liberty, but his life.

When, at length, he had made his way through the perilous avenues of the prison, and was fairly beyond the walls, he could hardly be prevailed upon by his companion to leave them. For near an hour, he wandered under their shade, weeping and exclaiming, and calling up on his dear master, at the evident hazard of being retaken; and probably would have remained there much longer, had not the dawn of morning rendered his companion desperate. Just, however, as the man was forcing him away, Paulo fancied he distinguished, by the strengthening light, the roos of that particular building, in whose dungeon his master was confined, and the appearance of Vivaldi, himself could scarcely have occasioned a more sudden burst of joy; succeeded by one of grief. “It is the roof, it is the very roof!” exclaimed Paulo, vaulting from the ground, and clapping his hands; “it is the roof, the roof! O, my master, my master! the roof, the roof!” He continued alternately to exclaim, “My master! the roof! my master! the roof!” till his companion began to fear he was frantic, while tears streamed down his cheeks, and every look and gesture expressed the most extravagant and whimsical union of joy and sorrow. At length, the absolute terror of discovery compelled his companion to force him from the spot; when, having lost sight of the building which inclosed Vivaldi, he set off for Naples with a speed that desied all interruption, and arrived there in the condition, which has been mentioned, having taken no sleep, and scarcely any sustenance, since he left the Inquisition. Yet though in this exhausted state, the spirit, of his affection remained unbroken, and when, on the following morning, the Marchese quited Naples, neither his weariness, nor the imminent danger, to which this journey must expose him, could prevent his attending him to Rome.

The rank of the Marchese, and the influence he was known to posses at the court of Naples, were circumstances that promised to have weight with the Holy Office, and to procure Vivaldi a speedy release; but yet more than these, were the high connections which the Count di Maro, the friend of the Marchese, had in the church of Rome.

The applications, however, which were made to the inquisitors, were not so soon replied to as the wishes of the Marchese had expected, and he had been above afortnight in that city, before he was even permitted to visit his

son. In this interview, affection predominated on both sides over all remembrance of the past. The condition of Vivaldi, his saded appearance, to which the wounds he had received at Celano, and from which he was scarcely recovered, had contributed; and his situation in a melancholy and terrible prison, were circumstances that awakened all the tenderness of the father; his crrors were forgiven, and the Marchese felt disposed to consent to all that might restore him to happiness, could he but be restored to liberty.

Vivaldi, when informed of his mother’s death, shed bitter tears of sorrow and remorse, for having occasioned her so much uneasiness. The unreasonableness of her claims was forgotten, and her faults were extenuated; happily, indeed, for his peace, the extent of her criminal designs he had never understood; and when he learned that her dying request had been intended to promote his happiness, the cruel consciousness of having interrupted her’s, occasioned him severe anguish, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano, before he could become reconciled to himself.

Chapter 3 1

“Your’s in the ranks of death.”
Shakespeare.

Near three weeks had elapsed since the Marchese’s arrival at Rome, and not any decisive answer was returned by the Inquisition to his application, when he and Vivaldi received at the same time a summons to attend father Schedoni in his dungeon. To meet the man who had occasioned so much suffering to his family, was extremely painful to the Marchese, but he was not allowed to refuse the interview; and at the hour appointed he called at the chamber of Vivaldi; and, followed by two officials, they passed on together to that of Schedoni.

While they waited at the door of the prison-room, till the numerous bars and locks were unsastened, the agitation, which Vivaldi had suffered, on receiving the summons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was about to behold, once more, that wretched man, who had announced himself to be the parent of Ellena di Rosalba. The Marchese suffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to see Schedoni, was mingled a degree of curiosity as to the event, which had occasioned this summons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered first, and the Marchese and Vivaldi, on following, discovered the Confessor lying on a mattress. He did not rise to receive them, but, as he lifted his head, and bowed it in obeisance, his countenance, upon which the little light admitted through the triple grate of his dungeon gleamed, seemed more than usually ghastly; his eyes were hollow, and his shrunk features appeared as if death had already touched them. Vivaldi, on perceiving him, groaned, and averted his face; but, soon recovering a command of himself, he approached the mattress.

The Marchese, suppressing every expression of resentment towards an enemy, who was reduced to this deplorable condition, inquired what he had to communicate.

“Where is father Nicola?” said Schedoni to an official, without attending to the question: “I do not see him here. Is he gone so soon, and without having heard the purport of my summons? Let him be called.”

The official spoke to a centinel, who immediately lest the chamber.

“Who are these that surround me?” said Schedoni. “Who is he that stands at the foot of the bed?” While he spoke, he bent his eyes on Vivaldi, who rested in deep dejection there, and was lost in thought, till, aroused by Schedoni’s voice, he replied, “It is I, Vincentio dr Vivaldi I obey your requisition, and inquire the purpose of it?”

The Marchese repeated the demand. Schedoni appeared to meditate; sometimes he fixed his eyes upon Vivaldi, for an instant, and when he withdrew them, he seemed to sink into deeper thoughtfulness. As he raised them once again, they assumed a singular expression of wildness, and then settling, as if on vacancy, a sudden glare shot from them, while he said—“Who is he, that glides there in the dusk?”

His eyes were directed beyond Vivaldi, who, on turning, perceived the monk, father Nicola, passing behind him.

“I am here,” said Nicola: “what do you require of me?”

“That you will bear testimony to the truth of what I shall declare,” replied Schedoni.

Nicola, and an inquisitor who had accompanied him, immediately arranged themselves on one side of the bed, while the Marchese stationed himself on the other. Vivaldi remained at its foot.

Schedoni, after a pause, began: “That which I have to make known relates to the cabal formerly carried on by him, the father Nicola, and myself, against the peace of an innocent young woman, whom, at my instigation, he has basely traduced.”

At these words, Nicola attempted to interrupt the Confessor, but Vivaldi restrained him.

“Ellena di Rosalba is known to you?” continued Schedoni, addressing the Marchese.

Vivaldi’s countenance changed at this abrupt mention of Ellena, but he remained silent.

“I have heard of her,” replied the Marchese, coldly.

“And you have heard falsely of her,” rejoined Schedoni. “Lift your eyes, my lord Marchese, and say, do you not recollect that face?” pointing to

Nicola.

The Marchese regarded the monk attentively, “It is a face not easily to be forgotten,” he replied; “I remember to have seen it more than once.”

“Where have you seen him, my Lord?”

“In my own palace, at Naples; and you yourself introduced him to me there.”

“I did,” replied Schedoni.

“Why, then, do you now accuse him of falshood,” observed the Marchese, “since you acknowledge yourself to have been the instigator of his conduct?”

“O heavens!” said Vivaldi, “this monk, then, this father Nicola, is, as I suspected, the slanderet of Ellena di Rosalba!”

“Most true,” rejoined Schedoni; “and it is for the purpose of vindicating — “ “And you acknowledge yourself to be the author of those infamous slanders!” passionately interrupted Vivaldi;— “you, who but lately declared yourself to be her father!”

In the instant, that Vivaldi had uttered this, he became sensible of his indiscretion, for till now he had avoided informing the Marchese, that Ellena had been declared the daughter of Schedoni. This abrupt disclosure, and at such a moment, he immediately perceived might be satal to his hopes, and that the Marchese would not consider the promise he had given to his dying wife, however solemn, as binding, under circumstances so peculiar and unforeseen as the present. The astonishment of the Marchese, upon this discovery, cannot easily be imagined; he looked at his son for an explanation of what he had heard, and then with increased defestation at the Confessor; but Vivaldi was not in a state of mind to give any explanation at this moment, and he requested his father to suspend even his conjectures till he could converse with him alone.

The Marchese desisted for the present from further inquiry, but it was obvious that his opinion and his resolution, respecting the marriage of Vivaldi, was already formed.

“You, then, are the author of those slanders!” repeated Vivaldi.

“Hear me!” cried Schedoni, in a voice which the strength of his spirit contending with the seebleness of his condition, rendered hollow and terrible.— “Hear me”

He stopped, unable to recover immediately from the effect of the exertion he had made. At length, he resumed, “I have declared, and I continue to declare, that Ellena di Rosalba, as she has been named for the purpose, I conjecture, of concealing her from an unworthy father, is my daughter!”

Vivaldi groaned in the excess of his despair, but made no further attempt to interrupt Schedoni. The Marchese was not equally passive. “And was it to listen to a vindication of your daughter,” said he, “that I have been summoned hither? But let this Signora Rosalba, be who she may, of what importance can it be to me whether she is innocent or otherwise!”

Vivaldi, with the utmost difficulty, forbore to express the feelings, which this sentence excited. It appeared to recall all the spirit of Schedoni. “She is the daughter of a noble house,” said the Confessor, haughtily, while he half raised himself from his mattress. “In me you behold the last of the Counts di Bruno.”

The Marchese smiled contemptuously.

Schedoni proceeded “I call upon you, Nicola di Zampari, who have declared yourself, on a late occasion, so strenuous for justice, I call upon you now to do justice in this instance, and to acknowledge, before these witnesses, that Ellena Rosalba is innocent of every circumstance of misconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marchese di Vivaldi!”

“Villain! do you hesitate,” said Vivaldi to Nicola, “to retract the cruel slanders which you have thrown upon her name, and which have been the means of destroying her peace, perhaps for ever? Do you persist— “ The Marchese interrupted his son:— “Let me put an end to the difficulty, by concluding the interview; I perceive that my presence has been required for a purpose that does not concern me.”

Before the Confessor could reply, the Marchese had turned from him to quit the chamber; but the vchemence of Vivaldi’s distress prevailed with him to pause, and thus allowed him to understand from Schedoni, that the justification of the innocent Ellena, though it had been mentioned first, as being the object nearcst to his heart, was not the only one that had urged him to require this meeting.

“If you consent,” added Schedoni, “to listen to the vindication of my child, you shall afterwards perceive, Signor, that I, fallen though I am, have still been desirous of counteracting, as far as remains for me, the evil

I have occasioned. You shall acknowledge, that what I then make known is of the utmost confequence to the repose of the Marchese di Vivaldi, high in influence, and haughty in prosperity as he now appears."

The latter part of this assurance threatened to overcome the effect of the first; the pride of the Marchese swelled high; he took some steps towards the door, but then stopped, and, conjecturing that the subject, to which Schedoni alluded, concerned the liberation of his son, he consented to attend to what Nicola should disclose.

This monk, meanwhile, had been balancing the necessity for acknowledging himself a slanderer, against the possibility of avoiding it; and it was the resolute manner of Vivaldi, who appeared to have no doubt as to his guilt in this instance, that made him apprehend the consequence of persisting in falshood, not either remorse of conscience, or the appeal of Schedoni. He acknowledged then, after considerable circumlocution, in which he contrived to defend himself, by throwing all the odium of the original design upon the Confessor, that he had been prevailed upon by his arts to impose on the credulity of the Marchese, respecting the conduct of Ellena di Rosalba. This avowal was made upon oath, and Schedoni, by the questions he put to him, was careful it should be so full and circumstantial that even the most prejudiced hearer must have been convinced of its truth; while the most unfeeling must have yielded for once to indignation against the asperser, and pity of the aspersed. Its effect upon the present auditors was various. The Marchese had listened to the whole explanation with an unmoved countenance, but with profound attention. Vivaldi had remained in a fixed attitude, with eyes bent on father Nicola, in such eager and stern regard, as seemed to search into his very soul; and, when the monk concluded, a smile of triumphant joy lighted up his features, as he looked upon the Marchese, and claimed an acknowledgment of his conviction, that Ellena had been calumniated. The cold glance, which the Marchese returned, struck the impassioned and generous Vivaldi to the heart, who perceived that he was not only totally indifferent as to the injustice, which an innocent and helpless young woman had suffered, but fancied that he was unwilling to admit the truth, which his judgment would no longer allow him to reject.

Schedoni, meanwhile, appeared almost to writhe under the agony, which his mind inflieted upon him, and it was only by strong effort, that he

sustained his spirit so far as to go through with the interrogations he had judged it necessary to put to Nicola. When the subject was finished, he sunk back on his pillow, and, closing his eyes, a hue so pallid, succeeded by one so livid, overspread his features, that Vivaldi for an instant believed he was dying; and in this supposition he was not singular, for even an official was touched with the Confessor's condition, and had advanced to assist him, when he unclosed his eyes, and seemed to revive.

The Marohese, without making any comment upon the avowal of father Nicola, demanded, on its conclusion, the disclosure, which Schedoni had afforted to be intimately connected with his peace; and the latter now inquired of a person near him, whether a secretary of the Inquisition was in the chamber, who he had requested might attend, to take a formal deposition of what he should declare. He was answered, that such an one was already in waiting. He then asked, what other persons were in the room, adding, that he should require inquisitorial witnesses to his deposition; and was answered, that an inquisitor and two officials were present; and that their evidence was more than sufficient for his purpose.

A lamp was then called for by the secretary; but, as that could not immediately be procured, the torch of one of the centinels, who watched in the dark avenue without, was brought in its stead, and this discovered to Schedoni the various sigures assembled in his dusky chamber, and to them the emaciated form and ghastly visage of the Confessor. As Vivaldi now beheld him by the stronger light of the torch, he again fancied that death was in his aspect.

Every person was now ready for the declaration of Schedoni; but he himself seemed not fully prepared. He remained for some moments reclining on his pillow in silence, with his eyes shut, while the changes in his features indicated the strong emotion of his mind. Then, as if by a violent effort, he half raised himself, and made an ample confession of the arts he had practised against Vivaldi. He declared himself to be the anonymous accuser, who had caused him to be arrested by the Holy Office, and that the charge of heresy, which he had brought against him, was false and malicious.

At the moment when Vivaldi received this confirmation of his suspicions, as to the identity of his accuser, he discovered more fully that the charge was not what had been stated to him at the chapel of San

Sebastian, in which Ellena was implicated; and he demanded an explanation of this circumstance. Schedoni acknowledged, that the persons, who had there arrested him, were not officers of the Inquisition, and that the instrument of arrest, containing the charge of elopement with a nun, was forged by himself, for the purpose of empowering the ruffians to carry off Ellena, without opposition from the inhabitants of the convent, in which she was then lodged.

To Vivaldi's inquiry, why it had been thought necessary to employ stratagem in the removal of Ellena, since, if Schedoni had only claimed her for his daughter, he might have removed her without any, the Confessor replied, that he was then ignorant of the relationship which existed between them. But to the further inquiries, with what design, and whither Ellena had been removed, and the means by which he had discovered her to be his daughter, Schedoni was silent; and he sunk back, overwhelmed by the recollections they awakened.

The depositions of Schedoni having been taken down by the secretary, were formally signed by the inquisitor and the officials present; and Vivaldi thus saw his innocence vindicated by the very man who had thrown him among the perils of the Inquisition. But the near prospect of release now before him failed to affect him with joy, while he understood that Ellena was the daughter of Schedoni, the child of a murderer, whom he himself had been in some degree instrumental in bringing to a dreadful and ignominious death. Still, however, willing to hope, that Schedoni had not spoken the truth concerning his relationship to Ellena, he claimed, in consideration of the affection he had so long cherished for her, a full explanation of the circumstances connected with the discovery of her family.

At this public avowal of his attachment, a haughty impatience appeared on the countenance of the Marchese, who forbade him to make further inquiry on the subject, and was immediately retiring from the chamber.

"My presence is no longer necessary," he added: "the prisoner has concluded the only detail which I could be interested to hear from him; and, in confideration of the confession he has made as to the innocence of my son, I pardon him the suffering, which his false charge has occasioned to me and my family. The paper containing his depositions is given to your responsibility, holy father," addressing the inquisitor; "and you are

required to lay it upon the table of the Holy Office, that the innocence of Vincentio di Vivaldi may appear, and that he may be released from these prisons without further delay. But first, I demand a copy of those deelarations, and that the copy also shall be signed by the present witnesses."

The secretary was now bidden to copy them, and, while the Marchese waited to receive the paper, (for he would not leave the chamber till he had secured it) Vivaldi was urging his claim for an explantion respecting the family of Ellena, with unconquerable perseverance. Schedoni, no longer permitted to evade the inquiry, could not, however, give a circumstantial explanation, without partly diselosing, also, the satal designs which had been mediated by him and the late Marchesa di Vivaldi, of whose death he was ignorant; he related, therefore, little more respecting Ellena than that a portrait, which she wore as being her father's, had first led to the discovery of her family.

While the Confessor had been giving this brief explanation, Nicola, who was somewhat withdrawn from the circle, stood gazing at him with the malignity of a demon. His glowing cyes just appeared under the edge of his cowl, while, rolled up in his dark drapery, the lower features of his face were muffled; but the intermediate part of his countenance, reciving the full glare of the torch, displayed all its speaking and terrific lines. Vivaldi, as his eye glanced upon him, saw again the very monk of Paluzzi, and he thought he beheld also a man capable of the very crimes of which he had accused Schedoni. At this instant, he remembered the dreadful garment that had been discovered in a dungeon of the fortress; and, yet more, he remembered the extraordinary circumstances attending the death of Bianchi, together with the immediate knowledge which the monk had displayed of that event. Vivaldi's suspicions respecting the cause of her death being thus revived, he determined to obtain, if possible, either a relief from, or a confirmation of them; and he solemnly called upon Schedoni, who, ready condemned to die, had no longer any thing to fear from a disclosure of the truth, whatever it might be, to declare all that he knew on the subject. As he did so, he looked at Nicola, to observe the effect of this demand, whose countenance was, however, so much shrouded, that little of its expression could be seen; but Vivaldi remarked, that, while he had spoken, the monk drew his garment closer over the

lower part of his face, and that he had immediately turned his eyes from him upon the Confessor.

With most solemn protestations, Schedoni declared himself to be both innocent and ignorant of the cause of Bianchi's death.

Vivaldi then demanded by what means his agent, Nicola, had obtained such immediate information, as the warning he had delivered at Paluzzi proved him to have, of an event, in which it appeared that he could be so little interested; and why that warning had been given.

Nicola did not attempt to anticipate the reply of Schedoni, who, after a momentary silence, said, "That warming, young man, was given to deter you from visiting Altieri, as was every circumstance of advice or intelligence, which you received beneath the arch of Paluzzi."

"Father," replied Vivaldi, "you have never loved, or you would have spared yourself the practice of artifices so ineffectual to mislead or to conquer a lover. Did you believe that an anonymous adviser could have more influence with me than my affection, or that I could could be terrisied by such stratagems into a renunciation of its object?"

"I believed," rejoined the Confessor, "that the disinterested advice of a stranger might have some weight with you; but I trusted more to the impression of awe, which the conduct and seeming fore-knowledge of that stranger were adapted to inspire in a mind like your's; and I thus endeavoured to avarl myself of your prevailing weakness."

"And what do you term my prevailing weakness," said Vivaldi, blushing.

"A susceptibility which renders you especially liable to superstition," replied Schedoni.

"What! does a monk call superstition a weakness!" rejoined Vivaldi. "But grant he does, on what occasion have I betrayed such weakness?"

"Have you forgotten a conversation which I once held with you on invisible spirits?" said Schedoni.

As he asked this, Vivaldi was struck with the tone of his voice; he thought it was different from what he had remembered ever to have heard from him; and he looked at Schedoni more intently, that he might be certain it was he who had spoken. The Confessor's eyes were fixed upon him, and he repeated slowly in the same tone, "Have you forgotten?"

“I have not forgotten the conversation to which you allude,” replied Vivaldi, “and I do not recollect that I then disclosed any opinion that may justify your assertion.”

“The opinions you avowed were rational,” said Schedoni, “but the ardour of your imagination was apparent, and what ardent imagination ever was contented to trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars after new wonders into a world of its own!”

Vivaldi blushed at this reproof, now conscious of its justness; and was surprised that Schedoni should so well have understood the nature of his mind, while he himself, with whom conjecture had never assumed the stability of opinion, on the subject to which the Confessor alluded, had been ignorant even of its propensities.

“I acknowledge the truth of your remark,” said Vivaldi, “as far as it concerns myself. I have, however, inquiries to make on a point less abstracted, and towards explaining which the evidence of my senses themselves have done little. To whom belonged the bloody garments I found in the dungeon of Paluzzi, and what became of the person to whom they had pertained?”

Consternation appeared for an instant on the features of Schedoni. “What garments?” said he.

“They appeared to be those of a person who had died by violence,” replied Valdi, “and they were discovered in a place frequented by your avowed agent, Nicola, the monk.”

As he concluded the sentence, Vivaldi looked at Nicola, upon whom the attention of every person present was now directed.

“They were my own,” said this monk.

“Your own! and in that condition!” exclaimed Vivaldi. “They were covered with gore!”

“They were my own,” repeated Nicola. “For their condition, I have to thank you, — the wound your pistol gave me occasioned it.”

Vivaldi was astonished by this apparent subtersuge. “I had no pistol,” he rejoined, “my sword was my only weapon!”

“Pause a moment,” said the monk.

“I repeat that I had no firearms,” replied Vivaldi.

“I appeal to father Schedoni,” rejoined Nicola, “whether I was not wounded by a pistol shot.”

“To me you have no longer any right of appeal,” said Schedom. “Why should I save you from suspicions, that may bring you to a state like this, to which you have reduced me!”

“Your crimes have reduced you to it,” replied Nicola, “I have only done my duty, and that which another person could have effected without my aid — the priest to whom Spalatro made his last confession.”

“It is, however, a duty of such a kind,” observed Vivaldi, “as I would not willingly have upon my conscience. You have betrayed the life of your former friend, and have compelled me to assist in the destruction of a fellow being.”

“You, like me, have assisted to destroy a destroyer,” replied the monk. “He has taken life, and deserves, therefore, to lose it. If, however, it will afford you consolation to know that you have not materially assisted in his destruction, I will hereafter give you proof for this assurance. There were other means of shewing that Schedoni was the Count di Bruno, than the testimony of Ansaldo, though I was ignorant of them when I bade you summon the penitentiary.”

“If you had sooner avowed this,” said Vivaldi, the assertion would have been more plausible. Now, I can only understand that it is designed to win my silence, and prevent my retorting upon you your own maxim — that he who has taken the life of another, deserves to lose his own. — To whom did those bloody garments belong?”

“To myself, I repeat,” replied Nicola, “Shedoni can bear testimony that I received at Paluzzi a pistol wound.”

“Impossible,” said Vivaldi, “I was armed only with my sword!”

“You had a companion,” observed the monk, “had not he firearms?”

Vivaldi, after a momentary consideration, recollected that Paulo had pistols, and that he had fired one beneath the arch of Paluzzi, on the first alarm occasioned by the stranger’s voice. He immediately acknowledged the recollection. “But I heard, no groan, no symptom of distress!” he added. “Besides, the garments were at a considerable distance from the spot where the pistol was fired! How could a person, so severely wounded as those garments indicated, have silently withdrawn to a remote dungeon, or, having done so, is it probable he would have thrown aside his dress!”

“All that is nevertheless true,” replied Nicola. “My resolution enabled me to stifle the expression of my anguish; I withdrew to the interior of the ruin, to escape from you, but you pursued me even to the dungeon, where I threw off my discoloured vestments, in which I dared not return to my convent, and departed by a way which all your ingenuity failed to discover. The people who were already in the fort, for the purpose of assisting to confine you and your servant during the night on which Signora Rosalba was taken from Altieri, procured me another habit, and relief for my wound. But, though I was unseen by you during the night, I was not entirely unheard, for my groans reached you more than once from an adjoining chamber, and my companions were entertained with the alarn which your servant testified. — Are you now convinced?”

The groans were clearly remembered by Vivaldi, and many other circumstances of Nicola’s narration accorded so well with others, which he recollected to have occurred on the night alluded to, that he had no longer a doubt of its veracity. The suddenness of Bianchi’s death, however, still occasioned him suspicions as to its cause; yet Schedoni had declared not only that he was innocent, but ignorant of this cause, which it appeared from his unwillingness to give testimony in favour of his agent, he would not have affirmed, had he been conscious that the monk was in any degree guilty in this instance. That Nicola could have no inducement for attempting the life of Bianchi other than a reward offered him by Schedoni, was clear; and Vivaldi, after more fully considering these circumstances, became convinced that her death was in consequence of some incident of natural decay.

While this conversation was passing, the Marchese, impatient to put a conclusion to it, and to leave the chamber, repeatedly urged the secretary to dispatch; and, while he now earnestly renewed his request, another voice answered for the secretary, that he had nearly concluded. Vivaldi thought that he had heard the voice on some former occasion, and on turning his eyes upon the person who had spoken, discovered the stranger to be the same who had first visited him in prison. Perceiving by his dress, that he was an officer of the Inquisition, Vivaldi now understood too well the purport of his former visit, and that he had come with a design to betray him by affected sympathy into a confession of some heretical opinions. Similar instances of treachery Vivaldi had heard were frequently

practised upon accused persons, but he had never fully believed such cruelty possible till now, that it had been attempted towards himself.

The visit of this person bringing to his recollection the subsequent one he had received from Nicola, Vivaldi inquired whether the centinels had really admitted him to his cell, or he had entered it by other means; a question to which the monk was silent, but the smile on his features, if so strange an expression deserved to be called a smile, seemed to reply, “Do you believe that I, a servant of the Inquisition, will betray its secrets?”

Vivaldi, however, urged the inquiry, for he wished to know whether the guard, who appeared to be faithful to their office, had escaped the punishment that was threatened.

“They were honest,” replied Nicola, “seek no further.”

“Are the tribunal convinced of their integrity?”

Nicola smiled again in derision, and replied, “They never doubted it.”

“How!” said Vivaldi. “Why were these men put under arrest, if their faithfulness was not even suspected?”

“Be satisfied with the knowledge, which experience has given you of the secrets of the Inquisition,” replied Nicola solemnly, “seek to know no more!”

“It has terrible secrets!” said Schedoni, who had been long silent. “Know, young man, that almost every cell of every prisoner has a concealed entrance, by which the ministers of death may pass unnoticed to their victims. This Nicola is now one of those dreadful summoners, and is acquainted with all the secret avenues, that lead to murder.”

Vivaldi shrunk from Nicola in horror, and Schedoni paused; but while he had spoken, Vivaldi had again noticed the extraordinary change in his voice, and shuddered at its sound no less than at the information it had given. Nicola was silent; but his terrible eyes were fixed in vengeance on Schedoni.

“His office has been short,” resumed the Confessor, turning his heavy eyes upon Nicola, “and his task is almost done!” As he pronounced the last words his voice saltered, but they were heard by the monk, who drawing nearer to the bed, demanded an explanation of them. A ghastly smile triumphed in the features of Schedoni; “Fear not but that an explanation will come full soon,” said he.

Nicola fixed himself before the Confessor, and bent his brows upon him as if he would have searched into his very soul. When Vivaldi again looked at Schedoni, he was shocked on observing the sudden alteration in his countenance, yet still a faint smile of triumph lingered there. But, while Vivaldi gazed, the features suddenly became agitated; in the next instant his whole frame was convulsed, and heavy groans laboured from his breast. Schedoni was now evidently dying.

The horror of Vivaldi, and of the Marchese, who endeavoured to leave the chamber, was equalled only by the general confusion that reigned there; every person present seemed to feel at least a momentary compassion, except Nicola, who stood unmoved beside Schedoni, and looked stedsastly upon his pangs, while a smile of derision marked his countenance. As Vivaldi observed, with detestation, this expression, a slight spasm darted over Nicola's face, and his muscles also seemed to labour with sudden contraction; but the affection was transient, and vanished as abruptly as it had appeared. The monk, however, turned from the miserable spectacle before him, and as he turned he caught involuntarily at the arm of a person near him, and leaned on his shoulder for support. His manner appeared to betray that he had not been permitted to triumph in the sufferings of his enemy, without participating at least in their horror.

Schedoni's struggles now began to abate, and in a short time he lay motionless. When he unclosed his eyes, death was in them. He was yet nearly insensible; but presently a saint gleam of recollection shot from them, and gradually lighting them up, the character of his soul appeared there; the expression was indeed seeble, but it was true. He moved his lips as if he would have spoken, and looked languidly round the chamber, seemingly in search of some person. At length, he uttered a sound, but he had not yet sufficient command of his muscles, to modulate that sound into a word, till by repeated efforts the name of Nicola became intelligible. At the call, the monk raised his head from the shoulder of the person on whom he had reclined, and turning round, Schedoni, as was evident from the sudden change of expression in his countenance, discovered him; his eyes, as they settled on Nicola seemed to recollect all their wonted fire, and the malignant triumph, lately so prevalent in his physiognomy, again appeared as in the next moment, he pointed to him. His glance seemed

suddenly impowered with the destructive fascination attributed to that of the basilisk, for while it now met Nicola's, that monk seemed as if transfixed to the spot, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expression he read the dreadful sentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction a pallid hue overspread his face; at the same time an involuntary motion convulsed his features, cold trembling seized upon his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back, and was caught in the arms of the people near him. At the instant of his fall, Schedoni uttered a sound so strange and horrible, so convulsed, yet so loud, so exulting, yet so unlike any human voice, that every person in the chamber, except those who were assisting Nicola, struck with irresistible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it. This, however, was impracticable, for the door was sastened, until a physician, who had been sent for, should arrive, and some investigation could be made into this mysterious affair. The consternation of the Marchese and of Vivaldi, compelled to witness this scene of horror, cannot easily be imagined.

Schedoni, having uttered that demoniacal found of exultation, was not permitted to repeat it, for the pangs he had lately suffered returned upon him, and he was again in strong convulsions, when the physician entered the chamber. The moment he beheld Schedoni, he declared him to be poisoned; and he pronounced a similar opinion on father Nicola; affirming, also, that the drug, as appeared from the violence of the effect, was of too subtle and inveterate a nature to allow of antidote. He was, however, willing to administer the medicine usual in such cases.

While he was giving orders to an attendant, with respect to this, the violence of Schedoni's convulsions once more relaxed; but Nicola appeared in the last extremity. His sufferings were incessant, his senses never for a moment returned, and he expired, before the medicine, which had been sent for, could be brought. When it came, however, it was administered with some success to Schedoni, who recovered not only his recollection, but his voice; and the first word he uttered was, as formerly, the name of Nicola.

"Does he live?" added the Confessor with the utmost difficulty, and after a long pause. The persons around him were silent, but the truth, which this silence indicated, seemed to revive him.

The inquisitor, who had attended, perceiving that Schedoni had recovered the use of his intellects, now judged it prudent to ask some questions relative to his present condition, and to the cause of Nicola's death.

"Poison," replied Schedoni readily.

"By whom administered?" said the inquisitor, "consider that, while you answer, you are on your deathbed."

"I have no wish to conceal the truth," rejoined Schedoni, "nor the satisfaction" — he was obliged to pause, but presently added, "I have destroyed him, who would have destroyed me, and — and I have escaped an ignominious death."

He paused again; it was with difficulty that he had said thus much, and he was now overcome by the exertion he had made. The secretary, who had not been permitted to leave the chamber, was ordered to note Schedoni's words.

"You avow then," continued the inquisitor, "that the poison was administered, both in the case of father Nicola and in your own, by yourself?"

Schedoni could not immediately reply; but when he did, he said, "I avow it."

He was asked by what means he had contrived to procure the poison, and was bidden to name his accomplice.

"I had no accomplice," replied Schedoni. "How did you procure the poison, then?"

Schedoni, slowly and with difficulty, replied, "It was concealed in my vest."

"Consider that you are dying," said the inquisitor, "and confess the truth. We cannot believe what you have last asserted. It is improbable that you should have had an opportunity of providing yourself with poison after your arrest, and equally improbable that you should have thought such provision necessary before that period. Confess who is your accomplice."

This accusation of falshood recalled the spirit of Schedoni, which, contending with, and conquering, for a moment, corporeal suffering, he said in a firmer tone, "It was the poison, in which I dip my poniard, the better to defend me."

The inquisitor smiled in contempt of this explanation, and Schedoni, observing him, desired a particular part of his vest might be examined, where would be found some remains of the drug concealed as he had affirmed. He was indulged in his request, and the poison was discovered within a broad hem of his garment.

Still it was inconceivable how he had contrived to administer it to Nicola, who, though he had been for some time alone with him on this day, would scarcely have so far confided in an enemy, as to have accepted any seeming sustenance that might have been offered by him. The inquisitor, still anxious to discover an accomplice, asked Schedoni who had assisted to administer the drug to Nicola, but the Confessor was no longer in a condition to reply. Life was now sinking apace; the gleam of spirit and of character that had returned to his eyes, was departed, and left them haggard and fixed; and presently a livid corse was all that remained of the once terrible Schedoni!

While this awful event had been accomplishing, the Marchese, suffering under the utmost perturbation, had withdrawn to the distant grate of the dungeon, where he conversed with an official as to what might be the probable consequence of his present situation to himself; but Vivaldi, in an agony of horror, had been calling incessantly for the medicine, which might possibly afford some relief to the anguish he witnessed; and when it was brought, he had assisted to support the sufferers.

At length, now that the worst was over, and when the several witnesses had signed to the last avowal of Schedoni, every person in the chamber was suffered to depart; and Vivaldi was reconducted to his prison, accompanied by the Marchese, where he was to remain till the decision of the holy office respecting his innocence, as asserted by the deposition of Schedoni, should be known. He was too much affected by the late scene to give the Marchese any explanation at present, respecting the family of Ellena di Rosalba, and the Marchese, having remained for some time with his son, withdrew to the residence of his friend.

Chapter 3 2

“Master, go on, and I will follow thee
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.”
Shakespeare.

In consequence of the dying confession of Schedoni, an order was sent from the holy office for the release of Vivaldi, within a few days after the death of the Confessor; and the Marchese conducted his son from the prisons of the Inquisition to the mansion of his friend the Count di Maro, with whom he had resided since his arrival at Rome.

While they were receiving the ceremonious congratulations of the Count, and of some nobles assembled to welcome the emancipated prisoner a loud voice was heard from the anti-chamber exclaiming, “Let me pass! It is my master, let me pass! May all those who attempt to stop me, be sent to the Inquisition themselves!”

In the next instant Paulo burst into the saloon, followed by a group of lacqueys, who, however, paused at the door, fearful of the displeasure of their lord, yet scarcely able to stifle a laugh; while Paulo, springing forward, had nearly overset some of the company, who happened at that moment to be bowing with profound joy to Vivaldi.

“It is my master! it is my dear master!” cried Paulo, and, sending off a nobleman with each elbow, as he made his way between them, he hugged Vivaldi in his arms, repeating, “O, my master! my master!” till a passion of joy and affection overcame his voice, and he fell at his master’s feet and wept.

This was a moment of finer joy to Vivaldi, than he had known since his meeting with his father, and he was too much interested by his faithful servant, to have leisure to apologize to the astonished company for his rudeness. While the lacqueys were repairing the mischief Paulo had occasioned, were picking up the rolling snuff-boxes he had jerked away in his passage, and wiping the snuff from the soiled clothes, Vivaldi was participating in all the delight, and returning all the affection of his servant, and was so wholly occupied by these pleasurable feelings as

scarcely to be sensible that any persons besides themselves were in the room. The Marchese, meanwhile was making a thousand apologies for the disasters Paulo had occasioned; was alternately calling upon him to recollect in whose presence he was, and to quit the apartment immediately; explaining to the company that he had not seen Vivaldi since they were together in the Inquisition, and remarking profoundly, that he was much attached to his master. But Paulo, insensible to the repeated commands of the Marchese, and to the endeavours of Vivaldi to raise him, was still pouring forth his whole heart at his master's feet. "Ah! my Signor," said he, "if you could but know how miserable I was when I got out of the Inquisition!"— "He raves!" observed the Count to the Marchese, "you perceive that joy has rendered him delirious!"

"How I wandered about the walls half the night, and what it cost me to leave them! But when I lost sight of them, Signor, O! San Dominico! I thought my heart would have broke. I had a great mind to have gone back again and given myself up; and, perhaps, I should too, if it had not been for my friend, the centinel, who escaped with me, and I would not do him an injury, poor fellow! for he meant nothing but kindness when he let me out. And sure enough, as it has proved, it was all for the best, for now I am here, too, Signor, as well as you; and can tell you all I felt when I believed I should never see you again."

The contrast of his present joy to his remembered grief again brought tears into Paulo's eyes; he smiled and wept, and sobbed and laughed with such rapid transition, that Vivaldi began to be alarmed for him; when, suddenly becoming calm, he looked up in his master's face and said gravely, but with eagerness, "Pray Signor, was not the roof of your little prison peaked, and was there not a little turret stuck up at one corner of it? and was there not a battlement round the turret? and was there not" — Vivaldi, after regarding him for a moment, replied smilingly, "Why truly, my good Paulo, my dungeon was so far from the roof, that I never had an opportunity of observing it."

"That is very true, Signor," replied Paulo, "very true indeed; but I did not happen to think of that. I am certain, though, it was as I say, and I was sure of it at the time. O Signor! I thought that roof would have broke my heart, O how I did look at it! and now to think that I am here, with my dear master once again!"

As Paulo concluded, his tears and sobs returned with more violence than before; and Vivaldi, who could not perceive any necessary connection between this mention of the roof of his late prison, and the joy his servant expressed on seeing him again, began to fear that his senses were bewildered, and desired an explanation of his words. Paulo's account, rude and simple as it was, soon discovered to him the relation of these apparently heterogeneous circumstances to each other; when Vivaldi, overcome by this new instance of the power of Paulo's affection, embraced him with his whole heart, and, compelling him to rise, presented him to the assembly as his faithful friend, and chief deliverer.

The Marchese, affected by the scene he had witnessed, and with the truth of Vivaldi's words, condescended to give Paulo a hearty shake by the hand, and to thank him warmly for the bravery and fidelity he had displayed in his master's interest. "I never can fully reward your attachment, added the Marchese, "but what remains for me to do, shall be done. From this moment I make you independent, and promise, in the presence of this noble company, to give you a thousand sequins, as some acknowledgement of your services."

Paulo did not express all the gratitude for this gift which the Marchese expected. He stammered, and bowed and blushed, and at length burst into tears; and when Vivaldi inquired what distressed him, he replied, "Why, Signor, of what use are the thousand sequins to me, if I am to be independent! what use if I am not to stay with you?"

Vivaldi cordially assured Paulo, that he should always remain with him, and that he should consider it as his duty to render his future life happy. "You shall henceforth," added Vivaldi, "be placed at the head of my houshold; the management of my servants, and the whole conduct of my domestic concerns shall be committed to you, as a proof of my entire confidence in your integrity and attachment; and because this is a situation which will allow you to be always near me."

"Thank you, my Signor," replied Paulo, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by his gratitude, "Thank you with my whole heart! if I stay with you, that is enough for me, I ask no more. But I hope my Lord Marchese will not think me ungrateful for refusing to accept of the thousand sequins he was so kind as to offer me, if I would but be

independent, for I thank him as much as if I had received them, and a great deal more too."

The Marchese, smiling at Paulo's mistake, rejoined, "As I do not perceive, my good friend, how your remaining with your master can be a circumstance to disqualify you from accepting a thousand sequins, I command you, on pain of my displeasure, to receive them; and whenever you marry, I shall expect that you will shew your obedience to me again, by accepting another thousand from me with your wife, as her dower."

"This is too much, Signor," said Paulo sobbing— "too much to be borne!" and ran out of the saloon. But amidst the murmur of applause which his conduct drew from the noble spectators, for Paulo's warm heart had subdued even the coldness of their pride, a convulsive sound from the anti-chamber betrayed the excess of emotion, which he had thus abruptly withdrawn himself to conceal.

In a few hours, the Marchese and Vivaldi took leave of their friends, and set out for Naples, where they arrived, without any interruption, on the fourth day. But it was a melancholy journey to Vivaldi, notwithstanding the joy of his late escape; for the Marchese, having introduced the mention of his attachment to Ellena di Rosalba, informed him, that, under the present unforeseen circumstances, he could not consider his late engagement to the Marchesa on that subject as binding, and that Vivaldi must relinquish Ellena, if it should appear that she really was the daughter of the late Schedoni.

Immediately on his arrival at Naples, however, Vivaldi, with a degree of impatience, to which his utmost speed was inadequate, and with a revived joy so powerful as to overcome every fear, and every melancholy consideration, which the late conversation with his father had occasioned, hastened to the Santa della Piéta.

Ellena heard his voice from the grate, inquiring for her of a nun, who was in the parlour, and in the next instant they beheld each other yet once again.

In such a meeting, after the long uncertainty and terror, which each had suffered for the fate of the other, and the dangers and hardships they had really incurred, joy was exalted almost to agony. Ellena wept, and some minutes passed before she could answer to Vivaldi's few words of tender exclamation: it was long ere she was tranquil enough to observe the

alteration, which severe confinement had given to his appearance. The animated expression of his countenance was unchanged; yet, when the first glow of joy had faded from it, and Ellena had leisure to observe its wanness, she understood, too certainly, that he had been a prisoner in the Inquisition.

During this interview, he related, at Ellena's request, the particulars of his adventures, since he had been separated from her in the chapel of San Sebastian; but, when he came to that part of the narration where it was necessary to mention Schedoni, he paused in unconquerable embarrassment and a distress not unmingled with horror. Vivaldi could scarcely endure even to hint to Ellena any part of the unjust conduct, which the Confessor had practised towards him, yet it was impossible to conclude his account, without expressing much more than hints; nor could he bear to afflict her with a knowledge of the death of him who he believed to be her parent, however the dreadful circumstances of that event might be concealed. His embarrassment became obvious, and was still increased by Ellena's inquiries.

At length, as an introduction to the information it was necessary to give, and to the fuller explanation he wished to receive upon a subject, which, though it was the one that pressed most anxiously upon his mind, he had not yet dared to mention, Vivaldi ventured to declare his knowledge of her having discovered her parent to be living. The satisfaction immediately apparent upon Ellena's countenance heightened his distress, and his reluctance to proceed; believing, as he did, that the event he had to communicate must change her gladness to grief."

Ellena, however, upon this mention of a topic so interesting to them both, proceeded to express the happiness she had received from the discovery of a parent, whose virtues had even won her affection long before she understood her own interest in them. It was with some difficulty, that Vivaldi could conceal his surprize at such an avowal of prepossession; the manners of Schedoni, of whom he believed her to speak, having certainly never been adapted to inspire tenderness. But his surprize soon changed its object, when Olivia, who had heard that a stranger was at the grate, entered the parlour, and was announced as the mother of Ellena di Rosalba.

Before Vivaldi left the convent, a full explanation, as to family, was given on both sides, when he had the infinite joy of learning, that Ellena was not the daughter of Schedoni; and Olivia had the satisfaction to know that she had no future evil to apprehend from him who had hitherto been her worst enemy. The manner of his death, however, with all the circumstances of his character, as unfolded by his late trial, Vivaldi was careful to conceal.

When Ellena had withdrawn from the room, Vivaldi made a full acknowledgment to Olivia of his long attachment to her daughter, and supplicated for her consent to their marriage. To this application, however, Olivia replied, that, though she had long been no stranger to their mutual affection, or to the several circumstances which had both proved its durability, and tried their fortitude, she never could consent that her daughter should become a member of any family, whose principal was either insensible of her value, or unwilling to acknowledge it; and that in this instance it would be necessary to Vivaldi's success, not only that he, but that his father should be a suitor; on which condition only, she allowed him to hope for her acquiescence.

Such a stipulation scarcely chilled the hopes of Vivaldi, now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no less respectable in character than in rank; and he had little doubt that his father would consent to fulfil the promise he had given to the dying Marchesa.

In this belief he was not mistaken. The Marchese, having attended to Vivaldi's account of Ellena's family, promised, that if it should appear there was no second mistake on the subject, he would not longer oppose the wishes of his son.

The Marchese immediately caused a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the present Countess di Bruno; and, though this was not pursued without difficulty, the physician, who had assisted in the plan of her escape from the cruelty of Ferando di Bruno, and who was living, as well as Beatrice, who clearly remembered the sister of her late mistress, at length rendered Olivia's identity unquestionable. Now, therefore, that the Marchese's every doubt was removed, he paid a visit to the Santa della Piéta, and solicited, in due form, Olivia's consent to the nuptials of Vivaldi with Ellena; which she granted him with an entire satisfaction. In this

interview, the Marchese was so much fascinated by the manners of the Countess, and pleased with the delicacy and sweetness, which appeared in those of Ellena, that his consent was no longer a constrained one, and he willingly relinquished the views of superior rank and fortune, which he had formerly looked to for his son, for those of virtue and permanent happiness that were now unfolded to him.

On the twentieth of May, the day on which Ellena completed her eighteenth year, her nuptials with Vivaldi were solemnized in the church of the Santa Maria della Piéta, in the presence of the Marchese and of the Countess di Bruno. As Ellena advanced through the church, she recollected, when on a former occasion she had met Vivaldi at the altar, and, the scenes of San Sebastian rising to her memory, the happy character of those, which her present situation opposed to them, drew tears of tender joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irresolute, desolate, surrounded by strangers, and ensnared by enemies, she had believed she saw Vivaldi for the last time; now, supported by the presence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the person, who had hitherto so strenuously opposed her, they were met to part no more; and, as a recollection of the moment when she had been carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind, that moment when she had called upon him for succour, supplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank silence, which, as she believed, was that of death, had succeeded; as the anguish of that moment was now remembered, Ellena became more than ever sensible of the happiness of the present.

Olivia, in thus relinquishing her daughter so soon after she had found her, suffered some pain, but she was consoled by the fair prospect of happiness, that opened to Ellena, and cheered, by considering, that, though she relinquished, she should not lose her, since the vicinity of Vivaldi's residence to La Piéta, would permit a frequent intercourse with the convent.

As a testimony of singular esteem, Paulo was permitted to be present at the marriage of his master, when, as perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony, and witnessed the delight in Vivaldi's countenance, the satisfaction in that of my "old Lord Marchese," the pensive happiness in the Countess di Bruno's, and the tender complacency of Ellena's, which her veil, partly undrawn, allowed him to

observe, he could scarcely refrain from expressing the joy he felt, and shouting aloud, “O! giorno felíce! O! giorno felíce!” [Note: O happy day! O happy day!]

Chapter 3 3

“Ah! where shall I so sweet a dwelling find!
For all around, without, and all within,
Nothing save what delightful was and kind,
Of goodness favouring and a tender mind,
E’er rose to view.”
Thomson.

The fête which, some time after the nuptials, was given by the Marchese, in celebration of them, was held at a delightful villa, belonging to Vivaldi, a few miles distant from Naples, upon the border of the gulf, and on the opposite shore to that which had been the frequent abode of the Marchesa. The beauty of its situation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to select it as their chief residence. It was, in truth, a scene of fairyland. The pleasure-grounds extended over a valley, which opened to the bay, and the house stood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle slope that margined the water, and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant shores, from the lofty cape of Miseno to the bold mountains of the south, which, stretching across the distance, appeared to rise out of the sea, and divided the gulf of Naples from that of Salerno.

The marble porticoes and arcades of the villa were shadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia flowering ash, cedrati, camellias, and majestic palms; and the cool and airy halls, opening on two opposite sides to a colonade, admitted beyond the rich soliage all the seas and shores of Naples, from the west; and to the east, views of the valley of the domain, withdrawing among winding hills wooded to their summits, except where cliffs of various-coloured granites, yellow, green, and purple, lifted their tall heads, and threw gay gleams of light amidst the umbrageous landscape.

The style of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy; except “Where a long alley peeping on the main,” exhibited such

gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste.

On this jubilee, every avenue and grove, and pavilion was richly illuminated. The villa itself, where each airy hall and arcade was resplendent with lights, and lavishly decorated with flowers and the most beautiful shrubs, whose buds seemed to pour all Arabia's perfumes upon the air, this villa resembled a fabric called up by enchantment, rather than a structure of human art.

The dresses of the higher rank of visitors were as splendid as the scenery, of which Ellena was, in every respect, the queen. But this entertainment was not given to persons of distinction only, for both Vivaldi and Ellena had wished that all the tenants of the domain should partake of it, and share the abundant happiness which themselves possessed; so that the grounds, which were extensive enough to accommodate each rank, were relinquished to a general gaiety. Paulo was, on this occasion, a sort of master of the revels; and, surrounded by a party of his own particular associates, danced once more, as he had so often wished, upon the moonlight shore of Naples.

As Vivaldi and Ellena were passing the spot, which Paulo had chosen for the scene of his festivity, they paused to observe his strange capers and extravagant gesticulation, as he mingled in the dance, while every now-and-then he shouted forth, though half breathless with the heartiness of the exercise, "O! giorno felíce! O! giorno felíce!"

On perceiving Vivaldi, and the smiles with which he and Ellena regarded him, he quitted his sports, and advancing, "Ah! my dear master," said he, "do you remember the night, when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebastian; don't you remember how those people, who were tripping it away so joyously, by moonlight, reminded me of Naples and the many merry dances I had footed on the beach here?"

"I remember it well," replied Vivaldi.

"Ah! Signor mio, you said at the time, that you hoped we should soon be here, and that then I should frisk it away with as glad a heart as the best of them. The first part of your hope, my dear master, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradise; but the second part is come at last; — for here I am, sure enough! dancing

by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples, with my own dear master and mistress, in safety, and as happy almost as myself; and with that old mountain yonder, Vesuvius, which I, forsooth! thought I was never to see again, spouting up fire, just as it used to do before we got ourselves put into the Inquisition! O! who could have foreseen all this! O! giorno felíce! O! giorno felíce!"

"I rejoice in your happiness, my good Paulo," said Vivaldi, "almost as much as in my own; though I do not entirely agree with you as to the comparative proportion of each."

"Paulo!" said Ellena, "I am indebted to you beyond any ability to repay; for to your intrepid affection your master owes his present safety. I will not attempt to thank you for your attachment to him; my care of your welfare shall prove how well I know it; but I wish to give to all your friends this acknowledgment of your worth, and of my sense of it."

Paulo bowed, and stammered, and writhed and blushed, and was unable to reply; till, at length, giving a sudden and lofty spring from the ground, the emotion which had nearly stifled him burst forth in words, and "O! giorno felíce! O! giorno felíce!" flew from his lips with the force of an electric shock. They communicated his enthusiasm to the whole company, the words passed like lightning from one individual to another, till Vivaldi and Ellena withdrew amidst a choral shout, and all the woods and strands of Naples re-echoed with— "O! giorno felíce! O! giorno felíce!"

"You see," said Paulo, when they had departed, and he came to himself again, "you see how people get through their misfortunes, if they have but a heart to bear up against them, and do nothing that can lie on their conscience afterwards; and how suddenly one comes to be happy, just when one is beginning to think one never is to be happy again! Who would have guessed that my dear master and I, when we were clapped up in that diabolical place, the Inquisition, should ever come out again into this world! Who would have guessed when we were taken before those old devils of Inquisitors, sitting there all of a row in a place under ground, hung with black, and nothing but torches all around, and faces grinning at us, that looked as black as the gentry aforesaid; and when I was not so much as suffered to open my mouth, no! they would not let me open my mouth to my master! — who, I say, would have guessed we should ever be let loose again! who would have thought we should ever know what it is to

be happy! Yet here we are all abroad once more! All at liberty! And may run, if we will, straight forward, from one end of the earth to the other, and back again without being stopped! May fly in the sea, or swim in the sky, or tumble over head and heels into the moon! For remember, my good friends, we have no lead in our consciences to keep us down!”

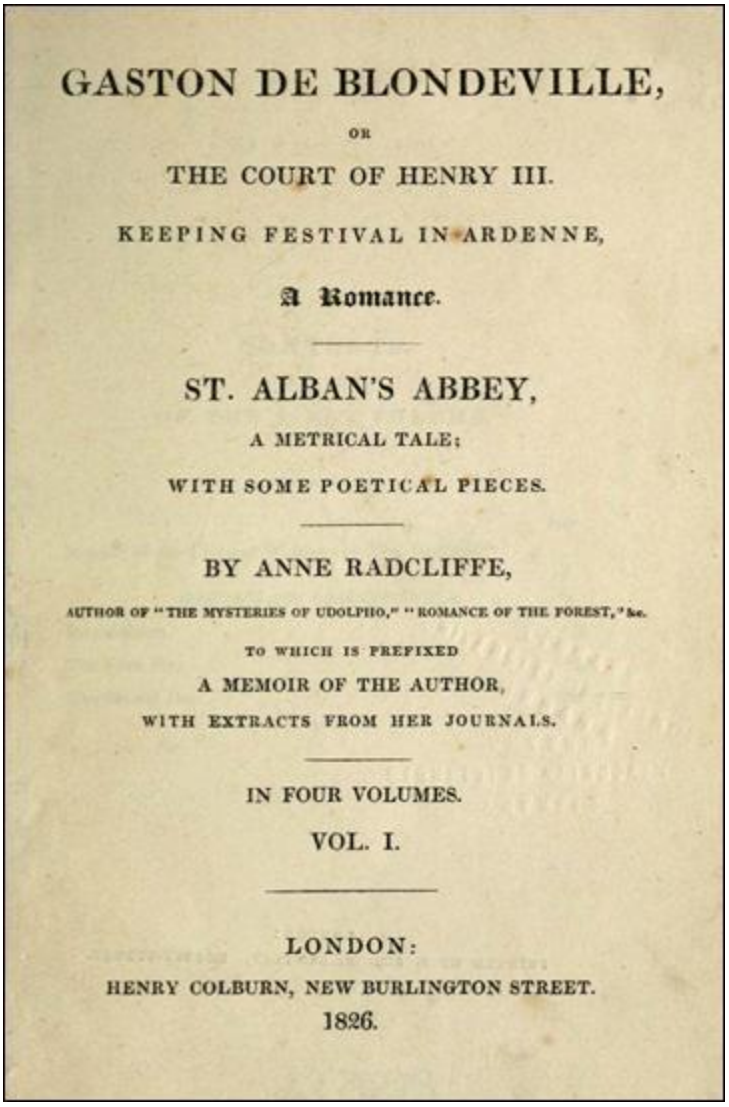
“You mean swim in the sea, and fly in the sky, I suppose,” observed a grave personage near him, “but as for tumbling over head and heels into the moon! I don’t know what you mean by that!”

“Pshaw!” replied Paulo, “who can stop, at such a time as this, to think about what he means! I wish that all those, who on this night are not merry enough to speak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they speak! But you, none of you, no! not one of you! I warrant, ever saw the roof of a prison, when your master happened to be below in the dungeon, nor know what it is to be forced to run away, and leave him behind to die by himself. Poor souls! But no matter for that, you can be tolerably happy, perhaps, notwithstanding; but as for guessing how happy I am, or knowing any thing about the matter. — O! it’s quite beyond what you can understand. O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!” repeated Paulo, as he bounded forward to mingle in the dance, and “O! giorno felice!” was again shouted in chorus by his joyful companions.

GASTON DE BLONDEVIL LE

The Gaston de Blondeville was written in the early ninteenth century, but published posthumously in 1826 by Henry Colburn, three years after Radcliffe's death. The novel is set in the court of Henry III and centred on a trial held by Henry to determine claims against the title character Gaston. He is accused of having killed a merchant's kinsman and despite Henry's reservations about the allegations against Gaston, he has little choice but to order a trial. Radcliffe pays particular attention to the details of Henry III court; this attempted realism serves as a contrast to the fact that while she largely chose to explain the seemingly supernatural events in her novels with rational resolutions in *Gaston de Blondeville*, she features an actual ghost whose presence cannot be justified by reason. The ghost who wishes to expose the truth in the case is contrasted with the abbot who attempts to prevent what has happened from being revealed.

Religion once again features as a prominent aspect in Radcliffe's fiction, with dubious connotations; the danger for both Gaston and his accuser Woodreeve increases as the trial progresses and the sinister machinations of the abbot come into focus. The reversal in Radcliffe's approach to the explanation of the supernatural in this work compared to her other novels raises interesting questions about a variation of philosophy in this book. The rationalist approach in novels or literature during this period was often linked to rejection of the individualism and the emphasis on subjective desires that were frequently associated with the turbulence and violence of the French Revolution. The supernatural is the uncontrollable and irrational and therefore has the potential to threaten the social or political order.



GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE,

OR

THE COURT OF HENRY III.

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDENNE,

A Romance.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY,

A METRICAL TALE;

WITH SOME POETICAL PIECES.

BY ANNE RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO," "ROMANCE OF THE FOREST," &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNALS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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Henry III (1207–1272) was the son and successor of King John, reigning for 56 years from 1216 until his death.

INTRODUCTIO N

“Well! now are we in Arden,” said an English traveller to his companion, as they passed between Coventry and Warwick, over ground, which his dear Shakspeare had made classic. As he uttered this exclamation of Rosalind, he looked forward with somewhat of the surprise and curiosity, which she may be supposed to have felt, and with an enthusiasm all his own, on beholding the very scene, into which the imagination of the poet had so often transported him with a faint degree of its own rapture. He was not, it appears, one of those critics, who think that the Arden of Shakspeare, lay in France. But he looked in vain for the thick and gloomy woods, which, in a former age, were the home of the doubtful fugitive, and so much the terror of the traveller, that it had been found necessary, on this very road, to clear the ground, for a breadth of six acres on each side, in order to protect the wayfaring part of his Majesty’s liege subjects.

Now, albeit the landscape was still wild and woody, he could not any where espy a forest scene of dignity sufficient to call up before his fancy the exiled duke and his court, at their hunter-feast, beneath the twilight of the boughs; nor a single beech, under the grandeur of whose shade the melancholy Jaques, might “lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,” while he sadly sympathized with the poor stag, that, escaped from the pursuit of man, came to drop his tears into the running brook, and to die in quiet. Not even a grove appeared, through whose deep vista the traveller might fancy that he caught, in the gayer light, a glimpse of the wandering Rosalind and her companions, the wearied princess and the motley fool, or of the figure of Orlando, leaning against an oak, and listening to her song: he could not even catch the last faint echo of that song, in a scene so different from the one his fancy had represented to him for the forest of Arden.

“Alas!” said he, “that enchanting vision is no more found, except in the very heart of a populous city, and then neither by the glimmering of the dawn, nor by the glow of evening, but by the paltry light of stage-lamps. Yet there, surrounded by a noisy multitude, whose cat-calls often piped instead of the black-bird, I have found myself transported into the wildest region of poetry and solitude; while here, on the very spot where

Shakspeare drew, I am suddenly let down from the full glow of my holiday-feelings into the plain reality of this work-a-day world."

Here ensued a conversation on illusions of the imagination and on the various powers of exciting them, shown by English poets, especially by Shakspeare and Milton, which it is unnecessary to repeat in this place. Such was its length, that Mr. Simpson's part in it had gradually become less and less active, while Willoughton's increased earnestness had rendered him less and less sensible of the deficiency of replies. At last, on his asking, rather peremptorily, whether his friend did not recollect some fine effects of the towers of Windsor Castle upon the imagination, Mr. Simpson, fortunately concealing how nearly he had approached to a nap, answered, "No, no; I do not recollect any thing of what you tell me; but you were talking a little while ago of Hamlet and towers; now, if you want towers that would do honour to Hamlet, go to Warwick Castle, and if we reach it, as we hope, this night, you can walk from the inn while supper is preparing, and you will find, on the terrace or platform before the gates, towers frowning and majestic enough. If the moon is up, you will see them to perfection, and, as you are so fond of ghosts, you can hardly fail to make an assignation with one there." "I shall delight in the advantage," replied Willoughton, laughing: "Though I am not so fond of ghosts in general, as you seem to think. It is only for a few of particular excellence, that I feel a friendship; for them, indeed, I am willing to own even an affection."

Willoughton, not receiving a rejoinder, observed, that his friend had fallen again into his nap; and he returned to the busy thoughts, to which his first view of this land of Arden, the ground of Shakspeare, had led. Sunk in reverie, he was no longer in the living scene, but ranging over worlds of his own, till a jolt of the carriage awoke his companion; who, shaking his head, and looking out of the window, with the sudden alertness of one who thinks he has been losing time, now supposed himself bound to brush up his thoughts and to talk to his friend.

Willoughton could well have spared the interruption, till a remark, delivered with an air of self-satisfaction, touched the string that recalled him willingly to the present scene.

"There now is an oak," said Simpson, "that may have been of Elizabeth's time, by the hollowness of its vast trunk and the state of its

branches.”

“Ay, long before her time,” said his companion, “and perhaps Shakspeare’s eyes have dwelt on it; perhaps he has rested under its shade: — O! we are coming now to something like the Forest of Arden: see how finely the woods rise in the distance, and what a rich gleam the western sun throws along the ground, beyond those low-hung boughs on our left.”

As the travellers advanced upon Kenilworth-chace, the country assumed a more forest-like appearance, and a new train of ideas engaged Willoughton, on approaching the venerable ruins of the once magnificent castle, at one period its prison, and at another, the *plaisance* of royalty, where Edward the II. groaned under the traitorous power of Mortimer, and his abandoned Queen; and where the crafty Leicester entertained Elizabeth, with princely splendour. The domain of this castle, with its parks and chaces, included a circuit of nearly twenty miles; and when a survey of it was taken in the reign of James the I., on its forfeiture by the voluntary exile and contempt of Sir Robert Dudley, the son of Leicester and of his first wife, the Lady Sheffield, — the woods alone were valued at twenty thousand pounds, according to Dugdale, who observes of the castle and its territory, that “the like, both for strength, state, and pleasure, was not within the realm of England.”

Recollections of the long and varied history of this castle, crowded upon the mind of Willoughton, and he looked out, with impatience, for a glimpse of its stately towers in the distance, and then of its mouldering gateways, in the sun gleam, beneath the woods that now rose round him with majestic shade. Here, at least, was a mass and pomp of foliage worthy of the noble ruin he was approaching and of the memory of Arden; and, when he first caught a view of the grey walls and turrets overtopping the woods, lighted up by the evening sun, whose long beams, slanting now under the boughs, touched with a golden flush the bending trunk of many an old beech standing deep within the shade, he uttered a note of admiration and curiosity that discomposed Mr. Simpson, who immediately directed the postilion to make his way to the nearest gate.

Soon afterwards they found themselves in a valley, whose woody slopes excluded all distant prospect, and confined their attention to the venerable relique, which seemed to characterise, with its own quiet gloom, the surrounding landscape. They observed the several fine and detached

masses of the castle rising on a lone rock in the centre of this secluded little valley; and, as they drove towards the only entrance of the area of these deserted courts, near the square-turreted gateway, which Leicester built for the grand approach to the castle, the impatience of Willoughton became tempered with a gentle and luxurious melancholy, and he forgot even Shakspeare, while he was influenced by somewhat of the poet's feelings.

But a sense of real life broke in upon him even in this scene of solemn grandeur, and it required somewhat of the patience of a philosopher to endure, in the full glow of his present enthusiasm, the clamorous impetuosity of idle children, who, on the first sound of wheels, were seen running to assail the strangers from every cottage on the neighbouring banks. The visions of quiet solitude and of venerable antiquity were, in an instant, dispersed; the chaise was surrounded, and the travellers, having alighted, made their way with difficulty to the little gate, that led through a garden beside Leicester's ruined tower into the area that was once the lower court of the castle, followed by a noisy troop, whom neither money, nor command, could for some time disperse.

The tower — the gateway being now closed up, — was no longer accessible to curiosity, nor could gratify it by any traits of the customs of former times. No warder's bench lurked within the gloom, nor portcullis hung in the arch. The warden's chamber for those, who, by military tenure, kept guard on certain nights of the year, was transformed into a light parlour, and the whole building changed into a modern habitation. From the green and broken square, anciently the lower courtyard, the travellers looked up to the noble mass of ruins that yet stand proudly on their rocky knoll, and form three irregular sides of what was once the inner and grand court.

On the fourth side, which separated the upper from the lower court, are now no vestiges, save in the inequality of the ground where their foundations stood, and where the walls, fallen from above, may lie buried under the turf and briers, that now cover the spot.

On the left, the shattered walls of that lofty pile, built by Leicester, and still called by his name, advance proudly to the edge of the eminence that overlooked the lower court, hung with the richest drapery of ivy; on the right, stands the strong square tower, called Cæsar's, which, though the

most ancient part of the castle, appears fresher and less injured by time, than parts that were raised some ages later. This was the keep, or citadel, of the castle; and the prodigious thickness of the walls appears through the three arches in front, proportioned and shaped like some which may yet be seen in aqueducts near Rome; the walls here show a depth of fifteen or sixteen feet. The stone, of which this noble tower is built, is of closer texture and of a greyer hue, than that in any other part of the building; and this hue harmonizes beautifully with the ivy towers, which overshadow its arches and door-cases, and with the ashlings and elder crowning its summit, which highly overtops every relique of this once magnificent abode of princes.

"It should seem," said Willoughton, "that no human force could lay low walls of such strength as these; yet, as one side of the tower is destroyed, while the other three remain nearly entire, it must have been assailed by some power more sudden and partial than that of time."

"Yes, Sir, yes," said a man, who had been standing by, observing the strangers with attentive curiosity, "that part was pulled down by Cromwell's soldiers, and, if they had had more time on their side, they would have pulled it all down; as it was, they did a mort of mischief."

Willoughton turned to look at his informer, and saw a tall, thin man, who appeared to be a villager, and who, without waiting for encouragement, proceeded: "I have heard say, they destroyed all that stood between Cæsar's and John O'Gaunt's tower there, at the end of the great hall, and a deal on the other side of the court, between the Whitehall and Lord Leicester's buildings."

"Are those walls before us the remains of the great hall?" inquired Mr. Simpson, pointing to a picturesque mass of ruins, standing on the third side of the upper court and seen in perspective between the other two.

"Yes, Sir," said the man, "that there was the great banqueting-hall where" —

"Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth," observed Willoughton. "How beautifully the ivy falls over those light Gothic window-mullions and that arched doorway, so appropriately and elegantly sculptured with vine-leaves! The sun now slopes its rays through the arch, as if purposely to show the beauty of its proportion and the grace of the vine that entwines it."

“Ay,” said Mr. Simpson, “many a pitcher of wine and many a baron of beef have been carried under that arch by the King’s yeomen, when Henry the Third kept his court here.”

“I doubt whether by yeomen,” replied Willoughton, “for, though yeomen of the household are mentioned, about this time, yeomen of the guard, a part of whose office it afterwards became to carry certain dishes to the King’s table, do not occur till the reign of Henry the Seventh. However, it is probable, that, before the appointment of the latter, yeomen of the household might perform this business on state occasions, and in that very hall may have stood before the long tables, in double row, with wine ewers in their hands.”

“Those were times worth living in,” observed Mr. Simpson.

“Ay, those were jolly times! Sir,” said the stranger man; “it’s lonely and sad enough in that old hall now; nothing but briers and ivy. Why, there is an ivy tree now against that old wall there, partly as old as the wall itself. Look, Sir, it is as grey, and almost as sapless as the stone it crawls upon, though the trunk is such a size, and hardly shows a green leaf, spring or summer.”

The travellers made their way among the briers to take a nearer view of it; and, if verdant festoons of younger plants had charmed them, Willoughton, at least, was no less affected by the withered sinews and grey locks of this most forlorn and aged tree, which had itself become a ruin, while adorning another. He climbed over hillocks of briers and weeds, which now covered the ruins of walls, fallen into this courtyard, and he looked down into the area of the great hall, through a doorway which had once led from it by a vestibule towards the white-hall, of which latter hardly a vestige remains, and to King Henry’s lodgings. Here he distinguished the upper end of that magnificent banqueting-room, the very spot where the *deis* , or high table, had stood, which had feasted kings and princes, its lords, or visitors; where Henry the Third had sitten, where John O’Gaunt had caroused, and where Elizabeth had received the homage of Leicester.

At one end of this platform were still the remains of the large bay-window, opening upon the grand-court, where the cupboard had stood, and the golden plate was piled; at the other end, a windowed recess bowed out towards the spot, where there had been a lake, and to woods, that still

flourished. This also, on state occasions, had probably held a plate-board, or cupboard, and, on others, had been occupied as a pleasant seat, commanding the finest views of the park.

The four walls only of this noble hall marked its former grandeur, not a fragment of either roof, or floor, remaining; the ground, upon which Willoughton immediately looked, having been the foundation of a chamber, or hall, for domestic and inferior guests, under the great one, which was eighty-six feet in length, and forty-five in width.

Those walls, where gorgeous tapestry had hung, showed only the remains of doorways and of beautiful gothic windows, that had admitted the light of the same sun, which at this moment sent the last gleam of another day upon Willoughton, and warned him, that another portion of his life too was departing.

The melancholy scene around him spoke, with the simplicity of truth, the brevity and nothingness of this life. Those walls seemed to say—"Generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us, and shall pass away. They have thought of the generations before their time, as you now think of *them,* and as future ones shall think of you. The voices, that revelled beneath us, the pomp of power, the magnificence of wealth, the grace of beauty, the joy of hope, the interests of high passion and of low pursuits have passed from this scene for ever; yet we remain, the spectres of departed years and shall remain, feeble as we are, when you, who now gaze upon us, shall have ceased to be in this world!"

"Why, here is a stone bench yet in this old window," said Mr. Simpson; "and a pleasant window it is still. This homely bench has outlived all the trappings of the castle, though, I dare say, it was little valued in their time!"

"You see, Sir," said the old man, "it belongs to the wall itself; else it would have been carried off long ago."

Willoughton turned at the now repeated voice of this stranger, whose intrusion he did not entirely like, though his knowledge of the castle might be useful, and his conduct did not appear to be ill-meant. To an inquiry, whether he lived in the neighbourhood, he answered, "Hard by, Sir, in Kenilworth. I saw you was a stranger, Sir, and thought you might like to know a little about the castle here; and, unless you hap to light on such a

one as me, you may go away as wise as you came — for, you will know nothing. No offence, I hope, Sir.”

“No, no; no offence at all;” replied Willoughton; “and since you are so well acquainted with this spot, let me hear a little of what you know of it.”

“Ay, let us hear what you have to say,” said Mr. Simpson.

Willoughton, turning as he heard this, perceived his friend seated in the recess he had before noticed. Much remained of the beautiful stone-work of this bay-window, and it now showed itself upon the glowing west, where the sun had just descended, behind the dark woods of the valley. He advanced into it, and looking out upon the scenery, was interested by the stillness and solemnity that began to prevail over it. At some distance down the steep bank on which the castle stands, he could distinguish fragments of the walls that once surrounded it, with here and there some remains of a tower, or a banqueting-house. The ground below seemed marshy, but pasture of a better green stretched up the opposite slopes, and mingled with the woods, that, on every side, shut out the world! This valley seemed the home of a composed melancholy.

“But where,” said Willoughton, “is the noble lake that, in Leicester’s time, surrounded this castle, on which, as you may have heard, Queen Elizabeth was welcomed with pageants and so much flattery?”

“Ay, where is it?” echoed Mr. Simpson, looking at the old man with an air that seemed to say, “Now we have some use for you, and will put you to the test.”

But Willoughton, without giving him time to reply, proceeded: —

“I am doomed to disappointment in Arden. For many miles, I could not discover any thing like a forest-shade, that might have sheltered a banished court, or favourite; and here not a wave of the lake, that delighted a festive one, and which might have supplied me with a floating island, moving to the sound of invisible music, or to the shells of surrounding tritons and sea-nymphs. Nay, I cannot even catch a gleam of the torches, which, on such an occasion, might have thrown their light on the woods and towers of the castle, and have quivered on the waters over which they passed.”

“No, sir,” said the old man, “it would be a hard matter to find any thing of all that now. Cromwell’s people would have knocked all that o’ the head, when they drained off the water, if such things had been there then.”

“Cromwell’s people again! However it is as well to remember them. What had the venerable scenes of Kenilworth to do with politics, or freedom? But thus it is; if even the leaders in political agitations have a better taste themselves than to destroy, for the mere sake of destruction, they let the envy and malice of their followers rage away against whatsoever is beautiful, or grand.”

So said Willoughton to his friend, who smiled, as he perceived that the indignant admirer of antiquity had allowed himself to speak of a military operation, as though it had been a popular commotion.

“Where went the line of the lake, my man of Kenilworth?” asked Simpson.

“Why, Sir, it flowed round two sides of the castle, as I have heard say; it went from the tilt-yard, all along the valley here, for half a mile, and spread out at the foot of these banks, — as wide as to the woods yonder, on the hill side.”

“What a noble sheet of water,” exclaimed Willoughton, “with lawns and woods sloping to its margin and reflected on its surface!”

“Yes, Sir, all that on the opposite side was a deer-park then, as I’ve heard from the account of some book, except that low ground further on, and that was pasture for cattle.”

“For cattle!” exclaimed Mr. Simpson,— “how they would poach such ground as that!”

“But what a beautiful picture they helped to make from the castle windows here,” said Willoughton; “when, on a summer’s noon, they lay under those shades, or stood in the cool waters of the lake.”

“Ay,” said Mr. Simpson, “to such as did not value the land.”

“It was just opposite the Pleasant, yonder,” said the aged historian.

“The *Pleasant!* ”

“Yes, Sir; if you look this way, I will tell you where it stood: — it was a banqueting-house on the lake.”

“O! the *Plaisance!* ”

“It stood on the walls there, down in the valley, to the right of John O’Gaunt’s tower here, and not far from the Swan Tower; but it is so dusk now you can hardly see where I mean.”

Willoughton inquired where the Swan Tower stood.

“Further off, a good way, Sir; but there is nothing of it to be seen now. It stood at the corner of the garden-wall, just where the lake came up; but there is nothing to be seen of that garden either now, Sir, though we know the place where it was. Queen Elizabeth used to take great delight in the banqueting-house, as I’ve heard.”

“It was pleasantly seated;” observed Willoughton.

“Yes, Sir; but there was rare feasting and music, too, I reckon. She used to be fond of sitting in this very window, too!”

“How do you know all this, my friend?”

“Why, Sir, the place is called Queen Elizabeth’s turret, to this day, because she took such a fancy to it; and it was pleasant enough to be sure, for it overlooked the widest part of the lake; — this bench had velvet trappings enough then, I warrant.”

“I have no pleasure in remembering Elizabeth;” said Willoughton, as he turned to look for his friend.

“No! — not in remembering the wisest princess that ever reigned?” said Mr. Simpson.

“No: her wisdom partook too much of craft, and her policy of treachery; and her cruelty to poor Mary is a bloody hand in her escutcheon, that will for ever haunt the memory of her.”

“You are too ardent,” observed Mr. Simpson; “much may be said on her conduct on that head.”

“She inspires me only with aversion and horror,” replied Willoughton.

“She gives other people the horrors, too,” said the villager.

“How do you mean, friend?”

“There are strange stories told, Sir, if one could but believe them; — there are old men now in the parish, who say they have seen her about the castle here, dressed in a great ruff about her neck, just as she is in her picture; they knew her by that.”

Here Mr. Simpson, giving Willoughton a look of sly congratulation, on his having met with a person of taste seemingly so congenial with his own, burst forth into a laugh, or rather a shout, that made every echo of the ruin vocal, his friend smile, and the old man stare; who, somewhat gravely, proceeded —

“They say, too, she has been seen sitting there, in that very window, when there was but just light enough to see her by.”

“A ghost in a ruff and farthingale!” exclaimed Mr. Simpson, in exultation;— “that is, surely, the very perfection of propriety in the ghost-costume;” and again the roar of laughter rolled round every turret of the castle.

“Why does that strike you as so absurd?” asked Willoughton; “this is only a ghost representing the familiar image of the person when alive. Can it be more ridiculous than the Scotch plaid for the supernatural being, whom we call a witch? And yet, when you and I used to discuss the taste of ghost-dresses, you did not object to that appearance; but justified it, as one with which popular superstition was familiar.”

“Yes,” replied Simpson; “but though the ruff and farthingale accompany our idea of Queen Elizabeth, it is of her, as a living character, not in that of her apparition.”

“And yet,” rejoined Willoughton; “if you remain in this ruin, half an hour longer, till you can scarcely distinguish the walls, you will feel less inclined to laugh at Queen Elizabeth’s ghost in a ruff and farthingale.”

“Perhaps I might,” said Mr. Simpson, “if you had not let me so much into the secret of effect in these cases. Yet I question whether it would have been possible for Elizabeth’s picture, arrayed in that ridiculous court-dress, supposing it actually to appear, to extort from me any thing but laughter.”

“They say, Sir,” said the aged man, “that she looked solemn and stern enough as she sat in that window, just where you do now, leaning her head upon her hand, or something that looked like one. She sat quite still, for some time, and old Taylor sat quite still looking at her, for he could not move; — but when she rose up and turned round, and made a motion with her hand — thus — as much as to say, ‘Go about your business!’ he thought he should have dropped, and would have gone fast enough if he could.”

“Ay,” said Mr. Simpson; “there was the characteristical in manner, as well as in dress. This must be a true history!”

“Well, friend,” said Willoughton, “and what followed?”

“Why, Sir, then she went down this steep place you now stand upon, into the hall there, where *he* could not have gone, in broad daylight, without risk of his neck; she sank down, as it were, and he lost her awhile, it was

so dark; but presently he saw her, all on a sudden, standing in that doorway there, — and I can almost guess I see her there now.”

“You are a silly old man,” said Mr. Simpson; and he looked immediately to the door.

“You would not like,” said Willoughton, smiling, “to inquire minutely into the difference between purposely avoiding to look, and purposely looking in the midst of this story;” but — turning to the old man— “what next?”

“Why, Sir, she stood in the arch some time with a very stern look; but I never rightly understood what became of her. Old Taylor said she passed away like a cloud; but then afterwards he was not sure but he saw her again, in a minute or two, in this very window.”

“And have you never been fortunate enough,” said Mr. Simpson, “to see any of those sights?”

“No, Sir, no; I hope I have no need of them; though, if I was that way given, I might have thought *I* saw things too sometimes. Once by Mortimer’s tower, down in the tilt-yard, I as good as thought I saw a man standing with a mask on his face, in a moonlight night, with a drawn sword in his hand.”

“That tower,” remarked Willoughton, “was doubtless named after Mortimer, the paramour of the infamous Isabel?”

“They say, Sir, some king was once shut up there.”

“Ay, Edward the Second, for a short time.”

“And they will tell you a power of stories of what was to be seen about that tower, before it was pulled down, and after too; but I don’t believe a word of them. People are always conjuring up strange tales when they have nothing better to do. I have got an old book at home full of them, enough to make one’s hair stand on end, if one could but make it all thoroughly out. I showed it to Mr. Timothy, the schoolmaster, and he could hardly make it out neither; but he said it was no matter, for it was full of nothing but nonsense. He read me some of it, and I could not get it out of my head again for a week.”

“Ay, it met with a thriving soil,” said Mr. Simpson, “it’s well you got the nonsense out of your head at all. But how happened you to buy a book in a language you could not read?”

“I did not buy it, Sir; and, as to the language, I could understand that well enough, but I could not read the letters; and Timothy himself bungled at the spelling.”

Willoughton inquired where this book was met with; and whether he could have a sight of it?

“Why, Sir, it was dug out of the ground, where an old chapel once stood, belonging to the Priory hard by.”

“O! I remember,” said Willoughton; “there was formerly a monastery of Black Canons at Kenilworth, founded by Geoffrey de Clinton, lord chamberlain to the first King Henry, and the founder of this same castle too: but go on.”

“The place is used for a burial-ground still,” resumed the old villager; “and it happened, that as Guy, our sexton, was one day going to dig a grave there, he lighted upon the coffin, or the chest, or whatever it was, that held many things besides this strange book.”

“Indeed!” said Willoughton, eagerly; “let us hear a little about this.”

“We shall not get to Warwick to-night,” said Mr. Simpson, gravely.

“Why, Sir, it was one day last autumn, — no, I believe it was as late as November; I remember it had rained hard all morning; but whether it was October or November, I cannot be sure.”

“That, I should suppose, does not much signify,” said Mr. Simpson.

“Come, now,” said Willoughton, “do let him be as circumstantial as he pleases.”

“Willingly, willingly, only remember, we are not to sleep at Kenilworth.”

“Well, Sir, I cannot be sure exactly of the time, only it had been a dismal day; but the rain was over, when old Guy came running to me in as great a fright as ever I saw a man, and said he had found something in the ground, he could not tell what, but he never felt any thing so heavy in his life; he could not move it, and desired I would go and help him to raise it; and he stared, as if he was out of his wits. When I heard it was so heavy, I thought we might as well have my son to help us, for he was a stout lad. Guy did not much like this, I saw, for he was thinking he should find a treasure, and Guy was always a close one, and for getting as much as he could; it was only two years before he got his money raised for tolling; and there is not one in the parish has liked him since. However, I got my son to go with

me, and we set to work, without saying a word to any one; and it was so near dark that nobody was likely to see us in that lonely place."

"Well! but if it had been treasure, it would have belonged to the Lord of the Manor," said Mr. Simpson.

"Yes, Sir, I know that well enough; but you shall hear. We raised it out of the ground at last, and what should it be but an old oak chest. It was so large, a man might have lain down in it at full length; but what helped to make it so heavy was the iron bands that held it together, and three great iron locks, that fastened it. Now, as the place where it was dug up was the east end of the church, Guy took it into his head it contained church plate, that had been put there, in troublesome times, by the monks of the priory. If you had but seen him! He thought his fortune was made; he threw away his spade, and cut a caper as high as a wall. I thought myself there must be something worth looking at o'the inside, but by this time it was so dark we could hardly see what we were about; so I sent my son home for the lantern, and then we tried with old Guy's crow to get the lid open. We got it off at last; and what do you think, Sir, we found? Why, nothing but old parchments; some with seals dangling to them, and some old books, dropping to pieces with the worms, though the leaves were thick enough, too: at the bottom of the chest was a great heap of dust."

"Did you find nothing else?" asked Mr. Simpson, fixing his eyes on him.

"No, Sir, nothing else," said the old man, with a little hesitation; "nothing else, except an old staff, with a large head; and there was a little silver on that and on a book I have at home."

Mr. Simpson inquired what had made the chest so weighty.

"Why, Sir, it was made of solid oak, six inches thick, I warrant, and had a great deal of iron about it. I took a fancy to that book, though I could not read it, for I could not make out the letters; but there is some pretty pictures on the leaves, and the colours are as fresh as if they were just painted; and some of the great letters are done all over with gold as bright as the sun."

"A manuscript, illuminated probably by some monk of the priory," said Willoughton; "can I see it?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the old man, "I have it at home; but what made me wonder most was to see it look so fresh, after it had lain all that time in the ground; to be sure it was well wrapped up in parchment, and the trunk was

thick enough, for that matter; but some of the other books dropped to pieces as soon as the air came to them."

Willoughton asked what had been done with the parchments; adding, to his companion, that they were probably the leiger-book and some other muniments of the Priory, hidden when the terrors of Henry the Eighth first prevailed in the monasteries, and afterwards pretended to be lost, first from some hope of their future utility, and then from a fear of avowing their concealment.

"When Guy," resumed the old man, "found what sort of treasure he had gotten, he was ready to throw himself into the old chest, to be put under ground with it again; but I said there was no need of that; so we took out some of the best of the books, but none of the others had pictures; and Guy took the old staff, and then we did lay the trunk in the earth again."

Willoughton made many inquiries concerning the parchments with the seals, and the seals themselves, and whether his informant could find again the spot where they were deposited.

"Come, come," said Mr. Simpson; "let us leave this place; it is almost dark."

The old man said he thought he could find the spot; but that would be of no use; for it had lain so deep in the ground, that there had been depth over it for graves, and it was now beneath them.

Willoughton, shocked at this circumstance, said no more on the subject; but the old man proceeded.

"Among other things in the book, Sir, is a view of this old hall. I should never have found it out myself; for it was no more like what it is now than nothing: but Timothy Crabb, our schoolmaster, knew it at once by this very window, too — and by a doorway in the wall, yonder."

"How does it appear in the drawing?" asked Willoughton.

"Why, Sir, — but you shall see the book, if you like. The hall had a high roof, like a church there, and a gallery ran all along the bottom of it, and such a chimney!" —

"Ay! like the remains of what we see here now, I suppose," said Mr. Simpson.

"No, Sir, as different as can be."

"O! perhaps," turning to Willoughton, "it was such an one as we saw at Penshurst; a raised hearth, with irons to hold wood, in the middle of the

hall."

"No; that style," observed Willoughton, "was of later date than chimneys in English halls. It came in, I apprehend, with the castellated mansion, of which style is Penshurst, the more ancient part of the building at least. In the hall of the older castle, a chimney sloped back from the line of the wall into the thickness of it, and let the smoke through a loop above. Thus, the raised hearth, on which the wood-fire blazed, projected into the chamber, and was sometimes overhung by a canopy of stone-work supported by pillars, that gave it a resemblance to a gothic porch, such as adorn some of our finest cathedrals."

"Yes, Sir, this in the book looks like something like a church porch without the sides, the top comes so far over the hearth. Then all down the hall are rows of tables, with gentlefolk and ladies sitting at them, and— "

"I must see this manuscript," interrupted Willoughton; "it appears to be a curious one."

"Come," said Mr. Simpson, "it is already so dark, we can hardly see our way hence. There is scarce a gleam of light left on the horizon."

"No, Sir, but the moon is rising yonder, and some gentry have a fancy to see this place by moonlight."

"O! we have seen enough of it."

"I recommend you," said Willoughton, "to avoid looking, just at this moment, towards the door at the bottom of the hall, lest you should see the stately form of Elizabeth in the archway; I had a glimpse of something like her just now; nay, I am not quite sure that I did not see the grave physiognomy of Leicester, under his small black velvet cap and feather."

"We shall not get to Warwick to-night," said Mr. Simpson, fretfully. "They talk of the patience of a painful antiquary; think what the patience of his friend must be."

"I have not the honour to deserve the former title," said Willoughton.

"Between us, we approach to it; the painful part of it, you will allow, belongs to me."

"In the old sense of the word," said Willoughton, "you do not claim it; and, as to the new one, your jests recompense you for your pain: I have all possible inclination to deserve the title, in its best sense; at least by cherishing those inquiries, which make us intimate with the characters and habits of our fellow creatures in past ages, which show them to us in their

halls, their ceremonies, their tournaments, their banquets, their domestic usages and even in their monastic retirement. These picturesque visions, in which the imagination so much delights, and every discovery, however remote, awaken a peculiar kind of interest and of sentiment no less delightful, which render antiquity, of all studies, the least liable to the epithet of dry, though dull and dry people so liberally bestow it. Antiquity is one of the favourite regions of poetry."

"Nay," said Mr. Simpson, "your woods and your meadows are the region for that. Who ever thought of looking for a muse in an old castle? But come, let us remember, that we are on the road for Warwick."

"Before we go, my friend here must show me his old manuscript; and I must see this fine ruin by moonlight."

"By moonlight!" exclaimed Simpson; "would you really stay for so romantic a purpose? We have seen it already by sun-light, and almost by no light at all?"

"The moon is rising, now, Sir," said the old man, "and by the time the gentleman has seen the book it will be risen high enough to give you light on your journey."

"Meanwhile, the horses will have no objection to a little corn," remarked Willoughton; "nor the postilion to a little ale, if this good man will direct him where to get it."

Mr. Simpson having added, that he too should like a little Warwickshire ale, the old man replied, "The ale they sell is not much to brag on; but, if you please, gentlemen, I will direct the lad where he and the horses may rest themselves, and, if you will step with me, you can taste some of my home-brewed, and see the book at the same time."

The travellers assented, and their conductor, after having directed the postilion to a house, accompanied them to his cottage, where he produced the desired manuscript. It was written on vellum, and richly illuminated, and purported to be an account of what passed at Kenilworth, when Henry the Third there kept the feast of Saint Michael, and of some wonderful accident that there befel.

"There is a title-page written almost in the form of a triangle," said Willoughton, "and that about as closely as if it were printed. The date, which forms the apex of the reversed triangle, I cannot wholly make out, but it is twelve hundred and something."

At the heads of chapters and sometimes on the broad margins, there were made drawings of parts of Kenilworth Castle, as it had appeared in the time of Henry probably, with some of the scenes which had there passed, and sometimes with single portraits of the chief persons engaged in them. These gave vivid ideas of the customs and manners of that period, and were traced, with more knowledge of perspective and more attention to proportion, than Willoughton expected. Among them was a procession of knights and ladies, led by numerous harpers, returning from the tilt-yard to the great hall, which showed a high sloping roof, while the windows below, at a considerable elevation from the ground, had round-headed arches, instead of pointed ones. The doorway, leading into it, accorded with the place where one still appears; but the arch was differently constructed, and the receding mouldings seemed to have been ornamented with chevron work, or zigzag, instead of the elegant vine now sculptured there, which latter he had no hesitation in assigning to the time of Leicester.

Another drawing gave an inside view of the hall, as mentioned by the old man. The roof was of great height, open to the rafters, and with pendent beams below, formed into arches, ornamented with inverted pinnacles, nicely carved. Another drawing gave the inside of a chapel, of which there are no longer any remains at Kenilworth.

The original style of the building appeared very ancient, but this was mixed with one more light and elegant, like that of the pointed arches of the windows; and Willoughton conjectured this improvement to have been made by Henry the Third, who is known to have repaired the chapel of the castle for his own use, during his occasional residence there.

There was a representation of a marriage ceremony in celebration at the altar, where a numerous assemblage of dignified persons were arranged in state. A king was giving the hand of the bride to a young man, who was decorated with many military insignia, but who was so far from receiving the gift with joy, that he appeared to be struck with consternation, while the lady, by her attitude, seemed to be fainting.

In the margin was a portrait of a king robed and wearing a crown of gold, which seemed intended for Henry the Third, to whose statue in brass, in his monument in Westminster Abbey, it bore a considerable resemblance.

At the head of another chapter was an inside view of a tower, where a man was sitting alone near a lamp. In the background a face appeared at the grate. The same chamber was represented afterwards, with a man stretched upon a low pallet, but whether asleep, or dead, was not expressed by the drawing. The lamp had gone out, and, instead of a face at the grate, the moon appeared through a window beyond, and threw a pale light on the couch.

Another drawing gave a view of a chapel, or hall; Willoughton was not certain which: there was, however, something like an altar at the farthest end, near which stood a figure alone, the face concealed in a vizor, the left arm, uplifted, held a shield, the right a lance, but the feet were in a position of rest, though another figure near a door was departing, as if with the fear of being pursued, his hands outstretched, and his face turned back over his shoulder. There, too, the moon appeared through a window, and the light fell upon the lifted shield.

While Willoughton was musing what this could mean, the old man, looking upon the leaf, said, “Timothy Crabb, Sir, maintains this is a picture of the Priory-Chapel, he is sure, as it stood formerly. I should never have found it out myself, there is so little left of the chapel; but Tim makes it all out fine enough.”

“Does he tell you what that figure means?”

“Not as I remember, Sir; but the book tells that, I reckon.”

Willoughton turned over the leaves near the drawing; the language, the orthography and the characters were all so ancient, that he hesitated much. What he did make out, however, fixed his attention so deeply, that his friend lost the small remains of his patience, and declared he would set off without him. Willoughton then told his humble host, that, if he was willing to part with the manuscript, he was disposed to give him his own price for it.

“Why, Sir, I like to look at the pictures sometimes, and the gold is so bright it is a pleasure to see it; but the book for other matters is not of much value to me, though it may be to other people, seeing as I can’t make it out; and, for that matter, if I could, I do not know any good it would do; for, what Tim did read made me as foolish almost as old John, and afraid to go near the castle, for some time, after dark, though I was always

counted a little more sensible than some. But I see no good in such things, not I.”

“You are a sensible fellow,” said Mr. Simpson, “and I wish my friend here had a little less curiosity, and a little more such wit as yours. And now, Harry, do leave the book and come away.”

“No, I shall first console myself for the mortification of your compliments. What shall I give you for the book, my friend?”

“Why, Sir, I don’t know, I am sure; I don’t know the value of such things. Tim Crabb said it might be worth its weight in gold for aught he knew; but I leave it, Sir, to your generosity.”

“It is well you do not leave it to mine,” said Mr. Simpson, “for I should make a low reckoning of it.”

The sum Willoughton offered accorded with his own estimation of so curious a relick, rather than with the expectation of his host, who heard it with exclamations of thankfulness; while Mr. Simpson expressed not merely surprise but reprehension, and the vulgar proverb of “Fools and their money— “ was nearly audible on his lips.

“What other books did you find in the same place?” asked Willoughton.

“Ah! bless you, Sir,” replied the ancient villager, “I wish I had a score of them.”

“Well you may, my friend, if they would fetch you such a price as this!” was the ready remark of Mr. Simpson.

“It is his honour’s own generosity, Sir, and I suppose he thinks the book worth the money, or he would not give it.”

“Come, Harry,” continued Simpson, “here has been folly enough for once; let us be gone.”

“You are sure you have no other book like this?” inquired Willoughton.

“There is another or two, that do still hold together, I think,” said the old man; “They have got no pictures; but then they have the same kind of letters, that cannot be understood.” — He went for them.

“You will tempt the man to steal the parish-register, and offer it to you as a curious relick,” said Mr. Simpson; “and indeed it will deserve your money better than this.”

The old man returned with a small quarto, printed in black letter and bound in real boards, which had been guarded at the corners with brass;

the marks of clasps remained on it and those of a lozenge in the centre of each board.

“Though this is of later date, much later date, than the manuscript,” said Willoughton, “I see it is one of the earliest books that came from the press in England. It appears also by its contents, to have been intended to assist the purposes of the monks of that dark age.”

“A Boke of Sprites!” exclaimed Simpson, with a shout of exultation: “a boke of sprites, with the signs they may be known by, and divers rules to keep you from harm: the like was never known before!”

“Excellent! excellent!” said Willoughton; “and here is another black-letter volume. Well, friend, without looking further, what shall I give you for them?”

“This is past endurance!” said Mr. Simpson; “my patience is out!”

“O Sir! I will give you these into the bargain,” said the old man, smiling; an offer which Willoughton would not accept, who paid the old man what he thought they were worth. Mr. Simpson, then taking his friend by the arm, desired his host to direct them to the chaise.

“I must see the ruin by moonlight,” said Willoughton; “but I will not detain you many minutes.”

“No, no; you will see the towers of Warwick by moonlight; which will be much finer.”

“My good friend here,” said Willoughton, “will order the chaise round to the gate where it set us down; and, by the time it arrives, I shall have seen what I wish to see.”

“Be it so,” said Mr. Simpson, with an air of resignation; “one is sure of you when a journey is to be begun; but never when one would end, or hasten it. I have not forgotten our midnight rambles about Stonehenge! Doubtless we were the first human beings, who had appeared there, at such an hour, for many centuries; and what astonished me afterwards, more than any thing I saw, was, that I myself should have been conjured there at such an unseasonable hour; I, whose brain never hatched any of those ‘high and unimaginable fantasies,’ as your poet Gray calls them, which distract the heads of some of his readers.”

“Ay! those shadows of the moon at full,” said Willoughton laughing, as they walked towards the ruin, his friend remonstrating with him on the imprudence of this passion for antiquities and on his credulity. “And can

you really hold," said he, "that these books were found in the manner related; and that any of them, especially the 'Boke of Sprites,' ever belonged to the library of the priory?"

"It does not seem probable," replied Willoughton, "that the old man should have invented the story he has related of the discovery of them; but, be that as it may, the books themselves announce their own genuine antiquity. The manuscript is laboriously illuminated, and it is well known, that such works were chiefly performed by the inhabitants of monasteries. The Boke of Sprites even was likely to have served the purposes of the monks. We know that the libraries of monasteries contained a most heterogenous assemblage: Ovid, the Romance of Charlemagne, Guy of Warwick, and the Rimes of Robin Hood, have been found on the shelf with Homilies, and other books; which, although they might be tinged with the corruptions of the Papal school, ought not to have had such companions. You may recollect, that Warton, in the interesting sketches of ancient manners which he gives in his *History of English Poetry* , mentions this very fully; and that, among others, the library of Peterborough contained 'Amys and Amdion,' 'Sir Tristram Merlin's Prophecies,' and the 'Destruction of Troy:' and books of this sort were not only copied, but often invented by the monks, sometimes for their amusement, sometimes for worse purposes."

"One of the old books you have relates to their castle, I think," said Mr. Simpson, looking up at the shadowy masses; which, shown thus faintly by the rising moon, seemed more majestic than before.

"Yes, and I perceive," continued Willoughton, "that even you feel a curiosity to know what may have passed so many ages back, on the spot we now stand upon."

"Why," acknowledged Simpson, "when one looks up at the very walls now crumbling into ruin, that were once so magnificent, and that inclosed beings with passions as warm as our own — beings, who have so long since vanished from the earth, one cannot help wishing to know a little of their history and of the scenes they witnessed; but, for your legend, I fear to trust it."

"It speaks of the times of Henry the Third," said Willoughton, "those were lawless enough to permit many adventures; and, if the citizens of London were then robbed in the streets even at noonday, what could

travellers in the forest of Arden expect? But this Manuscript seems to tell of princely feasts given in the castle, and of adventures passing in the presence of the Court."

"Ay, if one could but believe them."

"A great part of the castle," pursued Willoughton, "which then existed, is now gone; and much that we look at, stands in its place; but that noble hall, and Cæsar's tower and several other towers, such as those where the moonlight falls, beheld the very court of Henry the Third, ay, and Montfort, on whom he had bestowed Kenilworth, and who added ingratitude to treason, by holding the fortress against his benefactor and liege lord."

They stood for some minutes in silence, looking up at the ruin and listening, as the breeze rushed by, to the shivering of the ivy, that overhung it, — all the shining leaves trembling in the moonlight. The pauses of solemn stillness, that followed these sighings of the air among the old branches, were very solemn, and the sound itself — so still, uncertain, and sudden, Willoughton could have fancied to have been the warning murmurs of one, who, in his mortal state, had lived within these walls, and now haunted the scene where it had once revelled, or, perhaps, suffered. It seemed like a voice imperfectly uttering forth some dark prophecy, and telling of the illusion of life and the certainty of death. To Willoughton's recollection this spectacle of the remains of ages past, now glimmering under the soft shadows of moonlight, brought those touching lines of Beattie —

Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
And woo the weary to profound repose,
Can passion's wildest uproar lull to rest,
And whisper comfort to the man of woes.

Willoughton stood so wrapt, that he heard not his friend's inquiry, whether he meant to pass a night at Kenilworth, as a sequel to a former one at Stonehenge; nor was he immediately aware of the nearer approach of his aged conductor, who said, in a tone somewhat tremulous, "You are now on the very spot, Sir, where Mortimer's tower stood; it was the main

entrance to the castle, when there was a lake, and it opened from the tilt-yard, that ran along the end of the water into the lower court: you see, Sir, it was quite on the opposite side of the castle from Lord Leicester's great gate."

Willoughton surveyed the place, but not a vestige of the building remained. "Here then," said he, "the unhappy Edward the Second was, for a while, imprisoned, before he was removed to Corfe and Berkeley Castles, his last abodes."

"If you please, Sir," said the man, "the chaise is at the gate; and, if you will take my advice, you will not stay here long, for I cannot say I like it myself; I shall begin to think I see that strange figure again, and I had rather not."

"Well, let us go," said Mr. Simpson, "or I shall begin to fancy something of the same sort, too. What did you say, it had a mask on its face?"

"Yes, Sir, and a drawn sword in its hand; but I don't like the place, Sir, let us go."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Simpson, "let us go; we — we — we shall not get to Warwick to-night."

A laugh from his friend, which he too well understood, both vexed and ashamed him. "I did not think it possible," said he, "that I could have yielded to the contagion of this folly thus; remember, however, it is not Elizabeth in her ruff and farthingale, that I fear, nor any thing else distinctly."

Willoughton laughed again triumphantly. "Better and better; your feelings are true to my arguments, in spite of your own. I desire no farther proof of the effects of time and circumstances — of solitude and obscurity on the imagination."

As they passed by Cæsar's tower, and inquired where the line of the castle-ditch had been traced, he observed, that probably the chief entrance had at first been over a drawbridge to that tower, though now no sign of it could be distinguished.

When the travellers were once more seated in the chaise, Mr. Simpson betook himself to sleep; while, on their journey of four miles through the checkered moonlight of woody lanes to Warwick, Willoughton did not lament the silence of his friend, which left him to the quiet musings of his own mind, and to the peace of nature, reposing under this soft and

beautiful shade. The air was so still that scarcely a leaf trembled of the lofty boughs that overshadowed the road; and when the postilion stopped to make some alteration of the harness, the breathing of the horses alone, was heard through all this scene of night.

There is a peace of the spirits, which has surely somewhat holy in it. Such is the calmness which the view of a midsummer-dawn communicates, or that of moonlight on woods and green plains; and such Willoughton experienced during this short ride, till he drew near Warwick, when the beautiful towers of Saint Mary's appeared on the right, and the more lofty and distant ones of the castle on the left of the perspective; and these awakened the stronger interest of expectation.

Having reached the inn, and Mr. Simpson, late as it was, having ordered a good supper, they walked out to take a view of the castle. Finding that, at this hour, they could not gain admittance by the porter's gate, they went to the bridge over the Avon, on the outside of the town, and thence had a fine retrospect of the castle, with all its towers crowning the high, woody bank of that peaceful and classic stream. One vast, round tower of most warlike air, looking down upon the precipice, delighted Willoughton more than any other. A part of the edifice, repaired and adorned in the time of James the First, containing the state rooms, which run in a long line upon the steep, was not in harmony with this tower, and gave very different ideas of the character and manners of the respective ages to which they belonged. The moonlight touched this tower with a fine solemnity, and fell on the tops of the dark cedars and other trees, that clothe the precipice, as it glanced to Shakspeare's stream below, where it rested in all its silver radiance, as if pleased to claim it for its home.

Willoughton leaned over the bridge, and looked upon the scene in silence. The brightness of the river, the dark, clear shade of the woods, reflected on its margin and rising with majesty up the steep, with the grey towers, in softened light, crowning all, formed a harmony of tints and of objects such as he had not often seen, and which recalled to him that state of holy peace he had so lately experienced.

Amidst the stillness of this scene, there arose a strain, as if commanded by Shakspeare's wand, and to which his words might have been applied. "O! it came o'er mine ear, like the sweet south, that breathes upon a bank of violets." It was the music of French-horns, sweetened by distance and

by the water, over which it passed, accompanied by a few voices addressing the river and celebrating the bard in the wellknown song of Garrick and Arne,— “Thou soft-flowing Avon!”

Nothing could exceed the beauty of some of the cadences, prolonged by the deep, mellow tones of the horns, or of the chorus, and of the close, that gave these words: —

The fairies by moonlight dance round the green bed,
For, hallow’d the turf is, that pillows his head.

They brought tears into the eyes of Willoughton, and drew from him a deep sigh long after silence had returned.

Mr. Simpson looked about to discover whence this charming tribute to the memory of the loved poet came, and perceived two little boats stealing along the margin of the stream, under shadow of the bank that rose to the castle. The white awning of the first betrayed it to his eye, before it emerged on the moonlight; and now the measured trampling of the oars told its departing course upon the waters, till once again that chorus died along the air, and then the steps of the oars were heard no more.

The travellers remained for some moments, as if spell-bound, in thoughtful silence; and they left this enchanting scene, and returned to their inn, without having uttered a word. This was an unusual mood with Mr. Simpson; he had caught it from his companion, rather than from the scene; and now, on the entrance of supper, he rejoiced to get rid of it, and to return to the more substantial pleasures of this world.

Willoughton, when he had retired to his chamber, and had, as was his custom, looked out upon the night, now overcast with gloomy clouds, sat down to examine his manuscripts, instead of seeking repose. Bound up with that of the “Trew Chronique,” was another, entitled “A Trew Historie of two Mynstrells, that came by night to the Priory of Saint Margaret, and what they disclosed, and what one in the convent by his art, proved them to bee.” This “Trew Historie” was more difficult to be deciphered than the “Trew Chronique,” and Willoughton left it for the present, and took the “Boke of Sprites.”

As he turned over the leaves, curious to see the thraldom of superstition to which the people of a remote age were liable, he often smiled at the

artless absurdities he discovered, the clumsy inventions practised upon the fears of the ignorant by the venality of the monks. Yet he sometimes found his attention seized, in spite of himself, by the marvellous narratives before him; till, at length, he began to feel that he was alone, to recollect that it was past midnight, to observe that all around him was still as death; and gradually to think he might as well lay aside the “Boke of Sprites” till daylight should return and the world again sound busily around him.

He did so, and again took the “Trew Chronique,” desirous of ending his long day, with some new traits of an age so distant from his own and of the style, in which they might be shadowed forth. The mere spelling did not render this so difficult, as the character in which it was written, with its abundance of abbreviations and contractions.

The following is a modernized copy, which he afterwards wrote out for the amusement of a friend, who was fond of the subjects it touched upon, but had not industry enough to work his way through the obstructions of the original. In this copy, while Willoughton endeavoured to preserve somewhat of the air of the old style, without its dryness, he was often compelled to regret, that much of the effect of the story was lost, with the simplicity, brevity and quaintness of the ancient manner. However, he often retained the old words, where they did not seem to form too glaring a contrast with the modern style, and, now and then, somewhat of the quaintness of the original, the title of which ran thus: —

A Boke,

Contenynge a trew chronique of what passed at
Killingworth, in Ardenn, when Our Soveren
Lord, the Kynge, kept ther his fest of
Senzt Michel; with ye marveylous
accident, that ther befel, at the so-
lempnissazion of the marriage
of Gaston de Blondeville.
With divers things, cu-
rious to be known,
thereunto purtayn-

ing. With an
account of the
grete Turney,
ther held
in the
yere
MCCLVI.
Changed out of the Norman tongue
By Grymbald, Monk of Senzt Marie
Priori in Killingworth.

THE FIRST DAY .

At the head of this chapter was a drawing, of the King and Queen, with their train, passing under the towers of Kenilworth. Near the King rode a young knight of a very spirited air; in one hand he held his cap, bending towards the King, who seemed to be speaking to him, and with the other he reined in his fiery courser. At some distance, was a man pressing through the crowd, with eager gesticulation and a wild countenance, towards the King. The royal banner, on the tower above, was tinged by the setting sun, and the arms and caps of the soldiers on the battlement there glistened with the rays. The cap of one of these, who, as if to obtain a longer view of the King, appeared to have stretched too far forward, was falling on the multitude below; some of whom were laughing.

It was at the feast of Saint Michel, that King Henry, the third of his name, with his Queen and sundrie of the nobles of the realm and a marvellous train of estates and gentils, came to keep court in Ardenn, at his castle of Kenilworth. The day was drawing to an end ere they arrived: and it was a goodly sight to see this noble company coming over the forest, till then so lonesome; and the last light of this day's sun glittering upon the helmets and lances of the King's guard; likewise on the gorgeous apparelling of their horses and trumpets, with their banners unrolled, that went before his grace; also on the litters of the Queen, covered with cloth of gold and with tapestry of rich colours, brought from her own land beyond the sea.

This noble train, with all the spearmen attendant on the King, was like unto a little army covering the paths and tracks, for many miles, as they wound amongst the woods of Ardenn; or like unto some mighty river, that flowing along, appears, where the shades open, in shining bends upon the plain, and is lost again as they enter beneath the gloom; but yet may you judge of their course throughout all the prospect. Like as you may the broken lines of the great aqueduct, stretching over the plains of our dear father of Rome; which, as we perceive its distant points athwart those

solitudes, we connect in our minds into one great whole, grander in its sweep than it might have shown when it stood complete.

There went before the King a hundred archers in pairs, sumptuously apparelled, and having the feathers of their arrows stained with green; the horns sounded before them through the woods: then fifty demi-lancemen, two abreast; then fifty pikemen; then trumpets, with their banners also displayed; then officers at arms, in their surcoats, the serjeants with their maces. In the midst was borne up the royal banner, by six of the standard-bearers: the pipes of it were of silver, and were slided along the banner-staff; which was held with horn in a girdle of white leather, embroidered, worn by the King's chief standard-bearer.

The King's Highness came riding on a noble grey, widely encompassed about with pikemen, and attended by divers nobles of the realm and by knights and gentils, without number. His Highness wore that day a cloak of purple velvet, lined with yellow satin, and furred with martin and ermine; on his head was a cap of black velvet, bearing a sable plume. His countenance was goodly and gracious, and he often turned and spoke to those about him.

On his right hand, rode the young Prince Edward, holding in his fiery charger, yet looking as though he would fain spur him to the top of his speed. Next to him rode the Archbishop of York. On the King's left, was his brother, the Earl of Cornwall. The Bishop of Coventry would have been there, but he was then lying sick on his bed; but the Prior and divers of the monks attended on the King.

First amongst the knights, that waited on his grace, was Gaston de Blondeville, a young Provençal; whom King Henry had raised, for some daring exploits in his dominions beyond the sea, to be a knight of his household. He was of comely person and gallant air; and managed his proud charger with such easy grace, as a lady might, with silken bandage, guide a fawn. He wore a cloak of pale olive, lined and guarded with rose colour; his cap was of velvet like to it, and he wore his feathers in the French fashion: for he was of the Queen's country, and had all the gaiety of her nation in his countenance and 'haviour.

Yet were there some in the court, men of English ground, who liked him not; it may be, because he was a stranger in our land, or that he bore a

proud defiance in his eye, or that they envied him his favour with the King.

Some way before the Queen, went fifty of the foresters of Ardenn clothed in green, sounding their horns. She was in her litter, tapestried with cloth of gold, and she was compassed all about with her ladies and her nobles and esquires. Her litter was borne by two brave coursers, right richly trapped with velvet, and led by pages apparelled in sumptuous liveries; other pages, in ‘broidered doublets, went beside her, or following. Then came her master of the horses, leading her palfrey, very richly appointed, the bridle and breast-chain studded with jewels, followed by another of her palfreys, led by a page. Her Highness was adorned in a close gown of velvet, ‘broidered about with pearls, and bearing upon her head a great hood of black velvet, richly sewed with large pearls. Following her Highness, came her ladies and gentlewomen mounted on fair palfreys, richly appointed and apparelled; a goodly company.

Then came her Highness’s chariot empty, drawn by six horses, led by pages in jackets of scarlet damask, with the English crown ‘broidered on their backs. They bore in their caps a white feather; dropping aside, in the manner of France, whereat the people murmured, and well they might; for such a sight of strangers, from her own land, the like was never seen! But the Queen bore herself so graciously towards the people, smiling upon them with her comely countenance, that she won away their discontent. Other gentlewomen of her court followed her car, mounted on palfreys.

Next came Eleanor, the widowed Countess of Pembroke, the King’s sister, now Countess of Leicester, in her litter, with a sumptuous train: and then Cincia, the Countess of Cornwall, the sister of the Queen, right freshly apparelled, and sumptuously attended by noble dames and gentils; and a sight of people followed, in the different liveries of their masters.

Before the Queen, went her *Mynstrells of Music* ; who, when they came nigh to Kenilworth, began to blow upon their pipes, and to strum their stringed instruments with most sweet noise — so that the bells of a village there, which were rung for mirth, could not be heard so far.

Amongst the damsels attending the Queen, none were so fair as the lady Isabel, daughter of the Earl of Arundel, and the lady Barbara, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon; who followed her Highness, on white palfreys. Ychon of them was beautiful beyond thought: the lady Isabel was the more

stately and carried a higher brow; but Lady Barbara’s smiles were blyther than the morn.

Soon as the towers of Kenilworth showed themselves upon the West, which, if it had not been for the glowing spears of those on the battlements, would hardly have been known from the dark wood-tops, — soon as they appeared, some half-score of the foresters rode forward with their bugles, to give sign of the King’s approach; but were straight sounded back by the trumpets, which blew up a blast, that filled the forest, and echoed to the very castle walls, ere the proud trumpeters would stop.

Then his Highness courteously commanded, that those who had come forth so many miles, to welcome him on his way, should be appointed to proclaim him at the gates. They waited not for second bidding; but, tuning up so clear and sweet, set spurs to their hobbies, and flew swiftly as the arrows from their own bows.

All the way hence to Kenilworth was lined with other troops of foresters in green; who, at certain distances, saluted the King, as he passed, with their bugles, in spite of the trumpets, that charged so loud and shrill their minet-flourishes: and they followed in the Queen’s train. The King’s pikemen and lancemen going after of all.

At the first sound of the bugles before the gate, you might see the great banner of England raised upon the keep of Kenilworth. Then, the chief wardour of the castle appeared upon the turret; though he stayed not long there, but went down to join his lord, in their service at the gate. The archers behind the battlements stood in order; other bow-men and the lancemen ranged themselves behind the tower-walls, and the trumpets there answered the summons, with a blast, that shook the forest, and made the fair waters of the valley tremble; roughening the portraiture of towers and woods, which had seemed to sleep upon their surface, as in a glass of chrystal.

Then the Lord Constable, coming down from the keep, followed by a posse of his officers, took to horse and went out to meet the King. As he turned out of the gate, he met the Prior of Saint Mary’s, with the twelve canons, and a long train processioning, all in full ceremony, bearing precious reliques, to welcome his Highness; after them came the priest and sundry of the parish-church, singing.

The press of people, from all the country about, was so thick, that hardly could the monks make way among them. The castellan, a man proud and jealous of his high place, was not well pleased, that they should try to present themselves to the King, before himself; but they were soon right glad to follow in his train, for straight as he appeared, the crowd was forced back, and they passed, without difficulty, in that wise, full three furlongs.

The castellan, coming in presence of his Highness, leaped from his horse, and, on his knee, presented him the keys of the castle, on a rich plate; the which his Highness readily delivered to him again, with a gracious speech, bearing, that they were well in his custody. Then, the Prior and canons of Saint Mary's showed themselves in procession, with banners, and chaunting sweet anthems, and his Highness looked kindly on them; after which they went on to the Queen, and, paying duty, attended her to the castle. But my Lord Constable, remounting his horse, rode bareheaded before his Highness, to the very gates.

Immediately before the King, was borne his sword of justice, by the Lord Hubert de Lacey; where, on the sheath, you might behold, in letters of rubies, these words, "Truth and Right." As he passed all the people cried out, "King Henry, King Henry, long live King Henry! and blessings on your sweet-favoured visage!"

Then, they threw forth on the air, for joy, among other tokens, corn and flour; so that many of the nobles of the realm, nay, some of the King's guard, liked it not, for the flour-dust, falling on their garments, disguised them like unto grinders of corn: but they held their peace, as needs must, passing on in solemn stateliness.

Before the castle-gates, a great show of the King's bow-men were drawn out to receive him, and the courts within were lined, and every tower and battlement was thronged with his soldiers. There, too, were the foresters ready at the gates, who, on the King's approach tuned up their merry bugles, with might and main; as though one breath sounded through the whole of them. But, when the heralds passed under the towers, their trumpets took their revenge, for they gave many blasts, that made every court within shake for joy; and showed more like a triumph of war than a flourish of festival. They on the ramparts now seemed to take the hint, and joined them with such warrior-sounds of fierce disdain, that the clear

bugle seemed but as a shepherd-pipe beneath them, and, for a season, was not heard at all.

Certes, the noise of the trumpets and cornets, the clanging of bells, the trampling of horses over the bridge, the striking of swords upon shields, with, ever and anon, the shouts of the multitude, astounded cattle and fowl in the woods, far and wide. Old wives and they that might not leave their homes for sickness could hear the mingled uproar; and could know as surely, when the King reached Kenilworth, as those, who had journeyed thither to behold him. And many an outlaw in the forest, who feared to show his face among the crowd, lay hearkening in his den, or stalked under the old oaks, while he watched the minutes of the coming twilight, and reckoned on the booty he should seize from careless travellers, returning, at night, to distant towns.

Some too there were, who, in the pathless holds of this forest, heard the far-off voice of joyance and society, with bitter grief; finding out, too late, they were not made for that lonesomeness of heart their thoughtless vices had condemned them to. Alas! for such, let them shrive and betake themselves, as penitents, to holy cloister.

When the Queen's litter came near the gates of the castle, her minstrels of music sang with most sweet glee, and the bugles saluted her as she passed into the barbican, or first tower of defence; but, soon as she appeared on the drawbridge, the trumpets from the ramparts blew up a flourish, and then the minstrels stopped, though they had not finished their fit. And they did well; for hardly could there be heard the trampling of the horses' hoofs upon the bridge, nor the distant music in the courts before the King. The walls and turrets, thronged with faces, seemed to be alive, and to shout, as with one voice, "Queen Eleanor! Queen Eleanor! long live Queen Eleanor!" — but some few were heard to shout, "Away with the foreigners! — away with all foreigners!" which the good Queen seemed not to hear, though she guessed in her heart what they said; and many a noble knight and lady near her knew well. She, with unchanged countenance, showed only sweet smiles to those numberless eyes, darting from the walls and battlements, all turned upon her litter, as it passed over the bridge, glittering in the last beams of this day's sun, and then entered beneath that deep and dark archway of the great tower, leading into the base court.

Beyond, in the sunshine, could be seen the King’s Highness, preceded by the Lord Constable, and having the Archbishop on his right and Prince Edward on his left, passing forward to the upper court; where, on the steps, stood the marshals of the hall, the stewards, the esquires of the household, with many officers of the castle, waiting to receive him, some with chains of gold on their necks: the royal banner waving over all. They stood so thick, looking over one another’s shoulders, face above face, on the steps there, that they seemed like a rampart of heads; while, below them, in the same court, the lancemen and yeomen of the household stood waiting to receive the Queen.

And truly it was a pleasureful sight, to behold that vision of light appearing beyond the deep portal, under which stood, on either hand, the wardours in their niches, to the number of eight; so dim, they showed like shadows more than substance, albeit, they did not lack of that. And a more delightful sight it was to behold the Queen and all her train, winding through that dark arch into the beams beyond; the rich trappings of steeds and men, their breastplates and spears and steel caps, all glancing in the setting sun. There, too, you might see, through the higher bars of the portcullis, the windows of the great chamber hung out with tapestry of silk and cloth of gold.

But that, which caused some surprise to those who watched without, was a sudden turmoil, that appeared around the King in the court, just as the Queen’s litter was advancing forth of the archway. A man was seen forcing himself among the guards, towards his Highness, who turned his face backwards in the sun, as if to see what was going on; and seemed to rein in his steed, while he held forth his right arm to Sir Gaston de Blondeville, who, with cap in hand, leaned forward on his courser, as if receiving some command. The while, the heads and spears of soldiers gathered round, moving in tumultuous hurry, rising and falling incessantly, like unto those stormy white tops coming on over a darkened sea.

On a sudden, the King disappeared: some thought he had fallen from his steed, struck by the hand of the stranger; and then, such was the throng of people beyond the portal to get forward for more certainty, that hardly could the Queen’s guard keep them back, till his Highness was seen ascending the steps of the high court.

At last, out of the midst of the confusion a shield was seen raised upon the traversed spears of six soldiers, and borne towards the outer gate, having upon it a man stretched, as if dead. But at the great portal the soldiers stopped, and drew aside to make way for the Queen; his Highness, meanwhile, with his nobles and young knight, had withdrawn into the state apartments.

When her Highness was gone by, they brought the man upon the shield into the free air without the walls, and lowered their burden on the grass; but the tumult of the people was so great, (they suspecting that he had attempted the King's life) that the soldiers with their spears had much ado to save him from their fury, or to keep a little space open around him.

He was a man of goodly appearance, that lay there, seeming without life. Anon, he began to stir himself, and in a little while opened his eyes; the which, when the people saw it, redoubled their fury; and they demanded, that he should be had to prison, for "he has assailed the life of our good King!" With that they made such a roaring, that the shouts of the soldiers, who wanted to set them right, could not be heard, the women brawling louder than all of them together.

Thus it went for some time: and then, the noise being hushed, they found out the man was innocent of what they had suspected.

When the stranger had recovered himself a little, he stared wildly; and, raising himself up, he looked round him, as if examining the countenance of every one, whom curiosity or anger had made to bend over him. And so he looked again and again, till they asked him, if he thought he saw the countenance of any one there, whom he knew. Then he fetched a deep sigh, and said, "I as surely saw him as I now breathe, but he is not here."

Divers present then asked him, of whom he spoke, but he only muttered to himself, "I could not be deceived; it is impossible for me ever to forget him." Then he shook from limb to limb, and was nigh going off into a swoon again. The people, meanwhile, pressed upon the soldiers to know what all this meant; and curiosity and pity began to take the place of rage.

The tale went, that, as King Henry had approached the entrance of the second court, this man, who had passed the portal amongst the King's horses, at the risk of his life, came beside him, and, having fixed his eyes with the greatest attention upon a knight of the King's household, cried out, "Justice! most noble Henry." Then, as if unable to utter something he

would have spoken, he fell down in strong convulsions, and was nigh being trampled to death. His Highness, seeing the condition of the man, had commanded he should be taken forth of the court, and aid administered to him; and this was all the soldiers could tell.

There were some amongst the crowd who thought they had seen him before, and questioned him of his name, and wherefore he had presumed to approach the King in such manner; to all which he would nothing answer; but seemed heavy at heart, and as if his very sadness would not let him speak; only these words he uttered, once or more,— “It was he himself! I should have known him at Cairo!”

Some still said they had seen the poor man before; naithless he proved to be a stranger in Kenilworth. When he could walk, he was led back to the little hostel, where he had taken up his lodging, and there he remained closely hid from the eyes of every one, all that night.

THE SECOND DAY .

At the head of this chapter was a view of the tilt-yard, at the end of the great lake, with the towers of Kenilworth above. — In the lists were two armed knights, on foot, each poising his spear at the other. They were cased in complete steel; their visors closed, each bearing on his helmet his plume and crest. There was somewhat very impressive in the station and in the whole appearance of these armoured figures. Each stood with his right foot advanced; the right arm, holding the spear, was raised high, displaying at once the strength and grace of an accomplished warrior. At the end and along one side of the tilt-yard, were galleries hung with tapestry, where sat the Queen and her ladies, and the King and his nobles, waiting to behold the encounter. The opposite sides were open to the lake, the woods, and the castle.

In the morn, next after the King came to Kenilworth, there was tilting in the great yard of the castle, at which his Highness, with the Queen and her court, were present. This was the day of Turney; but, although this noble company made a goodly show, they were not apparelled with that splendour they showed on the chief day, as will be hereafter rehearsed.

Among the ladies of the court, none surpassed for beauty the lady Barbara, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon and a favourite damsel of the Queen; her the King intended to bestow in marriage, during his sojourn in Ardenn. She was innocent and graceful, as the fawns that bound in our forest, and excelled in all the accomplishments of the court. She had fixed her heart on Sir Gaston de Blondeville, a young knight of the King’s household, who had entreated her of her father in vain; for, though he was of a good family, it was a foreign one, being of the Queen’s country, and he had little besides the favour of his master to depend on. The youth was of a comely person and gallant bearing; well practised in all martial exercises of war, of which he had given some proof in exploits, and had latterly so much displayed himself in a fierce adventure against some of King Henry’s rebellious subjects, beyond sea, that his Highness had incontinently advanced him to be one of his own knights. Moreover, the

King, on hearing of his ill-faring suit, had taken that matter into his special cognizance; and the King knew so well how to command the earl, that he consented to give his daughter to the knight, and his Highness determined the marriage should be solemnized forthwith.

But, on this very first day, after his arrival, his spirit was ruffled by a strange accident. As his Highness was returning from the Tilt-yard, accompanied by the Queen, and attended by the whole court, his harpers playing before him, a stranger came forth of the crowd, and falling at his feet, called out boldly for justice. Many there present knew him for the man who, the night before, had showed such striking signs of a disturbed mind; and now, noting his unseemly vehemence, they stopped and asked for what offence he demanded justice. The King, too, remembered him; and listening what he should say, the man, observing that, addressed his looks and his voice eagerly to him, and exclaimed, that he demanded justice upon robbers and murderers who infested the highways of his kingdom with more violence and frequency than was ever known before, so that none of his peaceable subjects were safe from them.

The King, seeing the wildness of his look and the strangeness of his gesture, guessed the man was not rightly himself; yet he commanded him forthwith into the castle, there to wait, till he should speak with him, or order some others to do so; and the procession passed on.

Meanwhile, the King determined not to leave this matter, till he should have seen something more about it, with his own discernment. He went speedily into the white hall, which was the court of justice, keeping only a few of his nobles and other attendants, where he summoned the stranger before him, and had question put to him, who he was and of what particular grievance he had to complain.

The man answered, that his name was Hugh Woodreeve, a merchant of Bristol: and then he told his story — that, three years before, travelling with a very large sum of money in his possession, and, being in company with three other travellers, two of them merchants of good repute, and the other a kinsman of his own, they were attacked in the forest of Ardenn, when about two miles from Kenilworth, and robbed of nearly all they carried. They did not part with it quietly, it was so much. His kinsman, however, was the only one of the party that had good arms; he had served in the wars, and he now manfully resisted the ruffians, who directed most

of their vengeance to him; he was murdered on the spot; for the rest of his company, they escaped with some hurts. No one of the robbers was killed, but two or three were wounded.

Here the merchant stopped and seemed ready to sink. His Highness, having declared his indignation at this villany, assured the merchant, that justice should be done upon the guilty, if they could be found, and asked whether he could swear to them, if he should see them again. The stranger straight replied, that he could truly swear to the murderer, and that he had seen him in the very court, nay, that he saw him at that very instant, standing even beside the King's chair.

King Henry, struck with astonishment, fixed his eyes sternly on the stranger, for a moment, and then looked at those around him. On his right hand, was his son, Prince Edward, and, on his left, his young favourite, Gaston de Blondeville, upon whom all eyes were fastened; for to him the answer pertayned, and to him the accuser pointed, with a look of horror, which convinced every one present, except his Highness, he did indeed believe he saw before him the murderer of his friend, whether his fancy deceived him, or not. For the King himself, he inclined to think the accuser was either disordered in his mind, or that, from some unknown cause, he was the enemy of Sir Gaston; and his Highness knew well of the unreasonable and deadly abhorrence, in which many of his subjects of Britain held some of those strangers from France, who had risen into favour.

At the boldness of this accusation, Sir Gaston stood, at first, like one stricken with dismay; then, moving his hand towards his sword, he said, "but for the presence of the King, my master, I should soon avenge me for so foul a slander."

To which the merchant, now much more tranquil than he had been, said, "The same reason must restrain all; but I do not need it: I would not set my life against that of an assassin! I ask for justice from his Highness."

At these words, Sir Gaston was hardly withheld from his accuser. King Henry commanded silence: and, as soon as all noise had ceased, he turned with a severe countenance to the stranger, and said, "Know you not, that he, whom you accuse is a knight of my household, advanced to honour for his valour?"

“Yea, noble King Henry,” replied the merchant, “I have heard so; but, I repeat, he is the man who killed my kinsman! I never can forget that face: if I had met him in a distant land, I should have seized him for the murderer!”

The King, more fully convinced of the unsoundness of his mind, said, “Your passion has deceived you; thus far I am willing to pardon you; if you go farther, you must be taught what it is to dishonour a gentleman and a knight.”

Upon this, the merchant fell at the King’s feet; and, with uplifted hands, again cried out for justice! Henry, hardly less astonished at the resolution of the man, than that one of his household should be thus accused, (although he might have bethought him of the law he had himself found it expedient to make heretofore at Kenilworth, respecting robberies then committed in a very extraordinary manner on the highways) — King Henry, though astonished, began to doubt. He fixed a look, in which there was somewhat of inquiry, upon Sir Gaston, whose visage was pale, though his eye was fierce; but who may say, whether fear or anger maketh some men pale?

The King held it to be the last; a momentary doubt had entered his mind; but he promptly dismissed it. His Highness was commanding, that the stranger should be removed; and, for the present, confined in the castle; when Prince Edward, who, young as he was, had closely observed all that had passed, craved humbly of the King, his father, to suffer the merchant to be further questioned; and the King consented thereto.

Then the man was asked, whether he could tell the year and the month, when the robbery he spoke of had been committed. He was ready enough with his answers, and said it was on the eighteenth of October, in the year twelve hundred and fifty-three, and on the chase; that he was sure of the time, because it was within three days of that, when he should have paid to a goldsmith the most part of the money, whereof he was robbed. Upon this, the King seemed to consider awhile, for he knew, that, about that time, a camp lay in the neighbourhood of Warwick and on the edge of the forest, and that Sir Gaston was there, he being then serving as esquire to Sir Pierse Mallory.

At the last words of the merchant, Sir Gaston moved towards the King, as though he would privily say something; but his Highness reproved him

with a frown; and asked the merchant at what hour the robbery was committed, and what were the array and appearance of the robbers?

The knight interrupting the reply, then said aloud, “Sire! I entreat you, be mindful of the condition of disgrace, in which I must stand, if you seem to give countenance to this scandalous accusation. I know not, that I shall be able to breathe, if it be thought, that your Highness could, for one minute, think it possible I could have committed so foul a deed.”

King Henry, looking kindly upon him said, “It is right you should be cleared with those, who know you not so well as I do; and chiefly with those, who love not men of your country; and, therefore, would I examine this witless charge to the uttermost.” His Highness then made all his questions over again.

The merchant considered awhile, and somewhat of his boldness seemed to forsake him: he then answered, “the number of the robbers was three; they were most of them tall in stature; they wore cloaks about them, and had masks on their faces.”

“Masks?” said the King.

“Masks!” murmured the courtiers, with one voice.

The King, daunting the accuser with the anger of his countenance, said, “You could swear to this knight, as one of the robbers, and yet you say, he had a mask on his face! I suspect you now for an impostor more than for a moody man. If it prove so, tremble! for I swear by my sword you shall not escape. I give you one more warning, to stop before you totally plunge into your ruin.”

At these words, delivered with vehemence, the paleness left Sir Gaston’s face, and he made a profound obeisance, showing his gratitude to the King. The accuser, dismayed, could not immediately find his voice, as it seemed. Haply, he could not so speedily send back his thoughts to the rest of his story. Incontinently, the most of the assemblage began to look ychon in other’s face.

By-and-bye, the merchant said, that in the struggle between his companions and the robbers, two of the vizors fell off, and so he saw plainly the faces of the robbers, and he perfectly remembered the face of the knight. His Highness, without telling his thoughts on this, which many there present scrupled not to hold an after-invention of the accuser, commanded him to begin his tale anew, and to tell, one by one, every

particular he could bring to mind of the alleged adventure; but before he began, Sir Gaston, surveying him, asked whether, about four years back, he was not at Embrun, in the Dauphine.

Denying, that he had been at that place, the accuser then renewed his story, which purported, that he and his companions were travelling, about the close of day, through the forest, or chase, of Kenilworth, when they were attacked by robbers. He was bidden to repeat the number of them and of his company, which he did, without varying his tale. The King asked how long after sun-set it was when the assault began? which he could not readily tell; but said it was so nearly dark, that hardly could he see the figures of the robbers under the shade of the woods, from which they burst: the merchant paused a moment —

"Go on," said the King, impatiently: —

"But I could, afterwards, see them plainly enough by a torch I took from my companions, who had lighted it, at a smith's in a village by the way-side; an iron-smith's."

The King asked him if he knew the name of this village, but he knew it not; and whether he should know the smith again? and he answered, he thought he should. Then he was ordered to proceed with his story:

"My kinsman," said he, "was the only one of us, who was well-armed; and a braver spirit never lived. He fought with his sword that man, who now stands beside your Highness; it was a trusty weapon, and had done him good service in Syria, where he had it for booty, after a skirmish, as I heard. When my kinsman first made up to that man, I followed him with the torch, and to aid him, as I might, with an oaken staff I had in my hand; but I received a blow upon the arm, that held the torch, which was knocked to the ground, and the vizor of the man fell also, that very man, who now presses behind your Highness's chair. The torch was not extinguished, and, by its light, I plainly saw that same countenance, that now glares upon me so vengefully. I saw it while he aimed the blow, which penetrated the head of my unfortunate kinsman, Reginald de Folville."

The merchant paused, seemingly overcome by the remembrance of this event, while Sir Gaston exclaimed,— "Was it Reginald de Folville? He was esquire to a knight of Saint John, and was then at Lydda: so much for the truth of your story in that main point."

At the first words of Sir Gaston, the King and the courtiers had turned their faces upon him; but though his words were so strong and sufficient, they beheld in his countenance paleness and consternation. But he soon recovered; and, asking pardon of his Highness for the emotion with which he had spoken, accounted for it by saying, that Reginald de Folville had been his earliest friend.

“Your father’s friend, you must surely mean,” said the merchant; “for he was at the wars at a time, that would have made that possible. You must have been a child, when he went there.”

“I *was* then a child,” said Sir Gaston, averting his eyes from the stranger; “and I must ever remember the kindness he showed me after the death of my father; I owe him much. He went from Provence to Syria; I heard he fell in battle there. Sure I am he never returned: he died in battle there.”

“He died in the forest of Ardenn,” said the merchant with solemnity, “and lies buried in the priory of Saint Mary here. He died by your hand: that is his very sword by your side; I remember it now.”

The audacity of this assertion struck all present and none more than the King himself. His Highness desired to examine the sword, and asked the merchant why he had not sooner challenged it; to which he answered nothing. Sir Gaston, as he delivered it on his knee to the King, said— “If I know my accuser, which I think I do, he is no stranger to this weapon: he knows well that I usually wear it; but it never belonged to Reginald de Folville. My liege, it was my father’s sword; he won it in the plains of Palestine.”

The King examined it with attention. It was of eastern shape and finely wrought. In the hilt were a few jewels. Prince Edward, as he leaned over it, pointed out to his father a motto in an unknown tongue; and then, at some distance below it, a date, with the Roman letters, H. A., remarking, that probably these letters alluded to some exploit achieved in the year noted. The King addressed himself to Sir Gaston for the meaning of the motto and of these letters; but he knew not their meaning, and said they were as when his father won the sword from his enemy.

Then the King addressed the merchant with the same question, observing, that, as the sword seemed to be familiar to him, he probably had been told the signification of the letters on it. With that, the merchant

was hastily advancing to receive it of one, to whom his Highness had delivered it; when he suddenly drew back, covered his eyes with his hand, and stood immovable. Those near almost expected to see him fall, as he had done before in the castle court on the night last past. Sir Gaston, at the same time, stepping forward, presumed to take it, and to deliver it again to the King, with these words:— “Your Highness will not tempt the villany of this man by putting him in possession of the sword he falsely claims.”

But the merchant claimed it not; nor could he even endure to look upon it. Heavy sighs burst from him, while with eyes still covered with his hands, he said,— “That was the sword, with which the villain murdered him; and can I endure to take it in my hand, and to look upon the blade, on which his life blood flowed?” and he groaned more piteously than before.

There were some in the hall, who instantly thought this sorrow of the merchant was a mimickry, and asked how it could happen, that his kinsman was killed by his own weapon; to which, soon as he could recollect his thoughts, he made answer, that the robber, on wrenching the sword from his friend, struck him his death-wound with it. The King, returning the sword to the young knight, bade him keep it forthcoming till he should demand it of him again, and then said to the stranger these or such-like words: —

“You, a man unknown to me and to mine, and without a name, except as far as you have declared one, have dared to come into my court, and to accuse to me one of my own servants, a gentleman and a knight, of a crime most foul and incredible. You have related your story, and I have waited patiently for some evidence, that the murderer of your kinsman, if, in truth, he were ever destroyed by violence, was Sir Gaston de Blondeville. I find none, except your story. And in this you have not scrupled to affirm, that you would have seized him for the murderer, even in a distant land, though you also say, that your knowledge of his countenance was obtained only from the sudden (and, therefore, the uncertain) light of a torch lying on the ground, at a moment, when the danger you were yourself exposed to, might, it may be readily believed, have prevented you from closely observing any face whatsoever. You must be held unworthy of credit; and I commit you into safe custody, till it shall be discovered who you are, and who those are, who urged you to this base accusation.”

When his Highness had ended, they were going to convey away the merchant from his presence, but he craved leave to speak, and it was granted.

“My liege,” said he, “at any other than that moment of horror, I might have seen the face of this stranger, without remembering it the next; but the impression made, at that moment, will remain with me, as long as the strong feelings, which then struck me, shall return with the recollection of my kinsman’s fate. On seeing the same face, I was seized with the same horror; your Highness’s people can be witnesses, that yester-eve, when I saw that knight, I fell into convulsions, and was carried senseless from your presence.”

His Highness, remembering what had happened, and, on inquiry, finding, that this was the very man, who had then fallen senseless, perceived, that the merchant had not spoken this untruly. He asked again whether he was known to any person in Kenilworth, also whether either of the merchants, travelling in his company, at the period of the alleged murder, was at hand. The accuser stood, for a while, bewildered, and then repeating, that he was a stranger, having only passed through the place, a few times, on his way to or from Coventry, said, that of his two companions one was dead, and the other following his merchandize, in a distant land.

“Then,” said the King, “it appears you cannot bring any evidence of the truth of your story; even so far, as that a robbery was actually committed. Your accusation of this knight is, therefore, likely to be impelled either by malice, or by some other bad motive. If it shall prove so, dread the punishment that awaits you.”

“My liege,” said Sir Gaston, “I think I know the man, and also his motive. He wronged my father at Embrun; and now his malice, — but this story is connected with family circumstances, that should only be divulged to your Highness; and, if you will suffer me to unfold them in private, I shall prove, not mine innocence only — for of that your Highness does not doubt — but that man’s former and present guilt.”

At these words, the stranger fell again on his knees, and besought aloud justice on “a villain.”

The King looked long upon him and upon Sir Gaston, and sat pondering awhile. He then turned to the merchant, and, bidding him rise, asked him,

a second time, if he were not known to any one person in Kenilworth? and received for answer, “Only as a traveller.”

“An adventure as remarkable as that you have related,” pursued his Highness, “must have been known here at the time it happened, and must be remembered now. It is strange, if there be none who can recollect you also.”

“My lord,” observed Prince Edward, “he said his friend was buried here in the priory. If so, the prior must know him and his strange history.”

“Said he so?” quoth the King; and, turning to the stranger, he inquired how it happened, that he was not known to the prior? and who it was that commanded the burial of his kinsman.

The merchant said, he had himself ordered it, and had conversed with a monk and even with the Prior himself.

“Then you are known to the Prior, at least,” said the King; “he will surely recollect your story: let him be sent for. It is strange you should have said you were unknown: you are either guilty of falsehood, or your senses are unsettled.”

The stranger raised his hand to his head and sighed. “I recollect the Prior,” said he, “but he may not remember me.”

“We shall see!” said the King, calmly, as he rose from his chair: “If you are innocent, fear not! if you are guilty, you will lose your life, in seeking that of an innocent man.”

As his Highness left the hall, he looked somewhat sternly upon the accuser, and commanded, that he should be held in close custody, while more inquiry should be made. He then ordered Sir Gaston to attend him in his privy-chamber, and so departed forth of the hall, leaving the accuser speechless and dismayed.

As the merchant was led through this court of the castle to the tower, where was his prison, the lady Barbara, sitting in her bower-window above, saw the passing crowd, and inquired the occasion of it; but none would inform her. While she gazed with curiosity, she observed Sir Gaston going to the King’s privy-chamber; he looked not at her window, but went his way with a hurried step, and with such a countenance as she had never witnessed in him, till this time. At length, word was brought to my lady, her mother, of what had passed before his Highness. The Earl, her father, was promptly filled with disgust; and thought the occurrence would be

sufficient to prevent the marriage, which neither his English heart, nor his pride of ancient blood, had suffered him to approve. His daughter, the lady Barbara, was differently minded; she would not believe him she loved capable of even a dishonourable action, much less of so foul a one; and, assured of his innocence, she would have thrown herself at the King's feet, had that seemed always, as it did at first, proper, to urge his Highness to clear Sir Gaston instantly from the suspicion.

But truly the King needed no advocate for Sir Gaston de Blondeville; and so she thought, at last. His Highness's own inclination was sufficient; and so angered was his generous spirit by what he held to be not only a false, but a malicious accusation, that he had determined after proof of this, to give a signal warning by the accuser's doom; and this not only to prevent other false accusations proceeding from private motives, but to reprove and caution those of his subjects, who had a public prejudice against strangers, and were too likely to delight in the ruin of such especially as had risen to honours.

The King, therefore, willingly gave audience privately to the young knight, that he might explain to him the circumstances, which should assure him of his innocence. What Sir Gaston told his Highness was never assuredly known; some reports went on one side of the matter, some on the other: there was not one witness of what passed. Who then might know, unless they could guess by the countenances, and by what passed, when the hearing was over? But, if they had gone by no other guide, they would have been all for the knight, since he had made the King quite convinced; and moreover, the Earl of Huntingdon was summoned to the closet, where the King promised him the honour of the young knight would always remain unsullied in his opinion; and so commanded, that the marriage with the lady Barbara should be solemnized, as had been before appointed, on the day next following.

The Earl besought, nay, as some say, dared to remonstrate, that the marriage should be postponed till the stranger should have been lawfully convicted of falsehood; but his Highness said, "Nay; lest it should seem that the accusation was probable enough to require such delay. It is already wellknown, as a matter agreed upon, that the nuptials are to be held on the morrow, the preparations are nearly all made, and they are public. It is necessary for the honour of Sir Gaston de Blondeville, that the

appointment should be kept. If you are not convinced, still you will not be required to make disavowal of any thought you may have; for I myself will lead your daughter to the porch, and will so, by my presence and by this act of parental kindness, show my estimation both of the fair bride and of him who shall become your son. Farther proof of my regard shall not be wanting hereafter."

His Highness was peremptory, and the Earl, swayed by his master's positive opinion, and, it may be, by that promise of regard hereafter, at last obeyed.

While these things were passing in the King's chamber, the unhappy merchant was taken to a turret of the castle, called Cæsar's Tower; and there, with nothing but a pallet and the bare walls, was left to think of his jeopardy. What his thoughts were I know not; but he was heard sorely to sigh and groan, and with good reason; for, if he knew himself perjured, he knew also, that he should find no mercy from the King; and, if innocent, he could expect little justice against so great a favourite. But, whatever were his meditations, they held not till night, for he was called and led forth of the tower into the presence of the King; and, before even-song, the Prior of Saint Mary's was in attendance upon his Highness. He was not an aged man, yet was he a stern one. When he was asked whether ever before he had seen the merchant, he answered resolutely, that he had no knowledge of him. The same question being put to the merchant, touching his knowledge of the Prior, he returned a like answer.

At this seeming self-contradiction, the King could scarcely command his anger, till it was discovered, that a Prior of Saint Mary's had died, since the time when the murder was alleged to have been committed, and that it must needs be he, whom the merchant meant.

"But, where is the monk, with whom you consulted?" asked the King; can you tell his name?"

"His name was Ewdwyn," replied the merchant.

"He died yesternight!" said the Prior.

At this there was a pause, and a dead silence throughout the chamber. Sir Gaston looked darkly on his accuser; his accuser directed his eyes to the King and then on high; but, in a short minute, he fell down, as though he were a dying man. The King, touched at his sufferings, commanded him from his chamber, that aid might be administered unto him. And then, that

he might know whether this accusation of Sir Gaston were through malice, or mistake — for now pity inclined him to think the last — and also, that Sir Gaston might have mistaken, when he took this for the man, of whose deeds at Embrun he had talked; that he might know the truth on all this, he ordered the Prior to make inquiry in his community, whether the body of any person known to have been murdered in the forest of Ardenn, three years before, had been deposited in the chapel, or in the cemetery of the convent. Like wise, he commanded the Prior to have inquiry made in Kenilworth, whether any person remembered such an accident, or any house had received the dead body. And this he ordered, that it might always be seen he had desired to have justice done towards the wretched merchant, as well as for Sir Gaston de Blondeville.

This being appointed, the King departed to his great chamber, there to keep his state; the Prior to his convent, to resume his spiritual musings; the accused lover to his mistress; and the merchant was conveyed to his prison tower.

The King kept state, that night, with the Earl of Cornwall, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Lincoln, Henry de Wernham, his chaplain, who also had the custody of the Great Seal, the Earl of Norfolk, the Earl of Hereford and a number of other nobles of the realm; but the Queen kept her state apart.

The King’s great chamber was marvellous to behold. There were twenty-five wax-lights held by esquires of the household, all in the King’s livery, gentils as they were; also twenty-five wax torches were fixed high up over the tapestry. The walls were, that night, gorgeous with the story of Troy-town in ancient tapestries; there you might see the flames burning and the towers falling, and old King Priam, with beard as white as snow, his crown upon his head, and his Queen Hecuba tearing her dishevelled locks for grief. And there was that renowned son, who carried off his aged father, with his little child holding by his garment, and his wife following, all disconsolate. This was a piteous sight to see pourtrayed; but that it were nothing save a heathen story.

The floor of that chamber was not strewed either with rushes or with litter of any sort, but was laid in little checquers of divers colours; and, where his Highness sat, under his cloth of state, was spread a silken carpet of full crimson, fringed about with gold, as likewise his chair and canopy

of estate. But the finest sight was the cupboards, piled up with plates and cups of gold and silver, in readiness for the King, when he should take his voide. These were in that great Oriel, which his Highness had newly made in this chamber, before the bay; and which was closed about with painted glass from the highest cupboard to the arched roof, where hung a silver lamp, that made the whole glow with its light.

There were, that night, playing in the chamber, the King's twelve minstrels, all clothed, for his honour and dignity, in sumptuous livery, with their virger to order their pipyngs and blowings. There were, besides, the children of the chapel singing, at times, from the brown gallery; so that, the doors being open, you might have heard them through all that side of the castle; and those, who sat afar off in the great hall, needed none other music.

There also was Maister Henry, the versifier, whose ballad of the Giant of Cornwall was this night rehearsed to the harp by Richard, the King's harper, as was his famous Chronicle of Charlemagne, which lasted, till his Highness was well nigh weary, when he jocularly called out, having tasted of his golden cup, that Henry should have a butt of wine with his wages, if he would shorten his ballads by one-half. Maister Henry, who was a Frenchman, took this in good part, and, having especial care ever after to make his ballads nigher to too short than too long, became, in time, a notable rhymer. But let those do so who can. Some are famous one way, some another; for mine own part, I must be circumstantial, or else nothing, as this "Trew Chronique" in due time must show. That night, the King played at "Checkere" with the Earl of Norfolk, on a board laid with jasper and chrystal, the check-men being of the same. Some said the kings and queens were of ebony, studded over with jewels, but of this I know not.

But, the finest sight of all was the going of the chamberlain to the cupboard, accompanied of three nobles of the highest estate in the realm, that were there present, (save the King's family) to receive the King's cup and spice-plates; and then the bringing up of the voide before his Highness. And, first, the usher, having assembled the King's sewers, their towels about their necks, with the four esquires of the body and the knights and esquires of the household, to the number of seventeen; these, with divers other officers, being met at the cupboard, the Chamberlain took the King's towel, and, having kissed it, as the custom is, delivered it to the

Earl of Norfolk, he being of the highest estate, who reverently received the same, and laid it safely upon his shoulder. Then, the said chamberlain gave the gold spice-plates covered to the Earl of Hereford; and then the King's cup of massive gold, covered also, to the Earl of Warwick. At the same time were given to the knights of the household the Archbishop's spice-plate and cup, covered also, to be carried up, by the space of one minute after the King's.

And, certes, it was a goodly sight to see all these nobles and gentils marching up the great chamber (the minstrels playing the while), compassed about with esquires, bearing great lights to the number of thirteen, especial care being taken, as the manner all times has been at the voide, that the lights were odd in number.

First, then, went the usher, with his torch and rod, making passage; the chamberlain, with his chain and wand of office; then the five esquires, of the body, bearing wax-lights before the Earl of Norfolk, with the towel; then, three esquires about the Lord of Hereford, bearing the spice-plates; then, other three before the Lord Warwick, bearing the King's cup covered; then followed one knight of the household, bearing a single torch; so making up altogether the just number of lights. Amongst them went four knights of the household, well renowned for bravery and noble bearing, with the Archbishop's spice-plate and cup.

When this array drew near to the King, he, standing up under his cloth of estate, which was rolled up high, with the young Prince Edward on one hand and the Archbishop on the other, the Chamberlain taking the covers from off the spice-plates, gave assaye unto the Earl of Gloucester. The King, before he took his spice, made a beck to the Archbishop, that he should take his first; and the knights having advanced, as they well knew would be seemly, the Archbishop forthwith obeyed.

But, when the Chamberlain uncovered the cup, all the minstrels in the chamber blew up louder than ever, and so held on till his Highness took the ypocras, so that every roof in the castle rung with joy.

The King and Archbishop being served, his Highness's cup and spice-plates were again covered, but not so the Archbishop's. Then were the spice and cup carried to Prince Edward and the Earl of Cornwall, by the knights; to the bishops by the esquires of the household, and to the other estates by the esquires also. Which being done, his Highness forthwith

departed for “all night,” the trumpets blowing before him. Then, were three healths drank, one to the King, one to the Queen, and one to the Prince Edward; after which it were not meet, that the assemblage should remain, and straight the great chamber was avoyded of all there present.

The Queen, that night, sat in her bower with all her ladies. There were mynstrelsy and dancing to the harp and viol. The Lady Barbara was the marveil of all, that beheld her moving to the sound of viols like unto some sprite, rather than to a poor mortal. Prince Edward danced with her a round, and the Queen often honoured her with her pleasing speech. Sir Gaston, though he beheld her, showed not his wonted joy. He stood apart looking on, and, when her Highness spoke to him, he seemed nigh to senseless of the honour.

The dancing being ended, Pierre, a Norman and the Queen’s chief minstrel, apparelled in the guise of his country, sang some of his ballads on the harp, in his own tongue, which, albeit, they were not esteemed like unto Maister Henry’s, yet did they not displease. The first tuning was in words which have been thus rendered into English by one, who had learned much of the new speech, not then familiar, except with some few.

THE BRIDAL.

Lightly, lightly, bounded the roe,
The hind o’er the forest was fleeing;
The small birds tuned on every bough,
In sun and shade their gleeing.

And purple cups, and silver bells
From the green leaves were peeping;
The wild-rose smiled in the mossy dells:
Nought but the thorn was weeping.

And so bright in the sun its tears did shine,
They showed like tears of pleasure;
And the airs of May, through the budding spray,

Breathed joyance, without measure.

For this was Isabel’s bridal morn
Who loved each bud and flower,
The wild-wood shade, the mountain head,
The deep vale’s mead and bower.

And now was her festival gaily kept
By hagled brook and fountain,
From the low green bank, where the violet slept,
To the blue hill-top and mountain.

And lightly, lightly, bounded the roe,
His footstep wing’d with pleasure,
And small birds sang from every bough,
Welcomes beyond all measure.

At the end of this ballad, the minstrel rang out his harp in full joyance; and then, falling note by note, he dropped into a faltering murmur, as of deep sorrow, and so continued for some space, till those who heard him, perceived the witch of melancholy stealing upon them.

The Queen, deeming such strain unsuitable to the time, commanded him to change the measure, and sound forth one more gay, a lay of Provence, her native land, whither she knew he had been for his learning; but he, enthralled by the magic of his own mood, loving not to be commanded, still hung his head over the harp, listening to that pleasure-full melancholy and heeding nothing but its sweet sound.

At last, being made to know fully her Highness’s will, he sang the song of a Troubadour; for, though he loved best the ditties of Normandy, his own land, there was scarce one of Provence, which he had not gained; and the Queen did not let him forget them, so often did she command those, which she affected best. And now he sang forth to his harp a “roundel” in the Provençal tongue, made by a knight of the “Order of Fine Eyes.” They, who then heard him, would have thought he loved any thing less than

melancholy, so light and debonnaire was the music he rang out; and many could hardly keep their steps from dancing to that gallant measure. But it lasted not long; for, making a pause and looking wistfully at the Lady Barbara, he struck forth, on a sudden, some of his deepest tones, with a wild yet solemn grace, such as brought tears into the eyes of many a fair lady, and darted dread into the heart of one there present. It seemed as if the shadows of prophecy were moving over the strings, and calling from them some strange and fearful story yet to be. And then again did the harper's voice steal trembling forth, as do the moon's beams, when pale clouds pass over, saddening, but not fully obscuring their brightness: yet might every one hear plainly all his words. Here it is done into English by the same hand; but the verses be not all divided into equal numbers: —

I.

O'er the high western wolds afar,
Glimmer'd some lights of yesterday;
And there, one bright, but trembling star
Among the streaky shadows lay,
The traveller's lonely warning.
But soon the winds, that sing day's dirge,
Did o'er that star the shadows urge,
And hung the night with mourning!

II.

"What steps on the waste are beating?"
He listened not long on the ground,
'Ere he fearfully heard a sound,
As of trampling hoofs retreating:
And a dismal cry and a foot draw nigh;
"Stand ho!" 'twas an armed man passed by:
But he spoke no sound of greeting,
And seemed like a death-shade fleeting.

III.

O’er the lone mountains riding,
He gallop’d by gloomsome ways.
Where night-mists were abiding,
Round the witch of evil days:
Her name is written on the wind,
That speaks in cliffs and caves confin’d.
List there when the waning moon goes down,
And thou’lt hear the call her spirits own;
But as they pass, hold a chrystal glass,
Or thou’lt sorely rue the wild witch-tone.

IV.

O’er the lone mountains riding,
From a distant land he came,
No step his dark step guiding;
But he thought he saw a flame,
That bright, or dim, would sport awhile;
Then vanish, as in very guile;
He heard, as he passed, the witch-name sound;
And his startled steed, at a single bound,
Bore him away from that evil ground.

V.

But o’er the mountains pacing
As fast as he can flee,
Strange steps his steps are tracing,
And a shape he cannot see;
And, though he flee away, so prest,

Whether to north, or south or west,
Toward the past, or coming day,
(So dim the night he may not say)
Still oft by fits did ghastly gleam,
A corpse-light, all unknown to him.

VI.

He followed the light o’er deserts wide,
Down in deep glens, where wild becks wail;
He followed by darkened forest side;
He followed with dread, though link’d in mail;
Till it stayed before an iron gate,
Where battled turrets kept their state,
O’er towers so high and massy strong,
They seemed to giant-king belong.

VII.

Sir Adomar looked him all around:
Turret on turret hung on high,
Shaping black lines on the dim sky;
Sir Adomar looked him all around;
Nought, save this castle, could he spy,
Though, heavily clanged a death-bell’s sound;
And in each pause of the shuddering blast,
Moans were heard as of one from ‘neath the ground!

VIII.

He struck on the gate with his good sword:
“Ho! wardour, ho!” but never a word
Return’d the wardour from within.

“The storm is loud, the night is dark,
I hear from the woods the dog-wolf bark.
Up, wardour, up! it were a sin
To turn a traveller from your tower,
At such a lone and dreary hour;
A Saracen would let me in!”

IX.

The wardour was watching through the loop,
How many were of the stranger’s troop.
He had left his torch in the cullis’ bar,
And it let down a light on the lonely night,
That showed him harnessed, as for war.
His coat was mail, his helm was steel;
His visor did his look reveal;
Yet o’er his brow it cast a shade,
That made the wardour more afraid,
Than did the crimsoned plume above,
Or the mighty grasp of his iron glove.
He would not let the stranger in,
Till one, awakened by the din —
One whom the wardour need obey —
Seeing a lonely knight stand there,
Bade the wardour nought to fear:
He feared still, but he said not Nay:
Yet he would not ope the portal gate
To an unknown knight, without his state;
For neither squire, nor page, he saw:
He bade him then to the postern draw.

X.

The knight dismounted at the call;

The porter let him through the wall;
He turned the weary steed to stall,
And led the knight to the lordly hall.
I’ the lordly hall, so wide and dim,
One drowsy squire awaited him.
The ashy wood lay, white and cold,
On the raised hearth, where late was told,
With fiery eye and accent loud,
The deed of martial prowess proud;
Where late was told, in whispers low,
Some tale of terror and of woe,
The while each listener bent his head,
Nor lost a word the trouveur said:
Till fear crept o’er each nerve and vein,
That late had swell’d to martial strain;
And shadows crept along the wall,
Such as the sinful soul appal:
Till each, who heard, look’d round with dread,
And saw some phantom of the dead.

XI.

Now silent was the hearth and lone,
Save that a stag-hound slumber’d there.
The tables in disorder were,
With relics of the evening fare;
The household to their rest were gone,
And now no light was seen but one.
The light that led the stranger on;
That show’d above steel armour gleaming,
And many a dusky banner streaming,
From the black rafters of the roof,
In the night-wind, far aloof,
Like to some flitting phantom seeming;
And, stalking o’er the rushy floor,

It showed the knight where steps of gore
Had stain’d its green, with foot-prints red.
And the stag-hound, as the knight passed by,
Sent forth a mournful fearful cry.

XII.

The drowsy squire the stranger led;
(The wardour to his post was sped.)
They traversed the hall in silent march:
At the end was a door in a mitred arch.
The knight stood before that mitred door,
And gazed on a warrior shape above,
That seem’d to watch the passage o’er.
In his altered look strange passions strove!
The armoured shape leaned on its sword,
And downward bent its steely face,
As jealous who below might pace,
Or about to speak the challenge-word;
And it seemed the very form of one,
The knight perforce must look upon.

XIII.

Thus, while he stood in wonder-trance,
The squire upheld the torch on high,
Viewing the guest with watchful eye;
And marvelling what strange mischance
So check’d his step, and fix’d his glance: —
“Sir knight, why gaze you on that steel?
It is a baron’s good and bold;
Had he been here, no welcome cold
Would he have shown a stranger-knight,
Who trusted to his towers at night.”

XIV.

The spell of fant’sie loos’d awhile,
The knight return’d a grateful smile,
With thanks for this so courteous style;
And, then with thoughtful accent said,
While yet he stood, that shape before.
“The armour some resemblance had
To that of a dear friend no more!
A friend!” — he paus’d,— “a friend long dead!”
This, while he said, his colour fled.
The squire seem’d not to note his pain,
But, with fair speech, began again
Excuse to make for slender fare,
That it was night, and, not aware
Of honour’d guest approaching there,
The menials to their rest had gone;
A chamber should be fitted soon.
His squire and page should welcom’d be;
Right well he longed that squire to see.

XV.

The wearied knight a gesture made,
And looked his thanks, but nothing said;
Save that, for rest alone he prayed.
He sighed, as through that guarded arch,
And vaulted gloom, he held his march;
And there, before his doubting sight,
Glided again a pale sad light,
Full often he had seen with fear,
Yet more he felt to meet it here.
Then came they to an iron door,

And the knight beheld that flame no more.
It opened to a second hall,
Where warriors frowned upon the wall;
And ladies smiled in portraiture,
With downcast eye and look demure.
An umbered flash the red torch threw,
Athwart each warrior's steadfast brow;
And hardly might the gleam declare
A baron grim from lady fair.

XVI.

There is no need that I should tell,
What hasty fare the stranger took;
Nor how the squire, with silent look,
Watched, wondering, what had him befell;
So strangely gleamed his hollow eyes,
From forth the lifted beaver's shade
So wan his lips, like one that dies,
So few the words and thanks he paid!

XVII.

Though round the hall his looks would steal,
Not well did torch or lamp reveal
The portraiture of warriors grim,
Or noble dames hung there so dim;
Their frowns and smiles were lost to him,
But once, when that he turned his head
Where the fix'd torch a gleaming shed,
A sable form, ill seen at most,
Went gliding up a stair, on high,
Passed through an open gallery,
And through a doorway there was lost,

That seemed to lead to antient rooms,
Such as where silence dwells, and glooms.
The knight, he felt a sudden chill.
Though nought he said of what had sped;
But the spicy draught he deeply quaff’d,
Whenever the page his cup did fill.
And from his spirits chaced the ill.

XVIII.

The night-cheer o’er, the page led on
The stranger to his resting-place.
He led the way, that form had gone:
On the high stair he stood a space,
Waiting the knight’s reluctant pace,
Then, with mute reverence, marshalled him
Through many a gallery, long and dim,
Where helmets watched, in order grim;
Through many a chamber, wide and lorn,
Where wint’ry damps had half withdrawn
The storied paintings on the wall.
Electra, o’er her brother’s urn,
There bent the head, and seemed to mourn;
There, too, as meet in room and hall,
Troy’s tale and Hector’s piteous fall:
Here Priam’s Court, in purple and pall,
Its golden splendour now had lost;
But Helen, on the rampart stood,
And pointed to the Grecian host,
Outstretching to the briny flood.
Here Hector’s wife sat in her bower,
Waiting her lord’s returning hour;
And ‘broidering ‘midst her maiden train,
While her infant played with silken skein.
There — but it boots not that I say,

What stories once, in long array,
Lived on those walls, now ghastly clay.

XIX.

The knight would oft, as he strode by,
Cast on their shade a searching eye;
And pause, as list’ning some drear sound,
That rose within the glimmering bound:
And start, as though some fearful sight
Passed along this gloom of night;
But, at a lesser winding stair,
(The long drawn chambers ended there,)
When to that narrow stair he drew,
He thought a robe of mourning hue
Went fleeting up that winding way;
No glimpse had he of shape or ray;
No foot he heard the stair ascend.
Yet still that seeming garment passed,
As though some fiend, with evil haste,
Did up that lonely tower wend.

XX.

The knight, he stood on the step below —
“Whither, my young page, dost thou go?
Who dwells within this lonely tower,
Passing with speed, in sable weed —
Passing with speed, at this dead hour?”
“Nobody, save the raven-crow,
Dwells within this lonely tower;
And here, Sir knight, is your resting-bower!”
“But in this tower I may not rest,
Till I know who that stair has pressed;

Did you not see that black weed wave?”
“Yes, knight, I saw the raven’s wing,
Glint up that wall with sudden spring:
And hark! you now may hear him crave!”

XXI.

“It is not courteous, that my bower
Should be within this ruin’d tower!”
“But see, knight, ‘tis not in decay;
The storm hath blown a bar away,
And the raven through the loop doth stray;
His nest is wet on the battlement grey:
Your chamber is a stately room,
Hung round with work of choicest loom;
And erst it was the resting-place
Of our dear Lady Baroness,
Before she went to stranger-land.
My lord yet strays on foreign strand.
The chamber has another stair,
Leading to many chambers fair;
But no step goes by night so far,
Since my lord baron went to war.”

XXII.

The page stept on with torch before,
Far as that stately chamber’s door.
“Page! lift that light — fain would I know,
Whither that second flight doth go?”
“It goes to a battlement up on high,
And to a turret perching by.”
“Doth none keep watch on that turret high?”
“None, but the raven with his cry!

Your rest, Sir knight, he will not break;
To traitors only doth he speak.
They say he scents the new spilt blood.”
Upon the stair the raven stood!
He turn’d his dark eye on the knight,
And, screaming, upward winged his flight.
The wondering page looked back with fright,
And met the stranger’s fiery glance;
Then, hardly daring to advance,
Lingered he at that chamber-door;
“On,” said the knight, “with torch before!”
Scarce was the page the threshold o’er,
When check he made, and pale he turn’d;
Dim and more dim the torch-flame burn’d.
The knight look’d on, but nothing saw,
That might explain this sudden awe.

XXIII.

A spacious chamber there was spread,
And, for his rest, a stately bed;
Fresh rushes on the floor were strewn;
Faint on the arras’d walls were shown
The heroes of some antient story,
Now faded, like their mortal glory.
Another form, as dark as doom,
Stood within that chamber’s gloom,
Unseen by those who entered there.
His cause of dread the page thus said:
“Methought I saw, within that chair,
The baron’s self, my very lord;
I saw it, on a true man’s word:
I saw my lord return’d from far,
Arrayed, as he went forth to war!
He fixed his very eyes on me,

But looked not, as he wont to look.
Yet now no living shape I see,
And know that here he could not be;
For, long since, he these walls forsook:
Yet is it strange such visions pale,
Should o’er my waking sight prevail.”

XXIV

“Whose are these antient walls, I pray?”
The sullen stranger ‘gan to say:
“Sir, know you not these towers and halls
Watch where the foaming Conway falls?
Who should these walls and towers own?
And the wide woods and forest round,
Even to Snowdon’s utmost bound,
Save the brave lord of Eglamore?”
The knight explained his ignorance,
He was a wanderer late from France.
The page surveyed him o’er again;
He thought the wily knight did feign:
A deadly hue was on his cheek;
His looks spoke more than words may speak.
Yet to the page, though much it told,
He read not all it might unfold.

XXV

The knight perceived his doubting thought,
And drew a badge forth from his breast;
Some noble Order's golden crest,
Upon a field of silver wrought.
"This badge," he said, "with blood was bought."
He turn'd with haughty frown away.
The page did not more doubt betray;
But service offered to undo
His casque and linked harness true;
But the stranger gravely said him Nay,
And refused that night to disarray.

XXVI.

Wondering, yet fearing to demand,
Why to these towers from distant land,
The knight had come, without his train,
Pondered the youth his doubts again;
Again, as though his thoughts he read,
The knight look'd sternly down and said,
"My squire and my foot-page I missed
At night-fall, when the woods betwixt.
But they perchance may shelter find,
From this bitter-blowing wind,
In the deep hollow of some hill,
Till the dawn break, and the storm be still."

XXVII.

"But the wolf bays in the blast afar;

Sir knight, how may they scape such war?
I hear him now — he nearer howls!
Mercy! mercy! save their souls!”
“Hark!” said the knight, and stood aghast;
It was no wolf-howl in the blast;
It was a blood-hound’s dreadful bay,
The stranger heard, with such dismay —
The blood-hound at the tower below;
That over pathless hill and dale,
Had tracked a murderer in the gale,
And came to claim his master’s foe.
While listening to the lengthen’d yell,
The stranger seemed to hear his knell.
“A blood-hound loose, and at this hour!
Your rest, sir knight, had ill been kept;
Nor one within these gates had slept,
Had I been in my distant tower.”
The page he lighted a lamp on high;
The stranger stifled scarce a sigh,
That heavily for utterance pressed.
He heard the page’s steps descend,
And go where the long chambers bend,
Down to the halls, and th’ outer walls.
The page knew not the chance he ran;
He was marked with the blood of a murder’d man!

XXVIII.

The knight, he listened in silent dread,
Till now, the blood-hound’s voice was stilled;
But soon a low voice near him sped,
That every nerve with horror thrilled.
He looked the way that lone voice came,
And saw, by the lamp’s tall spiring flame,
A portraiture on the wall beneath,

Of noble dame, that seemed to breathe.
Robed in sable weeds was she:
The gleam fell on that lady’s brow;
There, written dimly, you might see,
The characters of hopeless woe.

XXIX.

Soon as that lady’s face he saw,
All other dread his heart forsook;
He gazed with fixt and frenzied awe,
And vainly tried away to look:
For to his fearful sight it seemed,
As though her eyes on his were bent;
And, where the pale flame wavering gleamed,
As if her varying cheek were blent
With lights and shades of death;
While round her lips a grim smile drew,
And the rose paled that on them blew;
And, with faint lingering breath,
“Prepare,” she said, “thy hour is nigh!
Unpitying, thou hast seen me die;
Unpitied be thy mortal sigh!”

XXX.

He heard the words — the words alone;
He heard not that deep solemn groan;
He heard not the clang of the ‘larum bell,
Nor from the gates that horn-blast swell;
Nor heard the many-trampling hoofs,
Nor voices calling in the gale,
And ringing round the castle roofs,
Till they made the ‘battled raven quail;

Nor heard the funeral shriek, that broke
Through every hall and lofty tower;
He heard alone the words she spoke.

XXXI.

Nor saw he in the court below,
By the torches' umbered glow,
Borne upon his bleeding bier,
With wounds unclosed and open eyes,
A warrior stretched in death draw near;
Nor heard the loud and louder cries,
This piteous sight of horror drew
From every friend and vassal true.
But he knew that voice at his chamber-door.
And straight the witch-veil of glamour
Falls, and his wonder-trance is o'er.
He hears his summons in that sound;
It is the bark of the true blood-hound.
True to his murdered lord is he;
He has traced the steps he could not see —
Traced them o'er darkened miles and miles.,
O'er glen and mountain, wood and moor,
Through all their swift and winding wiles,
Till he stopped before his master's door,
And bayed the murderer in his bower.

XXXII.
The castle gates were strait unbarred,
And he sprang before his bleeding lord;
He passed the page unheeded by,
And tracked the stranger's steps on high;
Till at the door, that closed him in,
Loud and dread became his din.

The doors are burst, and the spectre-light
Betrayeth the form of the blood-tracked knight:
He was armed all over in coat of mail,
But nothing did steel that night avail;
He fell a torn corpse, beside that chair,
Whereunto the page did late appear,
By the dark glamour-art revealed,
His murdered lord with lance and shield.
The *murderer* fell, and his death-wound found
In the terrible fangs of the true blood-hound.

Here the voice of the minstrel ceased; and, after striking a few notes of his harp, full and deep, he rested with a look of sorrow. His eyes dwelt on the Lady Barbara — but she heeded him not; but sat with head inclined, as if still listening to his dismal tale. There followed a dread silence in the room, as of expectation of that which was to follow. Some there were, who said the ditty was already ended; yet they would fain have heard something of the pitiful history of that unhappy lady, whose portraiture was in the tower-chamber, and would have known what was the guilty motive of the knight against the Lord of Eglamore; and how it chanced he came so unwittingly to his castle. Others there were then present, who, having noticed the young Gaston de Blondeville to be ill at ease, the while the minstrel sung, and being, perchance, already moved by the merchant's strange accusation, scrupled not to think the story touched him nearly; and that Pierre rested, not because his ditty was at an end, or from weariness; but that he doubted whether it would be well to proceed to the second part.

However this may be, he needed not have stayed his strain, for Sir Gaston was no longer in the chamber. Whether Pierre knew this or not, he began once more to strike upon the harp; when, on a sudden, the King's trumpets were heard blowing up near the stair; and anon, his Highness entered the bower, it being almost time that he should go to his rest for "all-night."

There was no more harping; Pierre tuning not up his second fit; and belike, if his Highness had been there at first, he would have bidden him to shorten his ballad by one-half.

The King looked about for Sir Gaston; and, espying him not, asked wherefore he was not there; but, before any answer could be given, the knight had returned, and now approached his Highness. He was then commanded to dance a round with the Lady Barbara, and he obeyed; but many there noted the sadness on his brow, though his steps were light and gay.

A more pleasureful sight could not be than the Queen's bower, as it was at that time, where she sat in estate, under a cloth of gold, her ladies standing about her chair, and her maidens on either hand, below the steps of her throne; and two young damsels of surpassing beauty and richly bedight, sitting on the first step, at her feet; the same, that were used so to sit, when her Highness kept state in the great hall at festivals.

Behind them, half encircling the throne, stood twenty household esquires, holding great wax torches, right richly beseen in the King's livery, and proud to wear it, gentils as they were, as I said before, and of ancient families in the countries from whence they came.

The arched roof was curiously wrought in that fashion, which King Henry had newly brought into favour; and, besides these lights, a great crystal lamp, that hung from the roof, shone over the chamber and upon the goodly assemblage, as they looked upon the Lady Barbara, passing so winningly in the dance. That night, the Earl of Richmond bore the Queen's spice-plate, and Sir Philip de Kinton her cup.

When the Lady Barbara had ended her dance, the Queen called her to her chair; and, making her take of the sweetmeats from her own plate, spoke commendable words to her, as did his Highness King Henry. Then the Queen, turning to the Lady Gloucester, took from her hands a girdle, richly beset with jewels, and, clasping it on the Lady Barbara, kissed her, and bade her wear it ever, for her sake and for her honour. Her Highness then stretched out her hand to Sir Gaston, who, kneeling, put it to his lips. "May you, Sir knight," said her Highness, "as well deserve this lady, as she deserves this token of my regard!"

Then, the King said many gracious things, and seemed so merry of heart, that he made all around him gladsome; till, the Voide being ended, he went forth with the Queen, the trumpets blowing before them; and the chamber was then speedily avoided for all night.

While these things were passing in the chambers of estate, there were divers wassailings and merriments making in other places of the castle. In the great hall were feasting and revelling, but not of estate. There were tumblers and jugglers and morrice-dancers and mimicks and mummers, with pipings and blowings, that made the roofs ring.

The monks at the priory heard them afar, while at the last even-song, and long after; and well I wote, that had it not been the King's castle, there had been some rebuke, as indeed due, for such noise made. The Prior in his chamber sat alone; listening, I guess, in gloomy mood to the revelry; and, all that night, only Edmund the monk and mass Peter with him: he came not forth to midnight-song.

But now I must return, and so must ye that hear, or read, to the castle. In the hall there was a dancer on stilts, playing the while on a recorder; there were dancers on one leg, and dancers upon the head; but that which most rejoiced many of the beholders, were the disguisings and the quaint antics of the mummers. There came a whole troop, some wearing the heads of asses, some of bulls, some of calves, some of cats, who brayed and kicked, bellowed and tossed, scratched and mewed, to the very life. Others, like stags and hares, hounds and apes, kept not so pertinently to their pretended natures, but marched on with solemn state, as much as might be, hand in hand, as if they had been loving friends and neighbours; yet each with a dagger stuck in his girdle. And others again, with fools' girdles and bells hanging to them; tossing their heads, and cutting such strange capers, to the noise of pipes and drums, as made the sides of many to shake with laughter, and roused up every hawk on perch there to shake his bells in concert.

But all this was child's play, though it was often done before the worshipfullest estates, in comparison of the sayer's art; which, when he could be heard between whiles, when the loud revelry paused and held breath, was marvellous to hear: and, as soon as those mad-heads caught the words of that tale-teller, sooth to say, they soon were still and hushed, as though no living soul but he breathed there; listening to his dismal tradey, with tears in their eyes, or quaking for fear of the strange things he told them. He, the while, with solemn visage, showing as though he himself believed all the marvels he related, and not showing roguish smiles, as some do, kept on always to the far end of his long tale: though

some learned clerks would oft-times comment to their neighbours upon his marvels, as if he had purported lofty matter worth their notice, and did not merely strive to while an idle tide away.

In other parts of the castle were those gentils and honest gentlewomen, that, misliking the loud revelry of the hall, drew together in chambers apart; and delighted themselves with histories of times past, the sad hopes of lovers, or the deeds of brave knights, or otherwise in singing and harping, after their own manner.

In the lower hall too was feasting, and the mirth did not stop short of the “Kuchane,” so that every man to the lowest degree was joyous; and each chamber and tower rung with song, or laughter, save the prison tower of the poor merchant. He, as he lay on his pallet-bed, heard those sounds of music and jollity, in confused uproar rising through the courts, while his heart was stricken with fear and sadness; for, whether he were right or not in believing Sir Gaston to be the murderer of his friend, it is certain, that he had seen his friend murdered, and that too, as he had said, in the woods of Ardenn.

He was, at this time, far from his home and friends, and had been travelling, over these parts a lonesome stranger, along the foss-way from Lincoln, southward; having been on his merchandize into the north seas, and having landed on the eastern coast. Coming again to that place, where, a few years back, he had buried his friend, the remembrance of him broke out in fresh grief; and, hearing that the King was coming to keep festival in Kenilworth, he resolved to break the matter to him; as well as to adventure to tell him, the times were such it was no longer safe to journey in any part of his kingdom.

The most audacious robberies, certes, were then committed at noonday with impunity; nay, the very thieves themselves feared not to be seen walking about, little attempt being made to seize them, or, in any wise, to suppress these scandalous outrages. Not only then did the sad fall of his friend, but also the fearful condition of the living, urge the merchant to make the truth known to the king.

With this design he had rested at Kenilworth, but not at the house where he had formerly suffered such affliction; and, on the King’s arrival, had gone forth in the crowd to behold him, though he had not intended to present his petition in that time of turmoil. But, when he saw near his

Highness, riding as it were in the top of favour, the very man, whom he thought to be the slayer of his kinsman; when he beheld that look, which he felt to dart into his heart, and to revive there all the horror he had felt at the aspect of the murderer, at the moment when his friend had been stricken down — then it was, that, overcome by the strength of his feelings, he dropped down senseless in the castle court, as hath been related.

And now, what had he gained by his courageous demand of justice? Suspicion, contempt, fear, grief, a prison, and, perhaps, death. Yet did he not repent the effort he had made, so honest was his grief for the fate of his kinsman; so much was his mind possessed with the notion, that he had accused his very murderer; so confident was he that he was performing a duty; and, what is more, so sure was he, that to perform his duty in this world is the wisest, the most truly cunning thing a man can contrive to do. Whether his suspicions concerning the knight were just or not; these, his conclusions touching his own conduct, none but fools, or villains, — that is, none but fools — will deny.

Thus he lay on his pallet, alike deprived of sleep by the jollity of others and by his own grievous reflections. A lamp burned beside him, but it served only to show the forlornness of his condition, in this high and distant tower. Sometimes, he would rise and look through his grated window upon the inner court of the castle, listening there awhile to the distant minstrelsy and to the confusion of numberless voices, footsteps and closing doors, that rose from many a chamber below. Anon, a torch-bearer would pass the court, a page, perhaps, or a yeoman; and would show the gloomy towers above and the steps of the guest he led at their feet. But, this passed, nothing could the prisoner see, save here and there, a lamp burning through a casement of glass (and a goodly show there was of such windows now in this castle) like stars through a clouded sky; but mostly the glorious beams of the great hall, that struck through the windows and lighted the air above. Once he heard the trumpets blow, and thought the King was coming forth, and once he fancied he saw, in the person of one who followed a torch-bearer, Sir Gaston himself. Then turned he from the casement, looked no more, and fell upon his pallet.

At last, every distant sound grew fainter; the noise of the dancers ceased; then the minstrelsy sunk low; the voices of the hall revellers

became few; he heard less frequently the doors opened and shut; and then he heard the fastening of bolts and bars: and, afar off, the castle gates closed for the night; and soon all grew still, as though no living creature inhabited there.

And thus it kept, until the wayte piped his second watch in all the courts. Then the stranger arose, and, looking again through his grate, saw him well, by the light his groom carried, piping the hour. And, when the man had finished his saye, he went round the court, his boy-groom holding up the torch, while he tried every door, and found that all was safe. By this light too, he perceived the wardour's men on guard; but no living being else was seen. The windows of the great hall were dark; and, the torch being gone, nothing glimmered through the night, save one great star, which wizards say is evil. It stayed, at this hour, right over King Henry's lodgings; but for whom it watched, who was there that might tell? The prisoner knew the star, and all that was thought of it, and he betook him to his pallet groaning heavily.

He had not long been there, when, as he thought, a voice near him spoke his name. Now, there was a small grate looked out from his chamber upon the stair; and thence the voice seemed to come. The prisoner, raising himself from his pallet, turned, and saw there the figure of a man passing away. He kept his eyes fixed, for some space, upon the grate, but the figure appeared no more, and he sunk again on his pallet.

The voice, faint and passing as it was, had thrilled him with dread. Whose it was, wherefore it had called him by a name known but to few, and had then passed away, without communing with him, he tried in vain to understand; yet seemed it not wholly new to him.

THE THIRD DAY. I .

Here was a drawing of the inside of the great hall, with the King and Queen holding festival. In the background was a sketch, of what seemed to be a pageant acted there; and yet the spectators appeared to be looking on, with an interest too serious for so trifling a performance. In the margin, also, was drawn, the chapel before mentioned, with a marriage ceremony at the porch.

On the morrow, the Prior of Saint Mary’s was with the King, before the esquire-barber had clipped his dread Highness’s beard, or the rushes had been strewed on the chapel-floor for the bridal company, or even the ox-chine, the manchets and the pitchers of wine had been delivered out from the kuchane and the buttery-hatch, for the breakfasts of the King and Queen and their lords and ladies. He told his Highness, that no person of the name of Reginald de Folville was on the burial lists of the Priory; nor was there any inhabitant of that house, or of Kenilworth, yet discovered, who remembered that name, connected with the extraordinary circumstances that had been related. It was, however, notorious, that robberies had frequently been committed in the woods and chases of Kenilworth, where many close and dark thickets were the home of outlaws; and that no single person, and few small companies, could travel in safety through any part of the forest of Ardenn. He remarked, that, if the merchant had suffered there the outrage he had alleged, it was extraordinary he should now venture to travel over the same ground without guide, or companion, to lessen his danger; for, it had appeared from himself, that he was travelling without either.

It was no less extraordinary, that, if the calamitous adventure, related by the merchant, had occurred so near to Kenilworth, and so few years back, it should not be generally known and still remembered there. From all these circumstances, and particularly from that of the name of Reginald de Folville not being found in the cemetery-book of the Priory, and from the absence of every other memorial of such a person, save in the charge itself, the Prior scrupled not to insist, that the stranger, now in

confinement, was an impostor, falsely calling himself a merchant; who, for his own private ends, sought the ruin and the life of Sir Gaston de Blondeville.

His Highness seemed well satisfied that it should be so; and, in his indignation against the accuser, declared, that his life should be forfeited, for the crime of having sought another's. He called for Sir Gaston; and, having acquainted him with the result of the Prior's inquiries, assured him, that his honour should be cleared from suspicion, and his accuser openly condemned: and his Highness told him, that, since he would soon be unable to serve him as a knight of his household, such being batchelors only, as well as that all the world might have proof of his spotless honour, he would place him amongst the nobles of his land.

So saying, his Highness bade him to his intended bride, and to hail her Baroness of Blondeville; also to warn her to be ready for the appointed ceremony of her marriage, by then two hours were past: and forthwith his Highness departed the chamber.

The Earl, her father, when he heard of what had passed, in the presence of the King, and of the new dignity conferred on Sir Gaston, was well contented to receive the young Baron for his son; but the lady, her mother, whose tenderness, being more than her ambition, made her fearful of contrary tidings, was not yet completely assured, that this would be a happy union for her child. The Lady Barbara herself, however, nothing doubting the worth of her suitor, loved him not the less for having been accused, nor the better for having been raised to new dignity; nevertheless, she took the distinction in good part, rejoicing, that it should thus appear he had not fallen in the esteem of his Highness, the King.

She was now in her bower, already attired for the bridal, attended by her six maidens, the daughters of some of the first nobles of the realm. And, although this be not a gay history, chronicling the vanities of women, yet will we here report all that we heard of this lady, in so far as her appearance may tell what might be seen in the King's court, at this time. She wore on her hair a string of pearls of great value and a necklace of the same, given her by the young Baron. Her robe, white as the lawn of the Archbishop, was confined by the precious girdle, given to her by the Queen; and over all she wore the veil of a sister, and pity it was, that so fair a vestal should be relinquished to this world, instead of being retained

in the community, which had once looked to have her their own. But I say not now more of her appearance, at this time.

King Henry, during his visits to Kenilworth, had newly repaired and adorned the chapel of the castle, and there the marriage was to be solemnized. By his command, the walls had been painted with the story of King Edward, the Confessor, giving the ring off his finger to a poor stranger. The floor was strewed with rushes and oak leaves, and with such sweet flowers as the season afforded, from the woods and the gardens. The lights were all a-blaze, so that they overcame the perpetual tomb lights of Geoffrey de Clinton, the founder of the castle, interred in the chapel here.

When the trumpets had sounded, there went forth in procession, first, the Queen and her court, her ladies pacing before her, two and two, according to their rank, preceded by her minstrels and the officers of her household. Next before her Highness went the bride, her six maidens strewing flowers before her, and Maria, the famous French poetess, who was then at the Queen's court, playing on her harp. Amongst the ladies encompassing her Highness, were the Countesses of Cornwall and Pembroke, (the latter then become Countess of Montfort) and the lady mother of the bride.

When these nobles and gentils had been let at the gates of the precinct of the priory, by a part of the choir, and by two of the secular clergy, and had been led to the porch of the chapel, they were more fully received beneath it by others of the clergy, repeating what is appointed to be there said; and were led into the chapel by those, who had received them, and so were they placed, every one according to their rank, unless when the Queen made any especial choice. Then, the King's trumpets blew up, and his Highness approached, accompanied of Prince Edward and the Earl of Cornwall, and attended by the knights of his Highness's body, the knights of his household, and a countless train of nobles — the young Baron conspicuous among them all, for that graceful and gallant air, for which those of his nation were renowned. The cloud, that was over him yesterday, had passed, and his countenance was joyous as the day.

And next to this young lord in grace, and high above in dignity, was the Archbishop himself: of lofty stature and of venerable and commanding aspect, he passed with slow and stately steps, preceded by bishops and others of the church, his purple train borne up by two pages, and his own

virger making due place for him and his part of the procession. Meanwhile, those of the clergy and of the choir, who had received the Queen, had returned to the precinct-gate, whence, with due sentences, uttered before the whole company, but ‘specially before the bridegroom, they led him to the porch, where the banns were fully proclaimed.

I hold it not meet to speak here, with greater pourtrayment, of the more solemn ceremonies in the chapel itself, only that, when the Archbishop came to the lowest step, he stayed there some time, with landed head in silence, the bishops having passed to their places; and then the minstrels and the children of the chapel began an anthem, which ended not till the Archbishop, the King, the bride and bridegroom, had advanced to their proper places, and, the bride’s veil having been thrown back, the Archbishop, on the special command of the King, began to read what is appointed.

There was that day in the chapel, among the crowd, by some unknown hap, a stranger, who seemed to observe, with more attention than the greater part, all that passed, yet did he never ask a question, nor speak to any one there. He was seen in different parts, although the press of people was so great, it was difficult for any one to change his station. At last, having reached the sepulchre of Geoffrey de Clinton, he leaned among the tomb-lights there, and moved no more. There was in his countenance a touching solemnity, while he watched the progress of the ceremony, which was noticed by many present; for, in his whole demeanour there was something, though it was difficult to explain what, that drew away the attention of many from the sight they came to witness, and that was pity, for it was such a sight as is seldom seen.

King Henry, of goodly stature and of comely countenance, was in a robe of dark blue velvet; and with the dignity of his carriage there was mixed an air of good humour, that made all men feel at ease in his presence. His son, Prince Edward, it was remarked, had a sterner look than had his father. Many, who knew, that the King’s heart was good, in many respects, lamented his weaknesses, and that his passions too often carried him away. He now appeared in his state and well able to enjoy it; but the Archbishop, with his firm, composed, and solemn countenance and lofty figure, made all other dignity appear as nothing. He was like some oak of our forest, whose grey top has braved the storms of centuries, and whose mighty

branches still afford shelter to the storm-beset traveller, and to the plants and flowers at his feet. The Lady Barbara was the lily there; the Baron de Blondeville, a young beech, growing at hand, with all its glossy branches and light foliage, spreading forth in graceful beauty. What pity, if the lightning should sere those green leaves, and destroy its promise!

When the Archbishop asked, who gave away the maiden, his Highness advancing, graciously delivered her to the Baron, who bending one knee, received her of the King; but, as he rose up, his countenance showed not joy, or love — it showed consternation. His eyes had glanced on the tomb of Geoffrey de Clinton, and were now rivetted, where the stranger stood. The stranger, as he still leaned amidst the torches there, seemed, however, unmoved by the dismayed looks of the bridegroom; his gloomy sternness was unshaken. But the emotion of the Baron increased: his looks became deadly pale, and he could no longer repeat the words, that were necessary in the ceremony. All eyes were soon directed upon him, and then upon the Lady Barbara, who fell into a swoon, and would have sunk on the ground, had not the King's arm sustained her. Her maidens, and some of the Queen's ladies hastened to her assistance; but, though almost every one in the chapel looked upon her with pity and care, the Baron regarded her not, nor seemed to know what had happened to her. His attention was still fixed upon the tomb, whither, too, directed by his looks, all other eyes now turned; but they perceived only the extended marble image of the dead one within, and the torches burning round it. The stranger was no longer there. The hasty surprise of the King, the calm displeasure of the archbishop, the severe curiosity of the young Prince Edward, the distress of the lady mother, and the wonder of all, where this might end, may not be told.

His Highness, inquiring of those about him whence this confusion had arisen, was answered, there was a stranger in the chapel, who seemed to be known only to the Baron, and it was surely the sight of him, which had occasioned this disorder. Then, the King commanded, that the doors should be shut, and search made for this unknown person, whom he suspected to be some secret colleague of the young Baron's accuser, come hither purposely to interrupt the ceremony; and he commanded also, that the service should proceed, as soon as the parties affected should recover their presence of mind. Many there thought the King too hasty in this, and the Archbishop himself testified no willingness to proceed.

The Baron did not long remain in his apparent torpor, but, on his recovery, he seemed like one awakened from a dream: he looked round with fear and surprise; and, fixing his eyes again on the tomb, he was well nigh relapsing, though nothing there was seen, save the marble image and the torchlights around it. The King spoke graciously to him, and, when the baron heard his voice, he made most humble gesture before his Highness, and craved his pardon for the disturbance he had created.

"You must ask pardon of this lady," said the King, showing to him the bride, who was now nearly reviving; "for it is she only who has suffered."

Then, the young Baron seemed, for the first time, to know fully what had happened, and he hung over her with sadness and anxiety; yet divers of the courtiers thought he felt more for himself than for her, and of this number were those, who envied him the new honour he had attained.

When the bride had recovered, her lady-mother would have withdrawn her from the chapel, and she herself wished to go away from the great observance that had been drawn towards her; but the Baron, addressing himself to the King, besought his Highness to interfere on his behalf, and not to suffer, that the vain impulse of a momentary and wandering feeling, which had, at times, come over him even from his childhood, should be taken in so serious a part. The Baron having knelt to the King, as he said this (and once before he did the same, but I did not note it on these leaves) the Archbishop could ill conceal his just displeasure, that the Baron should do reverence in that place to any human being; and the King said the Archbishop was right; and, making the Baron instantly rise, asked what had caused his dismay, and whom he had seen, that should have caused it.

Then the Baron answered, that he had seen one like unto his dead father; but he now knew it to have been only an apparition, suggested in his own mind; and he repeated, that to such like delusions he had been subject from his young-hood.

This was not said so lowly, as that the lady Huntingdon heard it not; and she thought, that such a state of mind was a sufficient reason for withholding her daughter from the marriage: and the Earl, her father, taking up the objection, had begun to repeat it, — but he was soon silenced; for his Highness said, peremptorily, that, because of consent duly given, he had resolved to be present at the marriage, with his court; and it were not to be allowed, that a momentary infirmity of one of the parties,

who instantly afterwards desired to have the ceremony renewed, should be sufficient for rendering all the preparations, which had been so great and so public, bootless. And his Highness commanded progress forthwith.

Yet the Archbishop had some private discourse with the King; and it seemed as though he were recommending delay, at least till that stranger had been questioned, whose appearance, he privately believed, had thus disturbed the Baron de Blondeville, notwithstanding the tale he had told. The lady Barbara herself was questioned, as to the cause of the distress she had betrayed; but she answered only, that it was the sudden alteration in the Baron, that caused her spirits to fail.

When those, who had been ordered to search the chapel, were called upon, they declared, that no where could they find the stranger who had been seen, neither within the doors, nor in court, nor in chamber. Then, the King, without further delay, commanded, that the service should proceed; and it did proceed accordingly, and was concluded, without farther let, or hinderance.

So the King and Queen returned from the chapel to the great chamber, in due state and order, and the court dispersed for that day, until the evening, when there was to be a grand banquet, to honour these nuptials.

All that day, the young Baroness seemed grave and thoughtful; the lady, her mother, was not a whit more joyed; although the Earl, recollecting the honour the King had newly conferred on the bridegroom, and beholding, in his mind, other benefits likely to follow, seemed now again to be well contented with this marriage. But the Baron carried himself thoughtfully, for one in his circumstances; and some, who observed him closely, thought there was still a tale to be told, which he liked not to have known; and others, who envied him less his new title, held that this humour was but the remains of that, which had seized upon him in the chapel, and that it was the recollection of this and of the confusion he had there occasioned, which preyed upon his spirits. However this might be, he seemed desirous of shaking off that mood, and to appear at the banquet with the gaiety, which the time invited.

Surely the preparations for this feast were magnificent, though they came not nigh what had been made on some former marriages, such as that given at Westminster, when Richard, the King’s brother, wedded Cincia, daughter of the Count de Provence, and sister to the Queen, when three

thousand dishes were served up at the wedding dinner; nor is it to be thought this was like unto that one afterwards at York, when King Henry gave his daughter Margaret in marriage to Alexander, the young King of Scotland; and my Lord Archbishop gave, for his share of the feast, sixty pasture oxen, which were clean consumed at that entertainment; but, nevertheless, this at Kenilworth was a right noble and princely banquet; and thus it was.

The King, that night, with the Queen, kept state in the great hall, which was thereunto, by command of his Highness, hanged about with that suit of tapestry, which setteth forth the story of our famous King Richard, Cœur de Lion, his deeds in Palestine; and be it remembered, that King Henry loved nothing better than to see on his walls the noble achievements of his ancestors and others, as the Queen's chamber here at Kenilworth showeth, where he had caused to be pictured forth, Merlin, King of Britain, and his three sons; the sailing of William from Normandy; the submission of Griffin ap Conan to Henry the First, and several other things.

This tapestry in the great hall was placed on all sides under the windows, down to the floor, except at the bottom of the hall, where the great gallery ran; and there the carved screens beneath were sufficient to hide the buttery-hatch, on the other side of the passage, and the doors leading down to the kuchanes. It hung on all sides, save here, and where the great chimney stood, which was guarded by a projecting stone-work, of curious carving, and like unto a canopy, or open porch. The wood, that was consumed within, was laid this night on andirons of solid silver, bossed.

On the top of this seeming porch, stood figures of armed knights, as large as life, such as were in the gallery before-mentioned. That gallery was covered with weapons and with complete suits of armour; some, with helmet and feet fastened against the wall, and others standing upright, like to living warriors, armed at all points; but doubtless, these last were well held up by some artful contrivance. Five figures, thus appointed, stood in the front of the gallery, as if watching who should enter from the screens beneath. Amongst these was one shape of black steel, larger than the rest and higher by the head; said to have been the very harness worn by the King's great uncle, Richard the Lion, in some battle in Palestine: and the

very sight of it was enough to daunt with fear those unused to a field of war.

Certes, it was like to that worn by this king in the very tapestry, wherewith the hall was this night, in good part, adorned; and where he was shown fighting in all his glory. It has been said, the young prince was much moved at the sight of the daring deeds there pictured forth, and of that armour — but not with terror, rather with noble pride, to emulate such greatness; and that he was by this and such like things, often before his eyes, prompted to what he afterwards achieved; but of this I cannot say. The keys of this gallery of arms were kept in the care of the lord constable of the castle, so that no person might enter it, without his special leave.

In the back wall was a window, opening from the King's chamber, that looked over the gallery into the hall below; and where his Highness used sometimes to divert himself, with observing what was passing at the different tables there and with the games and sports, passing amongst his household and followers. He needed only to draw aside a curtain in that chamber, to see all that was doing in the hall below; and there, at eventide, he might remain unseen, if it so pleased him; for the gallery received light only from the lamps in the arches high above.

The minstrel's gallery was this; never was it so at Kenilworth; nor in any great hall of prince or peer where state was duly kept. Their gallery was on the opposite to the great chimney, and nearer to the dais, where they sat all joyfully clothed in the King's livery.

At the upper end of the hall, raised by several steps above the rest of the flooring was that dais, where stood the high tables. The King was under a canopy of crimson velvet, fringed about with gold; the Queen's was on the same platform, with a canopy of the like form and stuff; but the canopy was lower by the valance.

A carpet of crimson silk was spread under the tables, and down the steps of the dais; below this, the floor of the hall was strewed with fresh rushes, on which were laid wood-flowers in plenty. In the bay-windows, at the end of the platform, or dais, a princely cupboard was set forth, stage above stage, of nine or ten heights, till they reached the bottom of the glass casements there; piled up with gold and silver cups and dishes and with basins of solid-gold, some set with precious stones, and others highly wrought.

From the arched roof of these two bays hung lamps, that showed all their brightness, and illuminated the roial window above, and also the slender columns, that reached to the roof; and the curious fretwork of leaves and flowers spreading there; which had been newly done by command of King Henry, who loved such vanities, and had brought this new fashion out of Normandy. He had put such roial windows, perchance better painted, in his new church at Salisbury.

Those, who now beheld the pomp he displayed and his vast retinue, wherever he kept his court, might say, with the venerable monk of St. Albans, on occasion of the marriage of the Scottish King Alexander with this King Henry's daughter; "If I were to describe the grandeur of this festival, the number of the noble guests, the splendor and various changes of their dresses, the abundance of the tables and variety of the sports provided; those, who were absent, would think I was inventing." There, Matthew, the good monk, tells us yet more of the Archbishop of York on that occasion, who expended four thousand marks in entertaining the courts of both kings and in every kind of munificence to the poor and sick. The kings, Matthew further tells us, entertained by turns their whole courts, "so that," as he adds, "the theatrical vanity of this world might show to all, as much as it could of its short and transitory gladness." And vanity it was, as those of Saint Albans knew to their cost and sorely complained of, when the King went so often to the Abbey there.

But what would such have said, had they lived now, in our King Richard's days; who, the second of his name, is first in every kind of new extravagance, the like of which was never seen afore, and what it may end in, there is no one that dare yet say.

But now, to go back to the past King Henry; he proved himself, according to the account in the Norman tongue, which I have seen, not only an excellent "meat-giver" here at Kenilworth, but a sumptuous bestower of many pleasures and a patron of every kind of mimickry, such as painting, carving, music and versifying, as this hall at Kenilworth fully displayed, on this very night. Before the feast began, it was a goodly sight to behold the serjeants at arms and the ushers, bearing the piles of gold and silver cups and the spice-plates to the boards; and the ceremony of laying forth the sur-nap on the King's table, in readiness for him to wash, which was thus: —

The King’s sewer having laid the end of the sur-nap and a towel on the board, and the usher having fastened his wand to them, drew them to the other end of the table; and then kneeling down, the sewer at the other end kneeling likewise, they stretched the sur-nap smooth. Then the usher, laying up the end of the towel on the board, rose and did reverence before the King’s chair, with his wand, as though his Highness had already been there. And, when he had kneeled down and amended the towel, he did reverence again in like manner.

On either side of the hall reaching from the steps of the dais (for in this hall was only one dais) to the screens at the end, were ranges of tables, appointed for different ranks and degrees of the Court: and it were goodly to see these nobles and gentils ranged in their places by the marshal of the hall. At one table, on the right, next below the dais, were those of the King’s blood, who sat not at his board. Opposite, on the other line, sat the noble dames, all together.

Next below the King’s board, sat the bishops and the abbots, each at their own table; then, the King’s high officers of estate, such as attended not on his person; there were, besides, the four Barons of the Exchequer, assessors, and several other great servants of his courts of justice, which always followed him, wherever he might choose to keep the high festivals of the year, and to administer the laws of the realm.

Other tables were set apart for other ranks of nobles, not of blood; their wives and daughters sitting apart from them. Thus every table was filled, each with its respective rank, magnificently attired; the nobles in velvet and cloth of gold, the dames sparkling with jewels and bearing plumes on their hair; the bishops in their ‘broidered copes and golden mitres, and the great officers of state in their own peculiar habits, with their golden chains.

But the table of the knights-banneret was that which made all, save the ladies’ boards, look pale and dull. They wore their ‘broidered mantles over a kind of cuirass, each with a sash of crimson beneath, thrown over the shoulder and falling down to the sword. On their heads they had each a small cap of velvet, with a gallant plume of feathers depending on each side, which it was the King’s pleasure they should wear, even in his presence. On the wall above, were the shield and of each knight, their banners waving over them. At the bottom of the hall was the esquires’

table, were sat nineteen of them, arrayed in the King’s livery. Every table had its own officers of service, as marshal-sewer, conveyers, almoner and butler, appointed according to the rank of the guests.

Now, the trumpets without having given warning, the King and Queen entered by a door leading from the state-chambers; attended by the young Prince Edward, the Archbishop, the Earl and Countess of Cornwall, the Lady Pembroke and Montfort, the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, the bride and bridegroom, all the knights of the household then at the court, arrayed in their velvet gowns, the esquires of the body; the kings at arms, heralds and pursuivants, going before in their coats, — two sergeants at arms appearing to make way. Next before the King, went the lord mareschal of the hall and his eight knights.

Thus, their Highnesses came in, with a brave noise of trumpets, and took their seats at the high tables. And immediately entered from the door, forty yeomen, each bearing a torch, who took their stations down the middle of the hall, between the tables, in two lines. Ten esquires of the household, most richly bedight in the King’s livery, who had marched before his Highness, with the four esquires of the body, stood in a half-circle; each bearing a large wax-light, at the back of the dais, near the high tables: — while other ten, with lights, took their stations, in two divisions, at the foot of the steps of the dais; but leaving an open space, that all guests might have sight of the princely board.

There, clusters of lights in golden candlesticks, showed the massive plate and the marvellous devices of the banquet, with the magnificent attire of those who graced it; and these lights, together with the numerous torches below, and the lamps depending from the points of every inverted pinnacle of the roof on high, cast such a blaze of splendour, not only on the banquet beneath, but on every painted window above, as made the hall as grand a spectacle, well nigh, for those without, as for those within; only that the guests could not be seen, by reason that the windows were so high above them.

Some travellers that night, coming from afar, through the woods, espying the blaze, wondered what it might mean. And some poor pilgrims, travelling from the shrine of Saint Hugh, at Lincoln, seeing through the darkness such painted light afar off in the valley, took it for some delusion, raised by evil wizards for their destruction; and they ventured not forward,

till they had, after due observation, some assurance of the mortal reality. Presently, as they advanced, they distinguished better the gorgeous colouring of the windows, which they knew to be of the new manner, called roial, and then the towers above, though these were pale in the moonlight, and then they heard the sound of minstrelsy within; and so, coming to the priory-gate, they asked shelter and had it: for, though they were told, that the King kept his court, and, at that time, banqueted in the castle, they chose to take refuge in the quiet of our cloister, rather than to ask for any part, or sight, of such doings. But, to come back to the King's feast, of which much and marvellous is yet to be told.

At the King's table sat, on his right hand, the Archbishop of York; beyond him sat the young Prince Edward; and, on the left, the Earl of Cornwall. But, just before his Highness came to his place and sat, the Archbishop, as highest of estate, delivered unto him the napkin; and the young Baron, for his honour, was allowed, on that night, to bear the golden basin and ewer for the King to wash; although there were so many of higher estate in the hall. At the same time, was brought another golden basin to the Archbishop, who seemed to wait till the King should have washed: but his Highness made a beck, that he should wash; and he did so. When the King washed, straight five esquires gathered round him, and stood with their lights, till he had made an end.

This ceremony done, they withdrew to their places, and the Baron took his behind the King's chair, who spoke merrily to him, while he served; and the Baron had recovered his good looks, and wore his gown of azure, broidered with silver, with as good a grace as any one in court. He was, most certain, of a brave figure, and of countenance, that, for high spirit, seemed to challenge comparison with every man he looked upon, which made him many secret enemies.

At the Queen's board, sat the Countesses of Cornwall and Montfort, and the young Baroness de Blondeville, and none other. A golden ewer, set thick with rubies, stood beside her Highness; and a basin of the same, with damask-water, strewed with fresh pulled lavender, was held to her to wash by one of her maidens, who duly sat at her feet under the board, the young Baroness bearing the napkin. Which done, two of her Highness's maidens, who waited behind her chair, delivered them to the Queen's pages.

And now entered the hall, Norroy, King of Arms, heralds and poursuivants attending, all in their coats; the Lord Mareschal with his eight knights, and the steward, treasurer, and comptroller, walking before the first dish for the King’s board; which was carried by the King’s chief sewer, wearing his neck towel; his carver, Harpingham, wearing the same, surrounded by esquires, of the household bearing wax-lights, and followed by serjeants at arms and esquires and pages. But, when these had reached the middle of the hall, they all stood still, and made reverence to the King; the lord steward, with his wand; the carver with his great knife, and the sewer with his dish in his hand: and again, at the foot of the dais, they all stopped short, and bowed before him, the trumpets sounding the while.

Would you know what this first dish was? It was a warner of shields of boar, in armour, with mustard, served with malmsey. When the warner was ended, the first course, and so was every other, was brought up by seven sewers, with like state and with due taking of assaye of the King’s meat, and with divers other ceremonies too tedious to relate.

Only amongst the dishes were frumentie, with venison; frumentie roial, with a dragon for a suttletie; browst of Almayne, potage of gourdis, and felettes in galentine.At the Queen’s table, amongst many other dishes and suttleties of curious invention, were these — tench in jelly; great custard planted for a suttletie; petynel, peronsew with his segue; goos in hochepot and browet tuskay.

There was, also, for an honour to the young Baroness, a special suttletie, presenting the Queen’s bower, with her ladies ranged round, and the lady Barbara, receiving on her knee the jewels, which her Highness had given to her the night before; there too, was presented Pierre, the minstrel, playing on his very harp. The Baron de Blondeville had leave from the King to quit his chair, for a time, to visit the bride; and, when he showed this suttletie to her, she smiled; but it was the first time she had smiled this night.

There was another suttletie of archers in the forest hunting the hart, with foresters in green blowing their horns and the whole court following. In this, too, was the Lady Barbara, mounted on a milk-white palfry, her hair bound up in a beauteous net; but not of gold and pearls, as it was this night, nor wore she a mantle of white cloth like that she now had on. At a

distance, within the shadow of the trees, stood an aged man alone, wringing his hands; but what this might mean none knew.

In the hall below, every table was abundantly served with dainties, according to the rank of those who sat there; and all were contented, as well they might be.

The King talked graciously and often to the Baron de Blondeville, and sometimes would send him with a dish of dainties from his own board to the Baroness; nothing doubting, that he would like the errand. And, when the Earl of Norfolk brought his Highness his cup, he drank to her; but the trumpets blew up too soon, so that what he said was heard not; but he bowed, and thrice waved to her his hand, the which, soon as the young Baroness saw, she rose up and curtsied low three times, to the great pleasure of all, who beheld her sweet grace and modesty. Many there were in the hall, who cried out, “May she be happy!”

The King had given back the cup into the hands of the Lord Norfolk, and was resting him in his chair; when he saw the curtain drawn back of that window, which opened from his own chamber upon the gallery of arms, and a person standing there. While his Highness marvelled by what means any one could have admittance into that chamber, the keys being in the custody of the Lord Constable, the window was unfolded, and the person, advancing into the gallery, came forward to the front; and there stood still, and with great seeming confidence, beside the armour of Richard the Lion.

Although the light, that fell there from the roof, was not so strong that his Highness, at such distance, could distinguish the countenance of this person, yet, by the grey gleam reflected there, he seemed to be clothed in steel, with helmet on his head: and so like was he to the form of King Richard, that, had not his Highness seen him advance, and the real shape of motionless armour standing by, he would have thought this but a figure for show, like the others there. The King, no less surprized by the strangeness of this appearance, than displeased by the boldness which had thus openly defied his command, respecting that chamber, ordered an esquire to repair to the Lord Constable, who was himself in the hall; and learn whom he had admitted there. The Baron, who stood by, looking whither the King looked, on a sudden changed countenance; and his Highness again observed that stupor and dismay, which he had noticed in the morning, beginning to fix his eyes and to spread over every feature.

The King spoke sharply to him, to rouse him, as was supposed, from his trance; but without effect, for he stood fixed and stiffened, like to a marble statue, yet with looks bent on the gallery, where the stranger stood.

Then, the King gave a beck that none should notice his condition; hoping he might recover himself, before the Queen and the young Baroness should observe him. When the Archbishop perceived that person standing in the gallery, he was observed to make the holy sign; and, when he looked at the Baron and saw his amazement, he repeated it: — it was said his Highness asked him why he did so; but that he answered not, save by a look of solemn reverence and by bowing of the head. That stranger, though the King fixed his eyes on him with displeasure, moved not; but his Highness, though unable to distinguish his features in that obscure situation, thought the intruder likely to be one not obscure, if known, but one who expected to remain unknown in a place so far from what was now passing; and his Highness resolved, that he should not escape detection.

With the esquire messenger, came up the hall the constable of the castle, to attend the King's pleasure. His Highness turned to chide him for not having better observed his command, respecting his own chamber; and enquired who the stranger was, that had intruded there. With astonishment, the constable declared the keys of that chamber and gallery had not been out of his keeping, and that he had not admitted any one thither.

"Nay," said the King, "thine eyes may contradict thy tongue; look there, and thou wilt see one less willing to keep council against thee than thyself." The constable looked to the gallery, but, perceiving only the known figures of armour there, he stood silent and amazed. Then his Highness, seeing the stranger was gone, said, "I let this pass. Thy friend has seen thee, and profited by the warning. Be more heedful in future. Go now to thy place."

The constable did reverence, and departed, marvelling much at the King's words and well resolved to enquire further into this matter. And now the Baron, not having been spoken to for some space, began to recover himself, like one awaking from sleep, and happily before those at the Queen's table knew what happened. The King made a sign, that none should speak, and then, accosting him with his wonted graciousness, bade him go to the table appointed for his rank, and refresh himself there. The young Prince Edward looked on him with curiosity, but without pity; and

spoke not to him. Meanwhile, the Baron gazed around with strange visage, as if he knew not well where he was, but in a short space bowed to the King, and withdrew. While this passed, the Archbishop was noted to look often towards the Queen's table; but he said nought.

The constable, the while, was making busy enquiry, who had been in the gallery of arms, but no one knew any thing of the matter; so he went himself to examine the doors, the key in his hand. The outer door, that led to the King's chamber, was fast. He unlocked it, and, leaving a guard there, went forward with lights through the whole range to the gallery chamber, and there examined the window door, that opened towards the hall; which also was fastened, as he had left it.

Much marvelling, he went out into the gallery, and tried a door, at the end, that opened upon a stair, and found it not only locked, but bolted within, so that if any one had entered this way, he could not have gone out by the same. The constable had ordered the outer-door to be guarded, as I said, while search was made through the gallery and the whole range of rooms; but this was to no purpose, not any thing living being found there. And now he began to think, that his Highness had tasted too often of the golden cup, and mistaken one of the armour-shapes in front of the gallery for a living knight, or other warlike person. However, he took care to make the doors secure, and forthwith he departed.

And now, when the second course was on its way to the King's table, the steward entered the hall, and called out loudly three times, "Wassel! wassel! wassel!" and, incontinently, the cup-bearers went round to the different boards; and all of the Court, standing up and leaning towards the high table, drank the King's health. Then, the verger of the minstrels giving them the beck, they all at once set up their pipyngs and blowings, with such a brave noise, that the castle might have been taken by storm, before those in the hall could have heard the thump of a single war-wolf.

There were trumpets and clarions and citolles and tabarets and makerers and fithols; besides the King's five harpers, all beating, or blowing, or thrumming together. They were heard afar off in the woods; and many an outlaw lay on watch that night, for those, who might be travelling from the castle homewards. The brethren of the priory liked not the noise, and the Prior, I guess, would have liked it as little, but that he was amongst those

in the hall, sitting at the table of the abbots. The poor prisoner in the tower heard the revelry, and to him it was sad indeed.

It were making a cook's book to tell what dainties there were at the second course: these must suffice, for this little history: — There were joly amber potage; jiggots of venison, stopped with cloves; lamprey, with galentine, marchpagne; fritter-dolphin; leche-florentine; with divers suttleties of castles and dragons and voyages at sea; and cities in the King's dominions, beyond the seas; and a full tournament, showing knights on horseback, riding their rounds, and ladies freshly apparelled, in the galleries, looking at them. At the King's board, was a suttletie presenting his court of justice such as it was already prepared in this castle, against the feast of Saint Michael. There was his Highness, sitting in judgment, and all his great officers, sitting round on the benches.

At the Queen's table, was a suttletie with ballads, the which, as yet, I have not [spoken of]. It was of three stages: the first presented Sir Gaston, at some former time, mounted on a courser in a field of war, and this alluded to some valorous exploit performed in France; the second stage showed him kneeling before the King, who laid his sword on him, and rewarded him with knighthood; the third stage showed him in his Baron's robes, receiving from the King the hand of the lady Barbara. There might you see every particular of the ceremony, as it had appeared that morning to the very life. There, too, was the tomb of Geoffrey de Clinton; but the stranger, which had appeared there, was not mimicked. — While the Baroness looked upon this, with most serious countenance, suddenly she fetched a deep sigh, and fell from her seat like one dead. The Queen's maids and the bride's maids thronged about her, but none could tell the cause of this her sudden discomfiture. Though some readily guessed it was a recollection of what had happened to the Baron, that morn; others in the hall affirmed, that they had just heard a voice speak these words: "Three tokens of death!"

But the lady Barbara herself, when she recovered, feigned her swooning was from the heat of the hall and the noise of the music; and, in trowth, this last was enough to make a stronger one than her to faint; and how the Prior sat it, who used always to cry out upon loud doings at feasts, was the wonder of many: but, that night, he seemed as joyously given as any there; yet held he himself with all proper ceremony, and remained always at the

abbot’s board, saying little, unless to those near to him. The lady Baroness, at the Queen’s command, was led forth awhile for fresher air.

There entered the hall, about this time, a jongleur, or glee-man, with harp in hand, clad in a cloak of grey, and took his seat at the lower end. His sandals were stained with marks of many a mile’s travel; and he sat awhile wearied and breathless. Those, who saw him, supposed that he had been to Warwick Castle, there to exercise his art, as so many others of his craft did; that, having heard the lord of that domain was here, keeping festival at Kenilworth, and knowing a jongleur to be always welcome at such seasons, he had posted hither, with all speed, not waiting even to amend his guise. Yet, marvelled they how he had gained admittance, in plight so ill becoming a King’s presence; but there was that in his look and stature, that agreed as little with his apparelling, as that did with the King’s high presence; and which checked the questions they would have put to him. A page, seeing his weary look, offered him wine and meat; but he, with gesture that spoke as much as words, refused the gift, but accepted the good will.

And now, the second course and a third being ended, came the heralds into the hall; and, with loud proclaimings, called out, three times, “Largesse for the King, the Queen, the Earl of Cornwall, and the Baron de Blondeville!” shaking, the while, their great cup on high. And first they cried it before the King, at the foot of the dais, next in the middle of the hall, and last at the lower end. And, in their officious zeal to exalt those, who yielded most to them, they made the Earl of Cornwall King of the Romans; but this was yet to be, which well they wot, also how wishful their lord, King Henry, was to gain this dignity for his brother, and how much he had employed his power and treasure therefore.

The King, as he heard that title given, fixed an eye of correction on him, that spoke it; yet was he not displeased with him in his heart, and he sent one to command, that he should again cry “Largesse” for the Earl, and so remedy the mistake, which was straight done accordingly.

And now the minstrels came down from their gallery, and sat altogether, at the board’s end, at the bottom of the hall, eating of the feast and partaking of the largesse-cup; there to remain, till the disguisings should enter. And it was a brave sight to see them all apparelled in the King’s livery, guarded and laced with gold; their virger, more glorious than the

rest, still directing all their doings. They eyed the stranger glee-man askance, and asked him not to their board, wondering why he came thither, where was no need of him, as they thought, and viewing his apparel with contempt and himself with disdain, as treading upon the skirts of their greatness, he being no better than a wandering minstrel. He seemed to read their thoughts, and his proud looks did somewhat daunt them; yet did his ruffled spirit take refuge with his harp and gain strength from it; for, he soon struck forth sounds so strong and clear, as rung up to the arched roof, and filled all the hall with sudden wonder. Maister Pierre himself could not exceed him in force and spirit, and amongst the whole five of the King's harpers was not one, who might not have bowed before him. Soon, the hum of busy tongues, that had often filled the hall with noise as of the murmuring tides, so that the whole band of minstrels might hardly at times be heard, (yet seemed not one tongue louder than another) — soon that hum was husht and still, — and the sound of that harp alone rose up out of the silence, and spread its sweetness over all the air. Every face was turned, with deep attention, one way, in search of the minstrel, and every head was hung aside.

Observing this, he quickly changed his measure to one more wild and abrupt, and his eyes seemed to send forth sparks of fire, while he sang, with full and clear voice, parts of the famous lay of Richard Cœur de Lion, as

"Him followed many an English knight,"

and other lines. Prince Edward, the while, seemed to lose not a word he sung. When he came to the words,

"By the blood upon the grass
Men might see where Richard was,"

the glee-man could not end them before the Prince, forgetting where he was, and, with fiery eyes, as if inspirited by them, stood like a conqueror on his field. The glee-man proceeded.

“As snow ligges on the mountains,
Behelied were hills and plains
With hauberk bright and helm clear
Of trompers and of tabourer;
To hear the noise it was wonder:
As though the earth above and under
Should fallen; so fared the sound!”

When the harper had ended, the King asked who played; and, being told a wandering glee-man, drawn hither by the fame of the festival, his Highness ordered he should be taken care of and well supplied with banqueting.

And now, supper being ended, damask-water was brought for the King and Queen and the Archbishop to wash with. After, the esquires of the household taking the royal boards, with all their suttleties, and the yeomen making off with those below in the hall, the place was cleared for dancing and disguisings. Then the Bishops, though not my Lord of York, nor yet the Bishop confessor attendant on the King, held it time to depart; the abbots also; and, with due homage to his Highness, forthwith avoided; but not the Prior; he remained in the hall.

It was then, that the King’s Highness sent his presents to the bride’s-groom; being a rich cupboard of plate, the chief wonder whereof was a great cup of solid gold, standing on an eagle’s foot. On the cover rose the head of a bird, whose eyes were of emeralds, and with his stooping beak he held the ring, which was set with rubies, as though by pulling the ring he would lift up the lid; his wings, half-folded, formed the two handles. Great store was set by the King upon the workmanship of this cup, he having himself ordered the device of the eagle, and, as some said, to show thereby how he would encourage the aspirings of the young Baron. Besides this, were six spice-plates and six great bowls of silver chased and two basins and ewers of the same. There were also six great silver pots for wine, vine leaves set with emeralds twining round them, the grapes being of purple amethyst so cunningly enwrought, you would have thought you could pluck them. Many other things there were of this cupboard, too tedious to relate.

To the young Baroness, who was revered, and had now returned to the hall, the Queen sent a set of golden baskets for sweetmeats and perfumes, wrought, as was said, by a Frenchman, and of so seemly a fashion, the like had never been seen before, but which made some to murmur, that her Highness liked only the workmanship of her own country. For this, the Baroness, led by her lord, advanced nearer to the Queen, and thanked her, with most sweet thanks; and then he his-self paid homage to the King for his princely gift, as doubtless he should have done before, but, perchance, his bride detained him to uphold her in thanking the Queen, before so great a company. Having done this, he took his station by the chair, his Highness often turning to him, with merry speech, to drive away the gloom, that yet, at whiles, hung upon his brow.

Presently, the tuning of many instruments without the hall was heard, and the sound of the bugle drawing nigh and nigher, till suddenly the skreens were drawn away, and there entered, at the bottom of the hall, a mountain moving on unseen wheels, piled up with green trees of every shade, which rose to a height of forty feet, or more, and spread itself on every side. On the steeps of this mountain, stags — for so they seemed — were bounding from rock to rock, and foresters in green, with their dogs, were hunting them to the sound of bugles, concealed amongst the woods.

These were all lords and men of honour, in goodly disguisings, so that you would have taken them for foresters and bucks, as they climbed up and down certain steps this mountain, at the risk of their necks, and all for sport, and to please the King’s Highness by their agility. And a pleasureful sight, ywis, it was to see them all running together, lords and knights and hounds and men of honour, as who should be first in his Highness’s favour. All acquitted themselves to the very top of excellence; for, they had been well taught in the knowledge of hunting, which is now called “the mysterie of the forests.”

Amongst them was Sir William de Mowbray, who, being somewhat of the fattest, was often fain to stop, and blowed so hard, that, had but a hunter’s horn been clapped to his mouth, it would have tuned up as high as the best of them. There was also the young Lord de Lomene, a foreign-man, as light as the flame of a waxen morter, and he, stepping falsely, rolled down the side of the mountain from stair to stair, till he settled on

the floor of the hall, never the worse for his forced performance, where he was received with a chorus of laughter and plaudits from the whole Court.

But anon the sound of the other instruments was heard, and another pageant entered. This was a goodly disguising of ladies, to the number of twelve, all freshly apparelled in silks of Italy, and shut up in a lantern. Around this lantern were windows covered with lawn; and within, amongst these ladies and women of honour, were forty wax lights, so that they might be seen and known, through all their disguisings, by every one in the court. Thus, these ladies of the lantern came on sweetly singing, like unto a cage full of birds, and playing on lutes and dulcymers, claricords, claricimballs and such-like instruments, with so pleasing noise, the like to it was never before heard, till they reached the upper end of the hall. There, ere they grounded, they were turned round, before the King and Queen, that all the goodly machine might be beholden.

Then, the rehersed, disguised Lords and men of honour, descending from their mountain (the lantern standing aside), danced awhile together by themselves deliberately and seemlyly, playing, all the time, upon recorders and regalls and tabors, in harmony with the music in the lantern, which might be called “light of love”; and, at certain times, tuning up, with most brave noise, and singing “Hayle, comely King, the cause of all our mirth!” And, presently, these ladies and women of honour, making a beck, that they wished to be let out of their lantern, the lords and men of honour hastened to open the door and to let them out, and help them down, and then they all fell deliberately to dancing, and gravely disporting together, in a most seemly sort, full curiously, and with most wonderful countenance. The while, the mountain and the lantern vanished together out of the hall.

When this pleasant company of estates and gentils had ended their sports, and had dispersed to their seats round the hall, there was a ceasing of the minstrels; and, forthwith the voide entered, with the heralds blowing up before it. Then came two score and more of lords and knights and men of honour, some bearing golden spice-plates, others bowls of silver gilt, others golden cups; followed by esquires and pages, bearing great silver pots of wine, to fill up the rehersed cups, as often as they were empty.

And now the King stood up, and spoke right cheerly to divers about him, who had not approached him before, and, amongst others, to the Prior of St. Mary's, he being still in the hall, although it was past midnight, and those of his house were rising to keep the first watch of matin. His Highness was yet speaking to him, when my Lord Archbishop, who stood deliberately on the King's right hand, was seen to make the holy sign. Those, who observed this, marvelled, and the King, gravely accosting him, asked why, twice this night, he had made this sign. But the Archbishop, as before, answered not, save by a look of awe and reverence.

The King, turning his eyes, saw, standing firmly at the foot of the dais, one, whom he took to be the same person he had already seen, this night, in the gallery of arms; and this he judged, not by his face, for his Highness had not then distinguished it, nor could he now fully see it, shaded, as it was, by his visor; but by his singular figure, arrayed in complete armour. It seemed, however, as if his melancholy eyes were fixed upon the King. He stood motionless, and spoke not to any near him, nor did those near seem to regard him. For a moment, his Highness's attention was rivetted on the object before him. He then sent an esquire to learn who it was, that had come thus unusually accoutred for a festive hall; but ere the messenger had left the King, the stranger had disappeared in the crowd.

And now, while the King and the Archbishop seemed severally to be pondering their thoughts, a solemn air of music was heard, without the hall, and the approach of another pageant withdrew his Highness's attention, who enquired why this had not appeared before the voide, but finished by supposing, that it was some mysterie of the men of Coventry intended to surprise him. He, therefore, graciously took to his chair again, listening to the sad and sweet harmony that advanced, while he ruminated on the late extraordinary occurrences; for, indeed, the quiet mournfulness of these sounds promoted the musing of melancholy thoughts.

At last, the pageant entered, and there appeared in the hall the presentation of a seashore, with high white cliffs, so cunningly mimicked, that it was the marvel of all, who beheld. There seemed the very waves, flushed with the setting sun and bickering in the light, as also breaking with gentle noise upon the strand; and a ship riding at anchor near, with a little boat lying on the beach, as if waiting to carry some one away. Now, the absence of certain evil sprites from this pageant, would have been

enough to convince his Highness, that this was no mysterie of the men of Coventry, without the beautiful deception of the scene here played forth, — and he marvelled.

Then there came in, the music playing sadly, a knight and a lady, with two little children following. The knight took them up tenderly, and pointed to the ship, and kissed them. The while, the lady wept sorely, and hung upon the knight, who tried to comfort her, and, pointing to the ensign on his shield, which showed that he was prepared for the Holy Land, he knelt down, and raised his hands on high. She knelt beside him, and then the babes, lifting up their little hands, knelt too; the music, the while, playing solemnly and sweet. Then they rose up, and the knight again kissed the children, and held the lady to his heart. After which, mariners came in, and, launching the boat, the knight departed for the ship. But the lady stood weeping on that seashore, and motioning with her hand, till he reached the vessel, and it sailed away.

But still she stood, while it vanished in that gloomsome mist, which now seemed rise from the ocean, and to stain all that glorious west, where late the day had been. Then, seeing the bark no more, she turned away, and wept piteously, leading her little babes, and so she departed.

Then the seashore was gone all at once out of the hall, and the music changing to warlike strains of trump and clarion, straight there appeared, as if by very magic itself, a field of battle, with knights and banners, on one side bearing the holy sign. Nor was there wanting St. George for England, the English lion, with many other true-hearted ensigns. On the other hand, were shown Saracens, with their crescents, glittering, as if the sun shone on them. At a distance, on the slopes of the hills, lay tents, with palms and cedars overtopping them. Nearer, on the low sea-bank, was a city of Palestine, with walls and mighty gates and domes and pinnacles. Within that sea-bay, too, ships rode at anchor. The tide was bright as amber, save where a sultry mist seemed to sit on the horizon, as if brooding a coming storm. Nay, such was the cunning of the scene, that you might sometimes think you heard that muttering thunder, which growls by fits so sullenly from far, before a tempest.

The King could not but marvel; and seeing this pageant was so different from those mysteries he had beheld played heretofore by the men of Coventry, and from any pageant he had yet seen enacted by English

joculator, he asked what jongleur from the east now played forth his art; for the like of deception and device he had never seen before. His Highness then bethought him it might be that stranger glee-man, who had, this night, come into his hall, and he meditated a due reward for his invention and for his loyalty, which he doubted not would lead him to display here some noble exploit in Palestine of Richard the Lion, whose deeds he had in part already sung.

“Who is there,” said King Henry, “would not think that show were living truth? The light is on the hill, as if the sun shone there.”

While he spoke, there rose from behind the hill a line of spears and crescents as of a vast army of Saracens coming down upon the Franks. As they came on, you might perceive their helms and brazen visors, till they spread down all the hill unto the tents of the Franks. Then might you faintly hear the clash of cymbals, the dread bray of Saracen-horns and, ever and anon, the thump of tabours. And now the fight began between the armies; and King Henry joyed to see Prince Edward watching all that was here enacting; he seemed to have King Richard’s heart in very trowth.

When the fight began, which was fought as if for very life and soul, the Franks fought with bows, swords, spears, iron-maces and battle-axes; the Saracens with spears and scymiters chiefly. Presently was seen the knight, who had set sail in the ship, fighting hard with two Saracens. There were few in the hall, that night, who, when they saw him so hard driven, did not think of the poor lady and her little children, whom he had left behind, and wish him victory for their sakes, as well as for his holy cause. These Saracens wore frightful masks of brass, and laid about them with so great strength, that it seemed the knight must fall. He broke his spear, and then he fought with battle-axe, and was nigh being overthrown, when another knight attacked the Saracens; and the first, having now but one enemy left, went off the field fighting with him manfully.

And so the battle held on, near to a besieged city; the Saracens, who were in it, sending forth wild fyre, called fyre-grekys, most like in shape to dragons and other dreadful beasts. Those, who beheld this, wondered at the surpassing cunning of the jongleur, and began to think he was one of those from the East, who practised arts of delusion; for, some such they were. There were even wooden towers set up, without the walls, by the Franks, that played their darts into the ramparts like unto hail. There were

also mangenelles, which cast stones, and the famous mate-griffon, invented by Richard the Lion; yet still no where was he seen in this pageant, so it was guessed this showed not a battle of his time, though it was fought where he had conquered. Presently, there came a pell-mell of Knights and Saracens, hand to hand, and, amongst them, that same knight, who had first appeared departing from his own land. He was again hard beset, but he brought down his nearest enemy to the ground, and the others then betook them elsewhere. He disarmed him, and held his wrested sword over his head. The foe begged his life, which the knight granted, but kept the sword, and with its aid, rescued a brother-knight from an enemy, and then departed.

Soon, flames involved the city; then thick clouds of smoke involved the whole in darkness; the shouts and trumpets sunk faint and fainter, and then were heard no more, and that glorious sight was gone for ever, no one saw how! Attention still pursued the sounds, and there was yet in the hall deep silence, when other notes than those of war began to breathe, notes of such sweet and lively joy, as thrilled the hearts of all, who heard them.

As they drew nigher, there came into the hall that rehersed seashore, with that rehersed ship upon the waves, and you might discern the pilot at the helm, and the sea-boys in their places; and straight that knight was landed. He kneeled, then with both hands held his shield on high, and looked up to the heavens; then he kissed the strand, the music playing all the while so solemn and soft, that not only many fair eyes, but many manly ones too, shed tears. Then the knight rose up, and departed, and the scene disappeared.

And now other sounds were heard, but of what instruments none knew. They were grave and sad, with sometimes dreary pauses, that made many to shake. Then a forest appeared, with gloomy woods, and no sunshine seen, save one gleam, which showed travellers coming on, as if to some towers, the tops of which were seen over the woods; and many in the hall said these looked like the towers of Kenilworth; others said they were different. It was now, when the light was failing on these towers, that a torch carried by one of the travellers began to cast its gleam beneath the boughs, and showed them to be three horsemen well appointed, one of whom appeared to be the very knight from Palestine; who the others were none knew; but the King viewed them with close attention, and with

seeming displeasure; and now not one word was spoken in the hall, and every eye was watching what would befall next.

Anon there came out from the wood three men armed, and with masks upon their faces, who soon came up with the travellers and attacked them. These defended themselves as well as they could; but the knight being armed, it was he who fought well nigh for all. Now many stood up in the hall, and a murmur and confused noise ran through it, for they guessed in their hearts what this meant.

The Knight had his helmet on, but the visor was open, and thus was his face exposed; on his helmet stood a raven for his crest, with open beak and wings half-spread. He fought manfully with the stoutest of the robbers, whose mask falling down to the ground, it was too plain, that his countenance was the likeness of one then living in the hall and standing by the King's chair. On this, every one in the hall, not excepting the Ladies, stood up, some looking eagerly to the high board, and others to the pageant, while his Highness spake not, but sat as if sternly determined to watch this extraordinary delusion to the end; nor did he once look towards any one, who stood near him.

The end soon came; for the robber, wresting in a great struggle a sword from the Knight, plunged it through his open visor, and he fell from his horse, a dead man. Then was there a universal groan throughout the hall. The robber departed, with the sword in his hand, and darkness fell over the whole scene, which appeared no more.

Now, the King rose impatiently from his chair, with looks of anger, and was about to inquire who had invented this deception, when he perceived before him again, standing on the steps of the dais, that very figure, clad in arms, which had before appeared there; and he knew it for the likeness of that murdered Knight, whose fate he had just witnessed. There stood the raven on his helm, and there too, within its shade, appeared a countenance of deadly paleness, shrunk and fixed somewhat angrily upon the King. His Highness, for a while, stood petrified and with eyes amazed, as if he saw something that might not, with any endeavour, be understood; he seemed to strive for speech, and at last faintly uttered, "Who art thou, and what is thy errand?"

Then, the Knight, pointing with his sword to the Baron de Blondeville, who stood, trance-bound, beside the King's chair, his eyes glared, and a

terrible frown came over his face. The Archbishop made the holy sign, as he had already done, this night before, when the King had seen nothing strange near him; and then stood with arms extended on high.

The figure still pointed with his sword to the Baron. Again, the King vainly demanded of the stranger, who he was? and, receiving no answer, gave order that he should be seized.

Then it was, that the Prior of St. Mary's, having approached the King, suddenly stepped forward to arrest the stranger; though such service pertained not much to him; but he might have spared his pains; for, where he would have seized upon the stranger, he eluded his grasp, and stood afar off in the hall; and the Prior, struck with dismay, attempted not to pursue him. Then, his Highness, in great disorder, commanded, that all the doors should be shut, that he, who practised this delusion on the sight, might be discovered.

And forthwith, his Highness was obeyed; but the stranger glee-man, who was the person suspected, was no longer to be found. A murmur went in the hall, that he was an Arabian jongleur — for, wondrous arts and deceptions those from the East were known to practise; and he was sought for without the hall, in many parts of the castle; but no where could he be seen, or heard of; nor could Maister Henry, the versifier, be found in the hall, whom the King called for, thinking he might know something of this jongleur, or how that strange mysterie, which had been shown forth, was brought about. Hearing this, the King was much moved; and commanding that the search should be continued, he left the hall by a private passage, leading to his own chambers, followed by the Queen and her ladies; the young Baroness being among them, who went off to her Highness's bower.

The King, attended, by his especial order, only of the Archbishop, the Bishop confessor, the Prior of St. Mary's and the Baron de Blondeville, withdrew to his privy-chamber. When there, and the door closed, the Baron fell on his knee, and besought his Highness not to deliver him over unto the malice and envy of his enemies, who had invented this device to work his ruin. His Highness answered, the devices of his enemies should cause their own ruin, and that soon.

Now came to the chamber, Maister Henry amazed and trembling; for he was one, who rejoiced so much in good fortune, that he could bear other as ill as any man: and the King's frown was now upon him. His Highness

asked, whether he knew aught of the jongleur, who had been that night in the hall, or of the mysterie, that had heen there enacted; for, in his heart, the King suspected, that Henry knew something of the matter.

Maister Henry, confounded by the King's angry looks, knew not well what he answered; which confirming the suspicions against him, his Highness hastily said, that if it should be found he had assisted in devising that delusion, which being an insult to the Baron, whom he favoured, was one also to himself, he should sorely repent his misconduct; nor should he go entirely free, if he had obtained an entrance into the hall for that jongleur; and forthwith his Highness commanded him to depart to his chamber, there to remain, till called forth by his order.

Now it was that Maister Henry better found his speech, and it was to protest his innocence of that device; and his ignorance, touching the jongleur, who had that night appeared in the hall, there to practise the glamour-art; but this availed him little in the present mood of his Highness, till he entreated, that the master of the revels and the marshal of the hall should be called into his presence, and questioned, as to what they knew of the conducting of that pageant. The King consented, and they were called accordingly; the marshal being still busy in the hall, helping there to the finding out of the stranger, but in vain. This he now made known to the King, and scrupled not to say, he believed the whole to be the work of magic, worked by that jongleur and by the prisoner then in a tower of this castle.

The master of the revels said the same, for that he had no hand in that mysterie; nor had he seen any preparations made for it; nor did any one in the hall know in what way it had entered. Then he took his Highness to witness, how it was possible, so marvellous a pageant, showing so many changes, and such a multitude of people, could have been completed, without long pains and trouble; and therefore, how it could have been effected, unless by the glamour-art; but no preparation for this had been seen by any; nor knew he or any one how the different changes had entered the hall. The jongleur had sitten there the while, playing on his harp, but he had drawn from it sounds of many different instruments, that sometimes had seemed close where he sat; and at others far off in the hall; the music, that had been heard there, was not of the King's minstrels!

On this, the Prior of St. Mary’s came forward, and, having craved leave to speak, which was granted, told the King he doubted not, that the whole deception had been wrought by the King’s enemies, with certain spells of magic, such as were sometimes resorted to, in desperate cases, and in this it was not the Baron’s downfall alone that they meditated, but the deliverance of their partner in guilt: the merchant now in jeopardy. Of such unlawful arts of magic, the Prior added, that his Highness himself had once proof, when the precious ring, that was to render him invincible in battle, was conjured away from under the bolts and locks of his casket, (those remaining unbroken,) and was conveyed away by the Earl of Kent, as his Highness had declared, and given to his dire enemy, Llewellyn of Wales, then in arms against him.

The King seemed struck with this, but not well pleased with the choice of this time for remembering an occurrence, which, it is true, he had himself in council asserted to be supernatural; and had even urged, amongst other matters, in accusation of the loyalty of that lord. His Highness seemed not well to know how he should take this speech of the Prior, and he cast upon him an eye of doubt, but he said nought.

“My liege,” added the Prior, “when I saw the astoundment, that came over the Baron de Blondeville, this morn in the chapel, I guessed it was a spell that fixed him. When I saw him in the hall, this night, twice in the same state, I held more surely it was so; but, when I beheld that marvellous delusion of the pageant, for who could suppose such surpassing scenes were wrought by hands — when I beheld, that, I was convinced, in very truth, that magic was at work! and so I doubt not was my Lord Archbishop, by his gestures.”

The King, assenting in his mind to this latter assertion, having observed, as before rehersed, the gesture of the Archbishop, turned towards him, and asked why he made that sacred sign? To which the Archbishop answered, he had used it to protect his Highness and all around from the evil, that he perceived was near him. At these words the countenances of the Baron and of the Prior brightened. Further the King inquired, why twice in the hall, when he had asked the same question, the Archbishop had returned no answer? To this, the Archbishop again made no reply; but bent his head with that look, both solemn and submissive, which he had before put on: till, being further urged, he replied, he “had not dared to answer!” on

which the King showed surprise and displeasure; but then seemed, on a sudden, to restrain the expression of either.

The Prior said, the Archbishop had done well; but the Archbishop showed no pleasure at this, and deigned not to turn an eye on the Prior.

“Did you,” said the King, “think your answer would endanger you?”

“My liege, I knew I should be endangered by it.”

“How! when I commanded?” said the King; “but you feared the force of magic?”

“No! my liege.”

The King looked again astonished, and the Prior curious. “Whence then was your danger?” said his Highness.

“From the malice of an evil sprite, my liege!” answered the Archbishop.

At this, the Prior, with a sarcastic countenance, said, “Perhaps, my Lord Archbishop has not told the whole: I have heard it said, — I speak it with submission, for I mean not to throw slander, — I have heard it said he doubts of witchcraft, if so he may doubt of magic!”

On this, the Archbishop, turning loftily to him that spoke, said, “The Archbishop of York comes not to the King’s court to make confession to the Prior of St. Mary’s!”

Then the King, seeing the weighty displeasure of my Lord of York and the rising anger of the Prior, interposed, and put an end to further question between them; but the Archbishop’s eyes were sternly fixed upon the Prior’s, which fell beneath them. He then craved a private hearing of the King, for tomorrow, and departed; leaving the Prior angry and confused, but not dismayed; for, soon as he was gone, he said in a low voice, which yet might be heard by the King, “ so depart from me all prejudice and callousness of heart.”

To which the Baron said, “Such is my wish too.”

The King, convinced, by this time, of the innocence of Maister Henry, the versifier, ordered with kind words that he should be dismissed, and then, commanding all present to avoid the chamber, save the Baron de Blondeville, and the Prior of Saint Mary’s, remained in close council with them, though it were past midnight.

Meanwhile, the whole company below the hall remained close shut up, while the search was yet going on in the chambers and gallery above, for those, who might have been concerned in this marvellous deception. There

were the marshal, the steward, the constable of the castle, and other great officers attending, to look after the little ones; but none of them could find either the supposed knight, or the glee-man. There were divers sayings and reports went forth on this matter, as, indeed, you must expect, without my telling; but most present held this strange; accident was brought about with magic, and that by the inveterate malice of the Baron de Blondeville's accuser and his secret friends. Some few there were who remarked, that by this same power of magic, did he possess it, the prisoner had done better to release himself from prison bond, but these were soon put to silence by others; and, whatever was thought, nothing more was said.

And so ended the festival in hall, this night, every one departing to his lodging in the castle, or to his home in his own or his friend's castle, or mansion, with his own thoughts on the strange accident, that had befallen.

And, whatever might pass that night in this hall, raised up by beings of another region, nothing was known of it by those of this; for none would venture thither; and none, save the poor prisoner in his tower, would even look down from the chamber upon the windows of that hall. And so that place was in darkness and in silence, which so lately had been illuminated, had echoed with song and laugh, and was animated with the pomp of beauty and of a court — emblem of life and death!

The darkness of the hall was observed the merchant from his turret lattice, for, he had watched much there this light, led thither by the sound of minstrelsy, and by a longing of his spirit to hover over the haunt of beings like unto himself. In the misery of his solitude, his heart would often change, and, like unto one tossing on a fever bed, who continually shifts his limbs in the hope of a little ease, so he went from his pallet to his window to escape from his own thoughts, and from his window to his pallet to avoid those sounds of joy and revelry, at which his heart sometimes sickened, when he remembered his wife and children, yet ignorant of his condition and his dead friend, whose cruel assassin was now his own dangerous enemy. Thus, he passed the hours, which to most in the castle had gone by with joy and abundance; he alone being ignorant of those marvellous appearances, which the Prior had not scrupled to say were raised by his art.

And so strongly did the Prior urge to the King, this night, the danger to be dreaded not by the Baron only, but by his Highness, from the powerful malice of the agents of the prisoner, acting by his art, if he were suffered to live, that the King resolved to have the matter fully inquired into tomorrow, in open court, his-self, sitting on the bench. But the Prior and the Baron, who had overheard the Archbishop's entreaty for a hearing, and feared he might unsettle the King's resolution, urged the matter still further, and representing the danger of waiting a jury-trial, dared to hint at sentence by other modes. The Baron even finished by saying, that not a moment of his life was safe, while his malicious accuser lived.

Whether the King fully understood, or no, what they meant by the words "other modes," he did not fall into their plan, but repeated, that on the morrow, a Jury should be summoned.

They then spoke plainly of trial by ordeal, but his Highness instantly rejected it. It was indeed over bold of them to propose such trial, knowing, as the Prior must know, that King Henry had shown his abhorrence of it, even in the first year of his reign, when he had abolished that cruel instrument of fraudulent oppression. And his Highness seemed not now well pleased; for, he straight dismissed them both, for this night.

Forth they went of the King's chamber together, and withdrew to consult further on this affair. It is plain the Baron had by some means gained the Prior, who was no true son of the church, to his interest. It was agreed between them, that he should lose no time in gaining admittance to the prisoner, for his own purposes, which might be done, under pretence of confessing him; and that before he left the castle, this night. Having fully settled their plot, they quitted the chamber, and were returning to the great staircase through the brown gallery, now left of every one, who had rejoiced there, that day, when the Baron made a sudden stop, and, taking a torch from the hands of one of the silver images, which lighted that gallery, shook it on high.

The Prior, turning to inquire wherefore this was done, saw standing beside them, that same armed knight, who had appeared in the hall! While the Baron stood with eyes fixed upon this stranger, a wound in the forehead opened, and distilled three drops of blood, which fell unnoticed on the Baron's robe.

The Prior had well nigh sunk to the ground, but recovered himself enough to utter faintly, after some solemn words,— “Who art thou?” The knight frowned upon him, but spake not; and presently disappeared, leaving the dismayed companions almost senseless.

They, however, left the gallery together; but, when they had reached the head of the stairs, the sound of cheerful voices was heard in an antechamber, and the Baron, encouraged by them, turned thither. But those, who talked, were only pages in waiting on some lord of the court, and they were still speaking of the marvellous occurrence in the great hall, that night, when the Baron appeared. Standing aside to let him pass, they wondered at his wild looks, as he went on to an inner chamber, where their masters sat.

The Prior, having also taken a light from one of the silver warriors, that held torches over the great staircase, descended alone, and was passing through the upper court of the castle, when, finding himself approaching one of the King’s guard, on watch, he immediately extinguished the torch, and passed the man without it; but, whether he took his way to the prison-tower, or to the castle-gate, his further course was unknown; for, he was no more seen, that night.

THE THIRD DAY. II .

Here was a drawing of a castle seated loftily on a rock, hung with thick wood, and having many towers on the precipice. In the margin was a portrait of an Archbishop, in his pontifical robes, probably designed for the Archbishop of York.

On the morn next following the day of festival, my Lord of York had long speech of the King, and it was supposed, amongst other things, that he had been arguing against the truth of magic; for he was suspected of divers notions of that sort; it was also thought, that he had given no very favourable opinion of that same Prior of Saint Mary's. However this might be, his Highness, when he came forth of his chamber, was noticed to be thoughtful, and somewhat sad, and, though the summons for a jury was that day issued, his Highness seemed willing to let that matter rest awhile.

Instead of sitting in court of justice and on the judgment-seat, as he had sitten at Winchester, his Highness went hunting the stag in the forest, to his own contentment and to the great joy of his courtiers. And, ywis, this was a better chace, through these deep glades, and woods, than that upon the wooden mountain in the great hall; and more sweet and cheerily did the bugles sound along the valleys and upon the open hills than through the roofs and galleries of Kenilworth. There went with the King all of estate in the court (save the bishops) with the foresters of Ardenn, and also a train of gentils and gallants, to the number of many hundreds, and a great throng of people on foot.

The forest was covered with them, for miles, and nothing but the sound of bugles and other joyous instruments was heard through these deep shades, where quietness had dwelt, day and night, for so long a time before. Others there were, I guess, besides the beasts, lay hid in those pathless shades, listening to the revel rout afar off, and trembling too for very life, as it drew near; for, the forest was so wild and wide, spreading out on all sides and touching divers countries, that it was one of the chief hiding places for outlaws and desperate men in the whole realm of England, as those dwelling in the bordering towns knew to their cost.

Many went wandering there, whom the world little thought of; and, who, had they been seen, could hardly have been guessed to belong to it, they had become so rude and uncouth in their seeming.

In the chase the King ‘spied the towers of the Lord of Warwick, high over the woods, and that pleasant river of Avon, flowing beneath. The Earl, who was of his company, besought his Highness to repair thither, and to refresh himself in his castle; to which the King gave consent, that he might judge of it; his Highness being a great esteemer of the builder’s art, and proficient in it, as his Abbey of Saint Peter, then rearing at Westminster, and the cathedral at Salisbury fully show; so he rode towards that castle; but, when he had mounted up the rock, he stopped before the great gates, in admiration of those warlike towers and hanging battlements, that rose so proudly over him. Then, he passed under the gateway into a court, surrounded by those towers, which all know to be of such vast strength, the bugles echoing through every arch and battlement, till he reached that pleasant side, where the turrets hang upon the precipice, that overlooks the Avon river.

As far as eye could reach, even in furthest west, to the broad hills of Gloucester, all the country, stretching below, was wood, or forest-pasture, with here and there the tops of spires and towers, whose convents and villages were so hidden in boughs, that, but for those little signs, you could not have guessed there were any goodly people dwelling in all that space. The King was well pleased with all that he saw at this castle, as he had been before; but with nothing so much as with that broad and majestic round tower, standing guard, as it were, at the south-east end of the castle, with pending battlements, where, all night long, town-men marched around, and where, but high above, in that little turret, the warder keeps his watch.

Here Willoughton laid down the manuscript, and went to a window of his chamber, looking towards Warwick castle, that he might behold under the moonlight the very towers here mentioned. He easily distinguished the one here pointed out, and, although that called the Record Tower, at the other extremity of the eastern front, was admirable for beauty of proportion, he had many reasons for preferring the other; of which reasons there were two, first, that it was more ancient and had existed, at the time the manuscript referred to; secondly, that it wore an aspect of severer

grandeur, and that by its singular construction, it showed forth much of the watch-and-ward habits and warlike foresights of that age. Willoughton thought he could never be weary of looking at it, under this shadowy moonlight; and already he fancied he could perceive half-armed men, on guard, pacing the battlement, and the warder's fire blazing on the summit and contending with the moonlight. The watch-signal too he heard; for, what else could be that, which passed on the wind, and which seemed to him so solemn, yet wild and so different from any thing heard in these "piping times of peace" and luxury. Curiosity, as to the tale he was reading, brought him back, at last, to the manuscript and to King Henry.

King Henry stood long at a window of that side of the castle, which overhangs the Avon, and there he beheld, with delight, the great cedars growing on a steep rock over the river, on whose outspreading tops he looked down, as on a carpet of dark velvet, varied with silver. Certain, that castle of Warwick has a more pleasant scite, than this of Kenilworth; for, there your eye was carried, far and wide, over woods to the hills of other countries; where at Kenilworth, you see only the woods of its own valley, with the lake shining below them. Yet there were, who better liked the quiet shade of those majestic woods, that seemed to shut out all the world, save when the King brought it hither, than the more free and lightsome prospect from the walls of Warwick; but, for mine own part, it was not so with me.

When that his Highness had tasted a manchet and had taken a cup of the fragrant Burgundy wine, of which my Lord of Warwick had good store, he hunted back to Kenilworth, followed by some of Warwick, whom he knew not of.

That night, the King kept his estate in the great chamber, with the Queen and all her Court. There were the King's minstrels and there again was Pierre, the Queen's harper, who, by command from his Highness, sang forth a lay, made by Maria, the French Poetess, who was now at the Court, as aforesaid. She had presented her book to the King, full of marvelous histories, right pleasureful to hear, although they were not all true, nathless she had said to the contrary in the preamble to her book. The lay, played forth this night, was that of "Guildeluce and Gualadun," or, as some call it, "The lay of Eledire." This was a Knight of Bretagne famous for his high qualities, loved and honoured by his Sovereign, but envied and hated by

many in the Court, who, gaining the ear of their Prince, at length persuaded him to banish him they conspired against from the Court and his country, leaving behind him a beautiful and excellent wife, whom they contrived to prevent from accompanying him.

It was said by many, in King Henry's Court, that he commanded this lay to be sung, as a lesson to the enemies of the young Baron, that he suspected them of malice. Others said the example of Guildeluce might be a warning also to the young Baroness; for, they thought that of the two Guildeluce was the greater hero, as you shall hear. This wise and valourous Knight, Sir Eledire, after vowing everlasting truth to his unhappy wife, set sail for England, there to seek adventures; and soon he found them. After achieving wonders, with the help of the ten knights he carried with him, in aid of a Prince of this country, he finished his exploit by falling in love with that King's daughter, contrary to all his former reputation, and setting his passion to fight with his duty, which had hitherto been sworn friends. There was a long contest, but unfortunately his passion conquered. Then, being recalled by his own Sovereign, who could not go on without him, having lost by his absence a great part of his territory, he carries off the young Princess, and returns to his affectionate Wife, estranged yet woe begone. The young Princess, who was as good as she was beautiful, soon as she heard the Knight had a wife, swooned away, and, not satisfied with that, died outright. The Knight goes nearly mad, and his distressed wife, to whom no one had told the whole truth, goes to a hermitage in a wood, to find out the secret cause of his distraction. There she sees the corpse of the beautiful Princess, and all jealousy and anger are lost, in compassion for her piteous fate.

Presently, the Princess by a charm is brought to life again; and what does this excellent wife, but determine to found a nunnery, and resign her beloved husband to the beautiful Princess. But the Knight, her husband, would not be outdone in generosity, and what does he do, but build that very nunnery to receive her, and, having thus rewarded that excellent wife, he marries the beautiful Princess, without further fighting between affection and conscience.

Whether the young Baroness might be inclined, if tried, to profit by the example of this excellent wife is not known; but most surely some ladies would not; for, they scrupled not to take pains to say, that this was one of

those lays of Maria, which were not true. They would not give it credence for a moment.

This lay, although we have here cut it short, rivalled Maister Henry's ballad for wearisome length; but the sweet thrumming of Pierre made the King endure it better; when it was well ended, there was great dancing amongst the ladies, and his Highness commanded the Baron de Blondeville to dance with the Lady Barbara, and they went a solemn round together, to the joy of all that beheld them. You would have thought by his looks the young Baron had utterly forgotten what he had seen in hall and gallery, the night before; for, none in the court seemed more proud, or high in spirit, than he, or danced with a better grace.

The Archbishop of York was at the King's right hand, the whole even; but the Prior of Saint Mary's came not near the castle, all that night. Nothing happened to disturb the festival there; but at the priory was a strange accident.

It was before the first watch of matins, that a lay-brother went into the priory church to trim the lights, when, behold! the place, instead of being well lighted, was in total darkness, save that a gleam from the moon came in through the windows. Eadwyn could hardly trust his sight; for, never in man's memory, had the tapers there ceased to burn. But, yet he stood amazed, he noticed something shining near the East end, as a person stood there; and, the moon, soon after, coming out more brightly, he perceived the gleaming of steel; it was an armoured man standing still near a window, or rather under it.

Eadwyn had heard of what had passed, the night before, in the castle-hall; and he instantly became convinced this was the same appearance, which had caused so much marvel there. While yet he looked the figure pointed downward to the ground, near its own feet; but Eadwyn dared not to look again, but fled, as fast as age would permit him, to alarm the whole brotherhood.

Straight, they all flocked together to the church, failing not to bless themselves by the way; but, when they came there, the lights were burning as usual, and nothing new was to be seen in the place! Yet Eadwyn persisted in his say, and, pointing out the spot, where the supposed knight had stood, it was found to be over a gravestone, without a name — so antient did it seem. The monks pored upon the stone; but, if a name had

ever been there, not a letter could now be traced; and, if any present did guess whose bones were laid beneath, not one did choose to say.

The disturbance, caused by this strange accident, soon reaching the ears of the Prior, he forthwith came to the church, and, seeing the brethren in such number over this grave, it was noticed he looked more stern than ever; but, when they told what brother Eadwyn had related, he made light of the matter, and said, that his health must be looked to, for that infirmity of mind foretold infirmity of body. Then, he ordered him straight to his cell, there to diet on bread and water, for seven days.

Thus he ended the matter for this night, and in less than seven days did brother Eadwyn, poor man, end his sentence, for, he died on the fourth day, being of above three-score and ten years, and of spare habit, having never been in much in the Prior's favour. As he was proceeding to his cell, the prior failed not to foretell from what he called the distemper of the brain, that his end was approaching; but all, who heard him, took not this matter, as he willed. He ended by warning the brethren not to go by night into the church, save at usual times, when all assembled, lest the folly of Eadwyn might disturb their minds with strange dreamings. Some, who heard him, smiled in secret, notwithstanding their grave deportment, and others, with wonder and trembling, promised to obey.

THE FOURTH DAY .

Here was a drawing of a forest, with a long cavalcade and procession, in other modes of the Court, winding under the shades. In the distance, where the light fell, tents appeared in a pleasant glade, and thence seemed advancing a body of Archers.

King Henry having commanded, that his court of justice should open, on the morrow, in the Whitehall, in the castle, to administer the laws of his realm, summoned, this day, a court of pleasure, to attend him in the forest. The Archbishop was not of his train. Early in the morning, he had departed on his way to Coventry, a short journey from this castle, to visit the Bishop, Roger de Wesham, who there lay sick, at Saint Mary's. And this he did not only in kindness towards him, but for certain more private reasons. Since his discourse with the King, his Highness had seemed willing to move more deliberately in this business of the Baron, and to sift it to the bottom, that the foul slander, as he held it to be, which had been thrown upon his favoured servant, might be exposed, as well as that his life might in future be shielded from the evil arts of sorcery, if such should appear to have been practised by his accuser, in the hall of banquet.

His Highness guessed not, that other than just means might be resorted to against the merchant's life, while he remained in prison, friendless and a stranger, as he was, in this place; much less suspected he, that, in his own court of justice a verdict might be given against an innocent man. A jury had been summoned in this matter, and had been ordered to be in readiness, however suddenly called upon to meet in court. And there the matter rested, his Highness, meaning to keep up this festival with princely diversions, having gone forth, with the Queen and all his court, to divert himself in the chase of Kenilworth and forest of Ardenn.

The Queen was in her litter, hung with purple velvet, broidered with gold, drawn by milk-white steeds richly harnessed; six esquires riding before her; with divers of her Court, and six pages running beside her, and compassed all about, with noble ladies and officers of her state. Chiefest among the ladies, for gracefulness, went the Baroness de Blondeville, on a

white palfrey. A palfrey of the like, led by two pages, followed the Queen, for her Highness to ride, when she should so mind. The Countesses of Cornwall and Pembroke-Montfort were likewise in their litters, gorgeously apparelled, with a press of noble dames compassing about and pages and footmen.

Before the King rode the Lord Warden of this forest, attended by the Verderer and other guardians of the vert and venison, with fifty archers, clothed in green, moving in pairs, and sounding by turns their bugles, with right merry glee. First began the four nearest his Highness, and, when they took breath, eight struck up, further on; then again six sounded, and so the music rose and fell throughout the line with most sweet changes. The sound roused up the stags in the forest, and many a one afar off was seen to bound athwart the avenues from shade to shade. But the King came not to hunt, this day, nor would he let an arrow be levelled at any he saw, though this might have been done, without fear of hitting; for they flitted from gloom to gloom, like a sunbeam among clouds, and hardly could you tell when they had passed.

But that, which most delighted the Queen’s ladies in these wild woods was to see the nimble squirrels climbing among the boughs, and springing from branch to branch, so full of happy life it was a pleasure to behold. And some, when they had gained the topmost boughs, would quietly sit, cracking the chesnuts and securely looking, with their full, quick eyes, on the company below.

There, I fear, were some, overborne by their own evil passions and galled by the consciousness of them, who might look up to those poor animals, with momentary envy. And doubtless many, who had not these painful reasons for choice, thought it were better so to live amongst these woodlands, in blessed ease and sprightly health, than confined in the golden trammels of a court, where every feeling was checked, that it might move only to certain steps of order, and nature was so nearly forgotten, that, if perchance she did appear, she was pitied and reproved for a child of ignorance, and straight altered after their own fashion. And there were few, who, when they came abroad amongst the hills and forests and the free air and the open sunshine, and heard the joy of birds, and saw the playful grace and glee of animals, there were few, who felt not their spirits dance, although they knew not it was in sympathy with free and guileless nature,

which, if they never more could resume it, yet could they never, even in spite of themselves, entirely cease to love.

This noble company had not gone many miles under these forest shades, ere their horns were answered by others, afar off, that made every hill and dell to ring; yet feared they not what this might mean, nor made halt to inquire. Presently, coming where the woods opened, they espied in a green lane a demi-circle of tents, and on the hills beyond a body of archers — outlaws they seemed to be — three hundred at the least, drawn up in battle-array, as if ready to meet them. The noble company nothing daunted, still advanced, and the King ordered his bugles to sound a parley; the which was no sooner done, than all the echoes of those hills answered with horns, and straight the captain of the band came down upon that little plain, attended by twelve of his archers and by two pages, one leading a brace of milk-white greyhounds, in a chain of steel, the other bearing his bow and arrow. These approached the King, cap in hand, and then, dismounting from their hobbies, the captain, who was no other than the King's bowman of this forest, taking his bow and arrow from the page, fell on one knee, and presented them to his Highness.

The King, having shot off the arrow, graciously returned the bow, with a purse of gold, and bade him rise, which he refused to do, until his Highness, and the Queen should grant his petition, which was, that they would repair to the tents, and there rest; while his archers sought to entertain them with their bows. This granted, the bow-bearer rose, and, leading those snowlike greyhounds, whose necks were bound with collars of ebony inlaid with silver, presented them to the King, as lord of this forest. But they were the Queen and her ladies, who best welcomed those delicate animals, admiring their slender forms and dainty coats, white as the ermine on their own mantles.

Forthwith, their Highnesses, with this noble company, repaired to the tents, where they found venison ready prepared for them, with other game, such as these woods afforded, and wines and fruits of Autumn, all set forth on boards dressed out with oaken boughs, so that every table seemed a bower. The rustic seats of the King and Queen were raised on turf, not carpeted with tapestry, but strewed with flowers, and, for their canopies of estate, they had arching branches of chesnut, wreathed with sweet woodbine. The wine was brought in beechen cups, carved from that noble

tree, that stretched forth its mighty branches over the King's tent, and then sent out its spray, so lightly and so proudly, above the flag of England waving there. Also, instead of damask water in golden ewers, water, clear as crystal was brought in beechen cups, and in hunters' horns, bound with silver, from the wild brook, that ran among the rocks, and that made, in its lonely course, still music under the green shadows.

It was a goodly sight to behold the tents ranged beneath the trees on the short sward, filled with fresh ladies and other noble company; and the King's tent, where attended the Lord Warder and all the officers of the forest, in their peculiar habits of ceremony — encompassed by his archers in green, with lords and knights in hunting habits, and with esquires and pages in his Highness's livery, glittering with divers colours. The place of every one was so well ordered, that there seemed not any crowd; each rank being set forth to the eye in due degree of beauty and proportion, one beyond another. And first, between the tents, stood the King's demi-lances, and the archers, who had run before him; behind these were the King's horsemen, and others of his train. Somewhat apart stood the Queen's litter, having her cloth of estate over it, with her richly caparisoned palfrey, and pages in waiting; near it were the sumpter-litters of her sister, and of the Countess of Pembroke-Montfort, with coursers, squires and grooms, countless. But the chief sight was the tents circling this pleasant green, all filled with estates and gentils, freshly apparelled, and with banquet-boards so gaily decked, and the lofty trees of beech and oak that overtopped them all.

On the hills, opposite to the demi-circle of these tents, were drawn out the three hundred foresters, who feigned to be outlaws of the forest, presenting Robin Hood and his company.

And, when the King and Queen had refreshed themselves, the Lord Warden of Ardenne, his-self, who had withdrawn from banquet, came riding up to the tent, blowing the ivory horn, which was hung about his neck with a chain of silver, and which was the sign of the charter, by which he held his office, and having done homage, asked, if it so pleased his Highness, to see his archers shoot; to which a gracious answer being given, the Warden gave signal to the bow-bearer, who straight made sign to his men, and the whole troop shot off their arrows, which had whistles in the head, with so loud a noise as amazed and rejoiced the hearts of all present,

and roused the stags from their coverts, and sent the birds from their leafy homes in flights, athwart the sky.

Then, were many noble bows drawn to shoot at the deer, as they scudded away under the shades; but the Queen benevolently said, “Nay; shall our delight in these pleasant woods, be the cause of suffering to their innocent tenants! Let every beast and bird be free and happy now, as we are.” And his Highness said it should be so this day, and forbade them to shoot. A fence had been fixed, as was the worthless way, and the game was to have been driven into it, and there shot at by her Highness and the ladies of her court. For this purpose, also, there had been prepared arrows, plumed with peacock’s feathers, and having heads of bright silver; and now, that a better sport might not be lost, hazel wands were set up, at due distance; from which were suspended garlands of roses, roses of Provence, the Queen’s country, for such they seemed, whether the work of nature or of cunning skill; and at these garlands the ladies of her Highness practised for prizes, which the Queen distributed, who, naithless that this adventure had seemed to fall out by accident, was well aware of all that was to happen, and came prepared for it.

His Highness’s sister, the Lady Pembroke-Montfort, won a golden arrow, and young Baroness de Blondeville a silver bugle; which the Baron, her lord, tuned up in most sweet triumph of her victory.

After these feats, the archers of Robin Hood practised with their bows, the hazel-wands having been removed to more than treble the distance; and they played off such cunning skill, as made marvel all those, who had before prided themselves in their own performances. Often were the rosy garlands scraped by their darts; or the hazel-wands that held them, shivered. A sheaf of silver arrows and a bow were the prize of the Lord Warden, the captain of the band, who was also wellknown to be the best bow-man. After they had ended this sport, they went through divers courses and devices on horseback, feigning a battle, and sounding their bugles, and hiding in the woods; and then coming back, in pursuit of one another, to the great delight of the whole court; and to none more than to the Prior of Saint Mary’s, who was in the King’s train; for he joyed in sports of the forest more than well became one of his calling.

And no sooner was this ended, than there was heard from that woody brow, behind the tents, a sound of sweet minstrelsy, of tabours and flutes

and viols and other joyous instruments, the which signal was well understood of many present. Straight, the King and Queen, with the chief nobles and gentils of their courts, departed thither-ward, whence the sound came, leaving the rest and the archers of the forest, to make merry in the tents.

Having gone up, beneath the woods, their Highnesses came at last to that lofty brow, where the minstrels were assembled, which overlooked the country, far and near, except where the forest-oaks now and then interrupted the prospect. There might you see, as you looked down under their dark branches, the towers of Kenilworth far off in the sun; and, beyond them, all that wide forest-region, reaching to the Charnwood-hills in Leicestershire; so distant, they seemed blue as the air above them, and none here would have guessed what ancient woods were on their steep sides, dark even as these oaks, which stretched their boughs athwart that lightsome blue.

But neither the lofty spire of the Abbey church of Leicester, Saint Mary de Pratis, nor the town could be spied; for they lay low at the feet of these hills. On another side, you had but to look down, where you could find an alley in the woods, to behold the Castle of Warwick proudly overtopping the vale, and seeming the very lord of those plains, that spread out on all sides, even to the hills of Gloucester, which his Highness had noted from that castle's walls. Some said you might perceive the stately tower of Gloucester Abbey; but of this I know not; for, my eyes could never make it out; yet it might be seen by others, which had not pored so many midnights by the blunt light of tapers; for, this makes things of day, if they be far off, invisible to eyes so used.

I do remember me, when Robert of Gloucester vaunted of his Abbey, Saint Mary de Pratis, at Leicester, he said from topmost spire you might see beyond a hill of Ardenn; but I believed him not, taking it for a triumph over our Priory, which he said was so darkly closed in forests, it seemed more like a cell of penance than a good prior's house. And when I asked him how often in the princely castle, that stood nigh his Abbey, King Henry had kept his court, he was put to silence, though he might have remembered that our good King did, at his Abbey, first receive the crown he wore. From this hill, too, you might espy the town of Coventry, with Saint Mary's, and the convent spires of that village of Eaton, called of the

nuns, Nuneaton. Certes, was a pleasant brow; for, wherever the woods opened, these wide prospects spread; yet, turning from them, you seemed hid in boughs and lonesome wilds, where neither town nor castle could be seen, nor any pomp, save that blessed one of these shades; nor any living thing, but what they bred.

And here, where the oaks stretched round a green plat, leaving only a little opening towards those blue forest hills of Charnwood, here was a noble tent prepared for King Henry and his court; there was none other on this spot; but seats were cut in the turf around, under the boughs for such as were not of estate; and there, too, sat the minstrel, tuning up with merry glee, opposite to the King's tent, where the woods parted.

When this noble company had rested awhile, and had taken leche lardys and wine, and had spied out from this summit all, which those, who knew the country, pointed out to them, the Countess of Cornwall went forth of the King's tent; and, according to the pleasant fashion of her country, danced on the green-sward under the trees, with the Lord Simon de Montfort. She moved with a noble grace, as was reported by those present; first, in a bass-dance; and then, springing up with lighter grace, she ended with a measure that showed off all the gaiety of her own land, and so much rejoiced the heart of the Queen, her sister, that, but for her dignity, she would have danced also. I guess it brought back to her mind the festivals of her father's court, in that pleasant land of Southern France, called Provence, where they love to sport in the open air, nigh the shade of woods, and will pass a summer's day to the sound of flutes and viols; their banquets being of fruit, fresh gathered from the orange-trees and the vines, and being laid forth on the grass, beside some windling brook.

And it was to pleasure the Queen, with a banquet like to what she had been 'customed to in her own country, that King Henry had thus come forth into these forest-shades. This was a day, that suited well his purpose; it was a calm, sunshine day, when the air, so balmy soft, showed every near object as if nought but crystal interposed — and every thing distant — hills, water, sky, as it were dressed in azure; it was surely a blue day, such as is seldom seen in our Island prospect, save in the parting month of autumn, though often in that pleasant part of France, where these diversions seem devised to make the most of the climate.

When that the Countess of Cornwall had ended her dance, the Queen invited several foreign noble lords and ladies, visitors from her own land, to dance divers rounds of their own country. Amongst these the Baron de Blondeville figured; and truly, when he led off the dance most joyed in by the villagers on the banks of the Rhone, none did so lightly bound, nor throw up his cap in the air, with gayer face than he. As for the young Baroness, who could trip more blythely, or more delicately express every joyful feeling than she showed here, this day?

Lightly as the willow-spray,
Dancing to the airs of May.

And thus this noble company disported themselves, until the day was far spent; and then set they forth in state and order for Kenilworth, the whole troop of forest-archers attending the King to the gates of the castle, whence they departed not till after due regale, nor till the sun had well nigh gone down. As they went, his Highness’s command was conveyed to them, that they should attend him to hawk on the river of Avon in the forest, and should there partake his banquet.

THE FIFTH DAY AND NIGHT .

Over this Chapter was a drawing of the poor Merchant’s prison-chamber; it was night; for, a lamp burned beside the pallet, on which he lay stretched. A face appeared dimly, behind the grating in the back wall.

This day, the King’s Court of Justice was opened in the White Hall of Kenilworth, and divers matters adjudged there; but the cause of the merchant came not on. It hath been already related, that Henry was inclined to move more deliberately in this matter than he had first been; but there were some about him who were desirous to urge it to a conclusion, before the return of the Archbishop of York from Coventry: and for this they had weighty reasons of their own. It has been shown, that the Archbishop inclined somewhat to the cause of the poor merchant, and that he was no friend to the Prior of Saint Mary’s. Now, neither the Prior, nor the Baron de Blondeville, augured well to themselves from the Archbishop, seeing the manner in which he had held himself towards them; and they sought, by all means, to have the prisoner disposed of, before the return of that powerful and intrepid prelate.

This day, the Prior came to the castle; and, after a private conference with the Baron, in which they settled their plot, the Prior craved hearing of the King, and set forth somewhat of the strange appearance at the Priory, on a late night; but he told only as much of the truth of that adventure as suited himself, and added to it as much falsehood as he dared. Having then declared the whole to be some new artifice, practised by the secret friends of the merchant, he besought the King to relieve the Baron from the unseen dangers, made to impend over him by the malice of his enemies, and which, he said, would not cease so long as his accuser remained unpunished; for that the accusation was a guilty one he had no doubt. To this entreaty the Baron joined his, that the King would end this matter, as might seem right to his Highness, pleading that his peace and honour were alike in jeopardy, during every hour of this season, in which he had looked only for joy and gladness; since, however fully and highly he was honoured by his Highness’s favour, and however he his-self might seem, in

the face of the court, to bear the slander, neither he, nor any one of those most dearly connected with him, had known one moment of real comfort, since the accusation was first made.

The truth of this King Henry admitted; yet was he firm in refusing to hasten unduly the trial of the merchant; and they, suspecting that his motive for this was chiefly to have the Archbishop present when it should come on, urged their petitions, till his Highness's visible displeasure put an end to further hearing. And thus the business rested for this time: the Prior departing for his chamber, and the Baron to prepare himself to attend the King, in the great chamber, where his Highness was to keep state. There was rehearsed before the King a Servantois, composed by Maister Denis Pyramus, setting forth divers brave deeds of chivalry. Nothing extraordinary happened this night; and the Court broke up at the usual time, every one seemingly well contented and at peace. But, what human being may look into the secrets of the heart? many, that lay beneath this roof, from King down to serving-man, were pressed with heavy cares, each in his way, but none more heavily than the Baron de Blondeville.

Now every one was gone to his own chamber, for all night, and the Wayte, with his groom bearing the torch, was going his second round, when a person passed athwart the upper court, who answered not the watchword. Both the old man and his boy saw this person beside them; but he was gone, before the challenge was repeated; and he was so muffled up in his garment, they could distinguish neither shape, nor feature. But they had marked the way he went, and they followed his steps, which led them to that great tower, still called of Cæsar, which was the keep; on it pended the prison-turret of the merchant. Marvelling who might go there at this hour so privily, they tried the door of entrance, but found it fast, and then the bars of the tower windows, and they too were safe. The great gate of the Portcullis, where the wardours kept guard, opened not into this court, but over the ditch, on the other side of the tower; or the wayte would have speedily given the alarm, for he thought all was not right.

He guessed he had mistaken the way this person had gone; but, stepping back and looking up at the tower, his boy spied a light passing by a casement, on high, which he knew led up a staircase to the prison-

chamber. So the old man suspected some plot was going forward for the liberty of him confined there, and he gave an alarm at the door beneath; presently on which, he heard the keeper's voice within; who, being asked whether any one had just entered the tower, answered "No;" and, being then asked whether any one had passed up the staircase with a light, he said he knew not, others were dwelling in the place, besides himself. The wayte told what he had seen in the court, and that he suspected some one had entered the tower with a false key; to which the keeper answered, that could not have been without his hearing; and bade him go on his watch-way, and, if his sight had not deceived him, he would find, perchance, the person he suspected lurking within the court, in the porch, perhaps, of the great hall, or under the archway of the white tower. Though the old man thought all was not right, he went his way, and searched the places noted and every other corner of the court; but he found no one. The more marvelling, he determined to look well to the prison-tower, and, if any one came forth of it, to seize him, if he might be strong enough.

And so, having sung out his second round, for this night, he concealed his torch, within a buttress-nook, where it lay smouldering; and then, with his boy, he took his station in the front of King Henry's lodging, which was opposite to Cæsar's tower. Little did his groom-boy help him; for, he was soon asleep and snoring loudly enough to bid any one lurking in the court to beware of his master; the torch itself could not more surely have betrayed their station; but the aged man, who could better wake than slumber, sat still and watchful on the bench, within that porch, often silencing, though it were but for a minute, his drowsy companion. Still and watchful did he sit in that gloomy porch below; but there was one as still and wakeful in the tower above, lying on his pallet, full of grievous care and dread of what might happen.

This poor merchant, when he knew of what he was accused, saw, that his destruction was appointed, and that the Baron de Blondeville, to save himself, had contrived this pretence of delusions and evil arts practised by him. He had been told to prepare himself for trial "on the morrow;" and he suspected not that he was deceived, or that there could be any motive for deceiving him, in that respect. The King, as before said, had steadily refused to have the merchant tried on the morrow; who, notwithstanding, had been bidden to hold himself in readiness for that day. And to that

morrow he now looked with dread and despair; for, how would he defend himself from that terrible shadow, which he heard his enemies designed to raise up against him? how strike a phantom, which, though armed with the deadly weapons of malice, was invulnerable as the air — the phantom of sorcery? Thus, he foresaw that his sentence was passed: and, when he thought of his distant home, his wife and children, who, ignorant of his wretched state, were now expecting him with fond impatience, from a foreign land, and whom he must never more behold; — when he thought of this, he was little able to meditate what he should say, or do, when he should be confronted with his enemies. Thus he passed several hours.

At last, when he considered the virtuous motive, which had led him into this jeopardy, and the wickedness of his accusers, pious confidence began to possess his mind; indignation struggled with his grief, and his apprehensions vanished. In these moments, he believed himself capable of rousing conviction in the minds of the judges, by the strength and eloquence of indignation alone. He forgot, that it had hitherto failed him with King Henry; but such courageous hope rose and fell with his sorrow, giving place to deep despondency and weakness, whenever be thought much of his wife and children.

The suddenness of his first appeal to King Henry prevented him from perceiving the danger of accusing the favourite of a prince; nor considered he his own helplessness, though he was in this place a friendless stranger: he felt only a generous sorrow for his murdered kinsman; he balanced not the difficulties with the justice of his purpose. And, truly, his peril arose not from any indifference of the King to do what was right, but from the want of steadiness in his mind, and from that misdirected kindness of heart, which made even a suspicion of guilt in one he had esteemed and trusted so painful, that conviction of it seemed not to be endured. It is wellknown, that a weak mind, rather than have such a suffering, will turn aside, and take shelter in willing credulity to its first opinion; a strong one, meeting the worst at once, will proceed straight forward, and, freeing itself from an uncertainty, will do both that, which is just towards others, and, in the end, best for its own ease. Which of these ways King Henry took will be more fully set forth hereafter.

Such thoughts as these had not occurred to the poor merchant, when most he needed them; but now, in the stillness of his prison, he considered

of many things, which, amidst the interests of busy life, he would have passed unheeded. And much and often he pondered on what he should say, on the morrow — the day, as he supposed, of his trial — endeavouring to prepare himself for the questions, that might be asked him. Importuned with such thoughts, he was resting on his pallet, a lamp burning above him; when, without any previous sound even of a step, he heard the key turn in the door of his chamber, and with such cautious gentleness, as if some person tried by stealth to enter. He lay still, listening to what might follow; but the door opened not, there being a bolt within, that secured the prisoner from nightly intrusion. Of this, the person without knew not; for the key was still moved in the lock; and this showed to the prisoner it was not the keeper, who sought to enter. With a dread of some nigh evil, he looked round, and saw, through the grate opening on the passage, light, that seemed to come from the stair; and, while he watched, behold a hand came through the grate, and tried to reach the bolt, which held the door within.

The poor merchant shuddered, when he saw those bony fingers stretched forth, with no weak impulse, to force back the bolt; and he started, when there came a face behind the grate, and he knew it to be the Prior’s of Saint Mary’s. His hand could not push back the bolt; and seeing, that the prisoner was now awake and watchful, he called to him by name, and desired him to unfasten the chamber. The prisoner demanded who came, at that unseasonable hour, and what he wanted; on which the Prior told his name, and that he came to confess him and prepare him for his trial, on the morrow. When the merchant observed, that the hour was extraordinary for such a duty, he was answered, “it is never too late for a good work;” and was desired to open the door, without further speaking.

But the prisoner, misliking the visage of this Prior, whom he had noted, on a former occasion, and fearing some concealed mischief, still delayed to comply, saying, that for his trial he was as much prepared, as an innocent conscience could prepare him. On this, the Prior was angry, and said he came by the King’s order, whose chamber he had just left, and, in his name, demanded entrance.

“If so,” answered the prisoner, “I marvel the keeper is not with you. Why come you alone, and at this dead hour? I beseech you let me go on with my night’s sleep, which will best prepare me for the morrow’s trial.”

“The King’s order is sufficient for my appearance alone,” said the Prior. “I require not the keeper’s attendance at a confession; and, for his key, it is already in my hand; therefore, delay no longer, draw that unlawful bolt.” The merchant said again he had no confession to make, and that, even if he had ought to tell, he could tell it through the grate, and there only would he answer, this night.

“You know not,” said the Prior, “the good you are refusing; let me in, and you may hear that you expect not. Why should you suppose I come to you as an enemy?”

“Father,” said the prisoner, “I have desired rest; and, in so saying, why should you suspect I take you for an enemy. I have never injured you, and am even a stranger to you; if, therefore, I ought to fear admitting you to this chamber, you best can tell why. But I crave rest; this is the reason for it, and well may I marvel you have chosen such a time wherein to visit me; and, yet more, why you come alone, without witness.”

“Come nearer to the grate,” said the Prior, “and I will tell you.” The prisoner raised himself from his pallet and advanced. “Come nearer,” said the Prior; to which the poor man, astonished at this eagerness, replied, that, where he stood, he could well hear even the lowest speech.

“Others, too, may hear. What I would say, is to yourself alone.”

“And what inducement can you have to confide any thing to me — a prisoner, without help, without council, without comfort, other than that of a good conscience? Since, then, I cannot administer to myself, what can I administer to you, that you should seek my confidence?”

“You may find, perhaps,” said the Prior, “that you are neither without council nor help, if you will listen to me;” and again he bade the merchant draw nearer; on whose doing so, he asked him, if he wished for liberty? On this the prisoner smiled contemptuously.

“I hear the first matin-bell,” said he; it calls you — you had done better to be in your place than to have come hither, at an hour, to tempt me by such a question.”

“I begin to think so too,” answered the Prior, “since you are so obstinately bent against yourself; but open the door, and I will convince you I am your friend.”

“You must convince me of that, before I unfasten this door.”

What other arguments the Prior might use are unknown, but they answered his purpose so far, that the poor prisoner, at last, gave up his fears, and admitted him to the chamber. Having thus entered, the Prior fastened the door again, and, holding up the lamp to examine whether any one was concealed in the room, the full light fell upon his forehead, and showed a deep scar, that seemed to remain from a sword wound.

While the merchant stood observing his face, under this peculiar light, the scar suddenly engrossed his attention; and he thought he had seen the same countenance, at some former period of his life. He had little time for recollection; but he thought this was at an inn, between Tarnworth and the Chase, as he was travelling with his kinsman from Worcester; the latter having landed at Milford, on his return from beyond the sea: but the recollection was indistinct; and he checked the fear, which was beginning to return upon him.

The Prior, after his survey of the chamber, met one glance of the scrutinizing eyes, that were directed upon him, and immediately withdrew his own; and, sitting down on the low pallet, he thus addressed his prisoner:— “Now shall you know me for your friend; for, here I tell you, that, if you wish to escape this night the trial that threatens you, I have in my power the means of assisting you; and am ready to use them, on one condition!”

The prisoner, surprised and distrusting the motive of this offer, answered, “You said but now, that you came hither by the King’s order! Is it also by his order, that you bring me this offer of escape? He has only to will my freedom! and I shall go forth from these walls without any contrivance, or secret methods of my own.”

“Yes: and then you may, without further let, or hindrance, again sound forth your accusations against an innocent man! It is on one condition only, that his Highness consents to your escape. As to your going openly forth, with his known consent, free of punishment for your accusation against the Baron de Blondeville, that cannot be, and he preserve his honour: liberty, granted to you on such terms, would be the Baron’s condemnation. This you must acknowledge. There is but one way, that can secure both his honour and your safety — only one!”

“Name it!” said the merchant.

“It is, that you set your name to this paper, containing a recantation of all, of which you have accused the Baron before the King; and that you leave it behind you ere you take your secret flight, in sure testimony of his innocence.”

The prisoner, rising up with indignation, exclaimed, “Never! I was witness to the crime, of which I have accused him, and never will I cease to demand justice for it! Nor will I believe King Henry would, in this way, shelter a man, whose honour he would fear to bring to trial!”

While he said this, the countenance of the Prior darkened; and, after a short silence, he replied slowly: “I cannot doubt your knowledge of the crime; but I as little doubt the innocence of him you have accused. You err not as to the deed, but as to the criminal; and your crime lies in this, that you have rashly, and with unmeet confidence, charged a man with a dreadful offence, whom, even if he were guilty, you could have small means of knowing to be so. Your obstinacy, too, in persisting in this charge, when you have found who the accused is, takes away from you all claim to mercy; and, understand from me, that, on your trial tomorrow, you are not likely to find any. At this hour, tomorrow night, if you shall be then still amongst the living, you will remember, in despair, the opportunity, now offered you and now passing away.

Scarcely had the Prior ended, when the bell of Saint Mary’s sounded, and his visage altered, while he faintly uttered the latter words. He was mute awhile, and then he said, “If you have resolved to proceed with this denunciation, I must leave you: if you doubt, mercy is still open to you; but no time is to be lost — I must be gone!”

“Could I doubt, for an instant, as to the person of the murderer,” said the agitated prisoner, “I should, indeed, be infamous, in accusing the Baron de Blondeville, and equally foolish in hesitating to accept your offer; but my memory is faithful; I never can forget the countenance of him, who murdered my kinsman, in my sight.”

“It is extraordinary your memory should have received so false an impression, if, indeed, you speak according to your conviction; it is extraordinary, that, considering the short opportunity you had observing the robber’s face, you should be so confident in that impression; you saw him only for a moment, and then by a torch lying on the ground. A light,

so placed, might give a false appearance to any countenance." He ceased, and the merchant remained thoughtful and silent.

"It is extraordinary, too," said the Prior, "that, recollecting so clearly, the countenance of one of the robbers, you should have no remembrance of the others."

"I saw not the faces of the others. You were present, when I related this matter to the King; can you have forgotten, that I said the other robbers were masked during the whole outrage?"

"I recollect you said so. And you say so now again? You are sure they were masked?" said the Prior.

"Yes, I am sure," replied the merchant.

"Yet is it strange, that the man, who committed the murder, should be the only man of the four, who exposed his face."

"The four! I saw but three," said Woodreeve, eagerly. He looked at the Prior, who was, for a moment, silent. "You must remember, I told the King, the assassin's *visor* fell off in the struggle with my brave kinsman."

At this close recollection of the very manner of the deed, the prisoner was much moved; he groaned heavily, and threw himself again on the pallet, saying, "Talk no more of this cruel transaction, I beseech you; it goes to my heart." His visitor made no answer, and the merchant remained for a short time, with his face hid in his hands, as if in an ecstasy of grief. When he raised himself and turned, he found the Prior standing close beside him, with an expression, which he did not, at the moment, understand.

"I must begone," said the intruder; "you will repent that you have neglected the opportunity; another will certainly not occur; and you deserve not that it should, since you can persist, on such slight grounds, in accusing a stranger of what would affect his life. I know the Baron de Blondeville to be innocent."

Woodreeve was struck both with the emphasis and with the tone, in which this was uttered; it was not the usual voice of the Prior; yet did it seem the natural one, and not wholly unknown to him. Looking earnestly upon him, he said, "Who is with me?"

His visitor, turning quickly at the question, answered not the scrutiny of the merchant's eye, but scornfully asked, "Know you not the Prior of Saint Mary's?"

“I did know a Prior of St. Mary’s;” said the other sadly, “you are not he. Moreover, your speech was but now changed, I knew it not for yours; not for the same I had heard a few minutes before, though it seemed not unknown to me.”

“That is strange; but your observance of my voice, seems to be about as certain as your recollection of the Baron de Blondeville’s features; and I should not much marvel, if you were to denounce it as a party in the same adventure. But I must leave you, and shall add nothing more, since you had rather remain a prisoner, with death before your eyes, than doubt the correctness of your memory, or recant from an error, when in so doing, you might save the life of yourself, or, perhaps, of an innocent man. Call not that a love of justice, which is blind vengeance in its blackest shape.”

There was something in these latter words, that now struck the harassed mind of the prisoner, with a force, which had not accompanied any similar exhortation from his adviser; a dreadful possibility was once more placed before him, and the moment was passing, in which by acknowledging that possibility, he might put an end to the fearful alternative, in which he stood, of losing his own life, or taking that of another.

“What if there be one possibility,” said he to himself, “out of thousands, that I have accused an innocent person!” and he shuddered with horror.

The Prior instantly perceived the hesitation of his mind, and he waited awhile, that it might end in further doubts, which he knew would be stronger, if his now readier listener should forget them to have proceeded from his promptings, and should mistake them for his own. When he thought they had taken some hold, he threw out hints and argument to confirm his apprehensions; and this with so much success, that the merchant was no longer sufficiently confident in his own recollection, to adhere to a purpose so surrounded with danger, either to his life, or, what was truly more important, and what he always held to be more important — to his conscience. But, although this shade of distrust might influence him, to desist from a further prosecution of the Baron de Blondeville, he was not persuaded to sign the recantation proposed to him, nor any recantation whatsoever. On this point, every suggestion made to him, touching his own security, or advantage, was vain; at this moment, he held it just possible the Baron might be innocent, and, therefore, was he willing

to desist from his accusation; but he also thought it far more probable, that he was guilty, and, therefore, would he not affirm that he was innocent.

The Prior, feigning more satisfaction he felt, as to the progress of his suggestions, said, “You think the Baron guiltless; your recantation must therefore follow, when you have had a few minutes further consideration. Else where would be the love of justice, of which you have said so much?”

“I only doubt of his guilt,” said the respondent in this dispute, “and that carries me no farther than a relinquishment of the prosecution.”

“But you certainly do not doubt, that this must be insufficient to satisfy his honour. He has been publicly accused, and it is necessary, that he should be as publickly cleared. It is also necessary” — here the speaker delivered himself with greater emphasis— “it is also necessary, that his accuser, if he be obstinate, should be punished for his attempt. Think you that punishment is likely to be slight? If you remain here, certain destruction awaits you; if you go away, and leave behind this recantation of your error, you will save your own life, and testify so far to the Baron’s innocence, as to render a pursuit of you unnecessary to his reputation.”

“I knew not,” said Woodreeve, “that you were so warmly my friend, as you profess yourself to be; you seem as anxious for my welfare, after I may leave this place, as for the Baron’s reputation.”

The Prior liked not this remark. “I know not,” said he, “why I should be thus anxious, since you are so distrustful of my goodwill, although there be mixed with my wish to save your life, a desire, that you should restore the reputation of an innocent man. I marvel you should hesitate to accept my kindness.”

The merchant still refused to sign a recantation, which went so much beyond his own conviction. “My flight, without this,” said he, “would afford sufficient is presumption of my doubt, and even that is rather a stronger word than ought to applied to my mere admission of a possibility.”

The parties remained for a while in silence, one considering whether he should waive the recantation he had so strongly insisted upon, the other, whether he should trust himself with such a companion, even if he no longer required it. He feared some treachery in the proposal; the offer of an escape might be made, only with a design to draw him into a virtual acknowledgment of guilty motives for his charge, the more certainly to

accomplish his destruction. “Suppose I were on the outside of the castle walls,” said he, “how may I proceed, when beyond them, since I have neither horse, nor friend, to expedite me?”

“You consent, then, to sign this?”

“No,” replied the merchant, lifting up his head, with a resolute and indignant countenance. “If you insist on such a condition, here, I entreat you, conclude your visit, and leave me to my rest.”

The Prior now yielded. “There is a place, without the town,” said he, “where you may lie hidden, till the dawn, or, if you fear not to traverse the woods by night, a horse and guide are in readiness for you. I am sufficiently your friend to help you, without insisting on further conditions.”

Still, the prisoner hesitated. He knew no previous goodwill of his adviser towards him, that could account for so much preparation for his safety; he liked not to trust him, with such an opportunity to ruin him. But, while he thus feared treachery, on one hand, he saw destruction threatening him, on the other; if he trusted to the present offer, he might perish; he awaited a doubtful contest with enemies so powerful, and so greatly inflamed by revenge, he felt little hope for his life. To declare in court, his mere admission, that the Baron might be innocent, would not be sufficient for his own release; further his conscience would not let him go, and yet it was apparent, that he should be pressed to go further, and should be treated as a criminal, if he refused; nothing would be sufficient to his own safety, which was not so to the Baron’s views; his admission would be attributed only to fear, and it was not fear in him, which his adversaries wished to prove. After he had weighed these thoughts in his mind, he told the Prior he was ready to depart.

While he yet spoke, he heard the bell of Saint Mary’s strike, for the third time; the Prior heard it too; and he stood still and thoughtful. Then, starting from his mood, he said, “Your determination is, perhaps, too late; let us begone.”

On being asked why he feared this, he answered, “That bell was to serve as the third signal.” On being asked for what purpose it was to serve as a signal, he replied, without explaining, that it concerned the escape, adding, “Not a moment is to be lost; while we are talking, your opportunity is fleeing;” and he arose and unlocked the chamber-door.

“Are you sure of the keeper?” said Woodreeve, “and how are we to pass the castle gates?”

“There is no time for answers; follow in silence.” They left the chamber; a light was burning on the head of the stair, which the Prior, as he descended, took up in his hand. The merchant perceived no one on the stair, save his conductor; but he looked fearfully at every doorway he passed, expecting each moment, to see someone on the watch, ready to start out upon him.

Having descended two flights only, the Prior turned into a chamber on the left, making sign for the merchant to follow; who, fearing he was not leading him forth of the tower, stood still on the stair, and pointed downward, as though he would go that way only. But, the Prior still beckoning, and retiring with the light, he could not but follow into what appeared to a stateroom of this tower, and which did in truth belong to the constable of the castle, though not then used by him. Woodreeve marvelled, wherefore he was led to this chamber, which, for height and greatness, nearly equalled any at Kenilworth, and which, though scant of furniture, was yet hung with ancient arras, that fell from under the high windows down to the very floor.

The Prior again beckoning him, he passed on, without inquiring, fearing lest the sound of his voice might call forth some one, who should have been on watch. This chamber led into another, separated, as was a third, by a wall, which, though lofty, did not reach the roof, except by a row of round arches, that appeared above the arras, and rose to a vast height, making the whole extent of these three large chambers visible on high, like unto the aisle-roof of a church, though the partition walls concealed it below.

On the top of these walls, stood many figures of armour, beneath the arches and piles of arms, which none could reach, save those acquainted with the secret ways of the chambers. These shapes exhibited every device of harness known — of plain steel, of brass, or coat of mail; with helms and visors of divers sorts; some to lie flat before the face, leaving only an opening for the eyes above; others hiding the eyes, yet allowing sight and the passage of breath through the iron bars of the projecting visor, and some with beaver down, as if there were a visage behind too ghastly to be exposed. These were the state rooms of the great tower, or keep of Cæsar;

but although assigned as the habitation of the Constable, they were never used by him, except in time of siege, they were so cold and comfortless. Hung they were with like arras from the line of the windows and arches, down to the floor, but they showed little sign of the living beside.

The merchant, coming to the third chamber and seeing no sign of an outlet beyond, liked it not; and, halting at the door, made signal for the Prior to return; but he, waving the lamp over his head, noticed this only by a gesture to come on. As he did so, his companion could almost have believed some evil sprite was before him, so dark and strange he looked under that gloomy light. When the Prior had reached the end of this chamber, he stood still, till Woodreeve came up; and then, checking all further question, he put the lamp into his hand, and, lifting up the arras, unfastened a door behind it; beyond which appeared an arch made in the solid wall, of twelve or fourteen feet thickness.

Several steps led up to a stone landing-place and to a loop beyond; where, in time of siege, two archers could stand, shoot forth their arrows, unseen of the enemy without. And there were many of the like in these chambers; but the arras hid them from those, who might be guests.

Woodreeve, marvelling why the Prior had led him thither, looked forward into the depth of this arch; and there saw, by the dim light, a figure stand: which, for aught that then appeared, might be a mere bowman, ready to shoot; till the Prior, snatching the lamp from the merchant, who had no power either to resist, or to flee, held it forward at arm’s length, and it gleamed upon the armour of one, who seemed appointed like a knight.

Instantly, the lamp shook in the hand of the Prior, and Woodreeve wondered not less to see his visage change to deadly pale, than at the shape before him, till its harness of a knight seemed to remind him of his dead kinsman. The Prior, recovering from his ecstasy, said, “‘Tis but the armour of the Lord Constable, which used to stand in this recess; ‘tis strange I should have forgotten this: come on; you have nothing to fear!”

But the merchant thought not so; and liked not being brought hither, whence, as it seemed, they could go no further; but in this he was mistaken. A key having been applied by his conductor to a door in the side of the archway, it opened upon a passage, made in the thickness of the wall, which led to many secret places of this tower, and elsewhere,

unknown to few, save the Lord Constable and the wardour: how the Prior came to be acquainted with it, may appear hereafter.

The wind, that poured through this door, had extinguished the lamp, had not Woodreeve let fall the arras; and, when he found himself inclosed in this arch, he lamented his attempt; and still more when he saw the Prior standing darkly, at the foot of a narrow staircase, looking up it, and beckoning him to come on. His heart failed him, and he demanded whither he was to be led, saying he would go no further, till he should receive an answer to that question. The Prior spoke in a low voice, as if he feared to be heard, a precaution, which seemed to be unnecessary here, and said, “Within the thickness of these walls, there are galleries, which lead to many points; you will presently find yourself at the foot of the tower.”

“How can that be,” said his companion, “when the stairs do not descend, but rise?”

“Come on, and you shall see; but first let me secure this door.” The Prior stepped back; and, as he locked it, hung the key to his girdle. As he flung back his weeds to do this, Woodreeve thought he saw the glitter of steel within. Other keys might hang there; but he almost thought he saw a poniard, and he doubted whether it were safer to attempt going back to his prison, or to proceed, without betraying his suspicions. His conductor left him little time to meditate; for, taking again the lamp, he went up the stair, bidding him tread lightly, and speak not.

It was a short flight of steps, ending in a narrow passage, where once and again a loop supplied the place of windows. Now, there were within these walls of the grand story, galleries, that ran round the chambers, below the windows, which were made for secret communication to distant parts of the castle; and, for means of security and escape, in times of siege; some led up to the battlements; others down to the donjon and to subterraneous avenues; but whither these went finally there were few that could tell. The Prior was acquainted with them all, and, when the King’s court was not at Kenilworth, he could, had he been rebelliously inclined, have surprized the ten knights, who kept garrison here, and have delivered the castle unto an enemy. But his treachery took not so wide a compass.

Woodreeve followed through this gallery in watchful silence, and, at the end of it, saw the Prior make halt, where the wall fell into a recess, as if a turret were at that corner of this tower. On coming up, he perceived in the

floor a large opening, or well, such as is found in the strong holds of many castles, and is used, when great balls of solid stone or balistas, catapultas, and other engines of war are to be drawn up, for defence, during the siege.

The Prior bent over it with the lamp, eyeing the depth; and, while Woodreeve did the same, he saw, far down within, a flash of light, which showed him a high and narrow arch at the bottom. A stronger flash made him look up to the lamp his conductor held, supposing it might have come from that; but his eyes settled not on the lamp, but on the looks of the Prior, which were fixed in dark watchfulness; and again the countenance struck him as having been seen by him, under other circumstances than any, which had lately occurred at Kenilworth.

He stepped hastily back from the opening; his conductor stepped back also; and he heard, at the same moment, a voice say, “Wardour, mind the hour!”

The merchant’s heart sunk at the sound, which seemed to him the same he had heard, this night before, in his prison, and he looked again at the Prior; but his lips were motionless; and, when he had made a sign for silence, and had beckoned the merchant forward, he turned quickly this angle of the tower into a gallery like that they had left. It ended in another turret, but here appeared a narrow stair, leading, on one hand, up to the battlement, and, on the other, descending; it was so narrow as to admit only one in front, and so steeply winding, that he, who followed, could hardly keep in view him, who went before.

It ended in a small chamber, where the Prior again made a stand, and, giving the lamp to his companion, he drew the bolts of a strong oaken door, so thickly barred and studded with iron, that the weight of it could hardly have been moved by the Prior alone. Here the spirits of Woodreeve revived; for, this seemed by its strength to be a door of outer defence, and he willingly assisted to force it back. His disappointment was great, when he perceived, that it opened only on a straight and steep flight of steps. Again, he questioned his conductor, who, once more, bade him be patient. The steps led to another door, which opened to a covered gallery, or passage, judged by the merchant to pass under the castle-foss, and, when they came to a third strong door, and ascended a short flight of steps, he doubted not the Prior was leading him forth of a salley-port, beyond the ditch.

At the top of these steps, a fourth door appeared; this was so stoutly fastened with bolts and bars, that together they could scarce undo them. And sorely was Woodreeve daunted, when, instead of finding it opening to liberty and fresh air, he saw beyond it only a narrow and dismal chamber, more like to a prison than even that he had left. His loud remonstrances alarmed the Prior, who again besought him, as he wished for freedom, to be circumspect and silent.

“We have passed,” said he, “along the castle wall, through that covered gallery, which leads from the Constable’s chambers to the gate of entrance into the bass-court, and may be within hearing of the wardours. Four knights below keep castle guard, to night, within the great portal, the King being here, at Kenilworth. You have, perchance, already betrayed yourself; but wait here, while I go on and examine, whether the way be clear; if you hear me speaking loud, retire into the covered passage, and bar the iron door; but be not heard the while; if all be still, stay here, till I return.”

Woodreeve eagerly desired to follow, his heart misgiving him of treachery, and because also, that he even shuddered at the thought of being left alone in this dreary place, without a light; for the only lamp they carried the Prior must take to light his own steps. But his conductor objected, that, their way now lying near the ground, it was unsafe for them to go further together, till he should have made sure, that the wardours were aloof. To this the merchant remarked with some surprize, that this did not agree with the assurance he had given him, that he had safe means of escape, for, it now appeared that, although their passage lay so near to where the wardours, or others watched, it seemed not that he had secured the goodwill of any one to help them. A keen sarcastic smile was on the countenance of the Prior, which, certain, the poor merchant did not read aright.

“If you have deceived me already, how can I resolve to proceed further with you? you said you had prepared a horse and guide, without the walls.”

“Hush,” said the Prior, “you are delivering us both to destruction; speak not; be confident and patient; you will soon have reason to find that your distrust has been folly. I will return immediately, unless I am seen. If you hear my voice, remember the retreat, that remains for you, and that you secure the door without noise; I shall find means of extricating you

another way. You know you are not to expect me to call to you; it will be sufficient if you hear me speaking loudly."

Having said this, he laid his finger on his lips, and then, shading the lamp by his garment, left the chamber by a narrow passage, and was speedily out of sight. Woodreeve, awed by the darkness of this lone spot, tried, notwithstanding the injunction he had received, to follow his steps; but no sound of them could he hear; a little ray from the lamp alone giving him a faint glimpse through that passage into a lofty chamber, where he just discovered the light vanishing through a distant doorway, with the Prior's shadow beside it. And here Woodreeve made halt, lest he should not be able, in this darkness, to find his way back to the covered passage, should the signal for retreat be sounded, and lest his following steps should be heard of the Prior, who his-self moved so stilly, as though he had meant to observe whether he was followed, or not.

The merchant listened attentively, but heard no sound: he watched a considerable while on this spot, without perceiving any sign of the Prior's return. His heart again failed him, and again he trusted, that he, who was guiltless of any crime, and whom pity for a murdered kinsman had exposed to this danger, would not be left to be destroyed by any artifice of man. Still the Prior did not return, nor was his voice heard in any direction. Now, taking his way towards the door, through which he had seen him depart, he determined to know the worst, and either to make one desperate effort to escape, or resign himself into the hands of any guard he could find. The chamber was so spacious, that hardly could he find his way through it, but that, as he advanced, he perceived a glimmering of light, which led him to the very door, where his conductor had disappeared. Here he saw the rays shoot athwart another room, through the arch of an opposite door. Listening and hearing no sound, he advanced cautiously, that he might observe, without entering that further chamber, what was passing within it.

It was a large and lofty chamber, having no window, save one, but many loops in the walls, which were dimly seen by the slanting light from a lamp near the high roof. On the opposite side, were large grooves and pullies of extraordinary strength, such as he had never seen before, and could not now comprehend the use of; but, in the present temper of his mind, he readily assigned for them some terrible purpose; in which

conjecture he was not mistaken. Near them were a row of large iron spikes and many bars, that covered the wall to a great height; and he then understood this to be the portcullis room. But what surprized him was, to see light springing up through the floor, at regular distances, by small apertures; for, he knew not that there were used the machicollations, for pouring down melted lead and hot sand on the heads of enemies, who might have forced the first gates, or even the portcullis itself; and that this glimmering came from the watch-lights of the guard in the portal beneath. Still, he neither saw, nor heard, any living person in this chamber; till, venturing a little within the door, he observed, at the farther end, a torch, gleaming through a passage, and the Prior himself standing in the archway, between two men, who lay along on stone benches in the wall.

He bent over one for awhile, and then over the other, as if communicating some to them; and Woodreeve, suspecting that he was betrayed to those, who would not scruple to dispatch him, stood rooted by terror to the spot, and saw the Prior advance alone towards the door, where he watched. He was presently observed of him, and the looks of his conductor, on discovering him, seemed to express dismay; but this soon passed from them, and, putting himself back, within the door, he said, “All is right; follow me through that passage; but step lightly and speak not, for your life.”

“For my life,” answered the merchant, imprudently, “will I not follow you thither, where two men are lying in wait; I have seen them.”

“Then you have seen the wardours of this cullis-chamber in their niches, keeping guard; and good guard will they keep; they will not wake of one while; their liquor has been such as I wished.”

This seemed so probable an explanation, that Woodreeve received it for truth; yet was he surprized, that so great preparation had been made for his escape, and he asked how it were possible to be certain this sleep was not feigned, and who had prepared their drink. The Prior answered, with sarcastic smile, “Four knights do service in the portal below; there is one among them, who has spared not to make these inferior wardours merry.”

He then checked further question, saying, “Come, let us pass; time speeds; this moment we may use, the next, perhaps, we may not.” Without more words, the merchant followed him through the portcullis-chamber, and, drawing nigh the place of guard, did, in trowth, perceive the two

wardours fast asleep in the niches, where they usually kept watch. But, hardly had he entered the gateway, when one of them began to move himself on the bench, and cried out, “Down with the portcullis, they are coming over the bridge;” and, stretching forth his arm, he had nigh knocked the lamp from the Prior’s hand, and the merchant, as he passed, was touched.

They stayed not to see whether he had waked himself, but, turning into a little projection of the passage, went down a round stair. And now approached the greatest danger of discovery; for, this led down into a room that opened under the great portal, where the wardours of that place usually sat. There were stone seats within the wall appointed for them, where they watched out the night in all seasons, save of the bleakest weather of winter, and then they sat by fire in the guard-chamber, which was in the opposite tower opening under the gateway. But those, who, this night, kept castle-guard under the great portal, being there on knight’s service and unused, save for a certain season, to be from their beds, at this time, minded not to watch within the niches; and, the drawbridge being securely up, they sat in that guard-room, there beguiling the time with dice, or they contented themselves with now and then a turn under the great arch, to see that others did their duty; and then reposed themselves.

When the merchant saw whither that stair led, he asked how they were to pass, unseen, through the portal, where the wardours watched, and received for answer, they were not to go out to that portal, secured by gates, as well as by guards and by the raised drawbridge, but by a secret way in the tower-room below. Now, hardly had the Prior spoken, when, on coming near to the bottom stair, he checked his steps, and stood still and watchful; for, he saw the door of that room standing ajar, which he had reason to hope would have been shut and even fastened at this hour; and, presently after, a wardour was seen passing there, by a light hanging in the archway.

Darkening his lamp with his garment, he stood, fearing to venture forward, lest his steps should discover him, ere he could get through that room. He also feared, that the noise of raising the trap, by which he would depart, must be heard, even if he should get safely through the room. Before the passing of many minutes, the Knight, watching there, began to sing an old Norman song, the burden of which was taken up in chorus by

his comrades dicing in the guard-room beyond, making a kind of hoarse music, which was soon joined by the sound of a single clarion, repeating a few notes in an under tone, both solemn and terrific to the poor merchant, who thought it was some signal of alarm.

But his conductor, who knew it to be only a sign for changing the guard at some post without the gates, took courage at the noise, and, boldly stepping forward, shut the door that led to the portal, and drew the gate within. Yet, ere he could find the trap, the Knight, who had heard a bolt drawn, was calling and then striking heavily at the door. Finding no answer, he ordered a clarion to be sounded in the portal for a call to the wardours, of the portcullis chamber above, and to gather those below to inquire into this matter.

And now was Woodreeve most fearful, lest those sleeping wardours above should by these loud soundings be roused from their trance: and hardly could he hold the lamp to the ground, while the Prior searched for the trap, which lay hid in the corner; there, having found a grated opening on the floor, Woodreeve pointed that out for the trap, little guessing he stood over the Castle dungeon, where condemned criminals were kept, and where he might yet be laid. It was of great depth, and what little and glimmering light it ever had was received through this opening, by which also food was let down to the wretched prisoner.

Undismayed by the noise without, now that he had secured the door, the Prior continued to search coolly for the trap, knowing, perchance, better than his companion, that the wardours would not soon wake, and that amongst the knights below, was one, who was enough the friend of the Baron de Blondeville and his cause to manage his unthinking comrades, till they should be willing to suppose the alarm had proceeded from some mistaken cause. Had the merchant been also aware of this, he might have thought himself safe; yet might he have erred, when thus secure, and have found that his worst enemy stood close beside him.

The Prior having, at length, found the trap, applied the key, and, with his companion’s aid, lifted the door. Beneath, appeared a steep and narrow stair, and now again, when Woodreeve, after such long toil and so many changes of anxiety, looked down into this dark abyss, his distrust of his companion returned with new force; he pointed to the fearful descent, and urged, that, even if it could lead them without the walls, they must be

unable to get over the foss, which was broad and full of deep water. A thundering sound upon the portal door and a loud blast of the clarion silenced this remonstrance, and prevented the Prior's reply. He thought the sleep of the wardours above must needs be the sleep of death, if it fled not at the noise: so thought some under the archway, and they redoubled their blows and their hallooings; but as yet to no purpose.

The Prior the while, having found it no very difficult matter to thrust, as it were, his harassed companion down the opening, lowered and secured the trap and followed down the steps. As Woodreeve now stood with the lamp, at the bottom of them, the light it cast upward to the Prior gave a ghastly hue to his visage, which again brought back his former faint recollection of having seen him, at some other period, and under circumstances of danger. It was by such an upward, darting light, that he had seen the murderer of his kinsman, at the moment when the visor fell off; and he now almost thought he saw before him that very murderer.

The suspicion was far from being strong, the mixed expression of terror and firmness, with which he fixed his eyes upon him, did not escape the Prior. With less firmness than usual, he almost started and threw a keen and frowning glance upon his companion. Dark and thronging thoughts cast their shadows upon his countenance. But recovering, by degrees, his usual aspect, he stood awhile at the foot of the stair, listening for the sound above. It had ceased, and all within and without this gloomy vault, was still.

He knew not, whether to understand, that the noise had brought down the wardours from their sleep, and that the portal was opened, or that the Baron's friend, who watched there with the rest, had succeeded in quieting their suspicions. The thickness of the trap, and the depth of the vault, in which he stood, would prevent him from hearing their footsteps, even if they were trampling over his head; but should this be so, and should those knights, who were strangers to the secret ways of the castle, have discovered the trapdoor, he trusted to the strength of its inward fastenings for a sufficient time of security. Woodreeve stood, the while, silent from terror and expectation, and hardly did he know whether it were better for him to be o'ertaken by those above, or to proceed with his murky conductor. "What, if he has brought me into the depth of this vault only to destroy me?" thought he. Then he considered, that hardly would any one,

after the alarm which had been given above, hazard himself by so atrocious a deed, and his spirits, in some deal, returned.

But he demanded again, and with more resolute tone, whither they were going, and was answered, “To a sally-port.”

“But how are we to pass the ditch? Is there a boat then waiting for us?”

“Come on,” answered the Prior, sharply.

Woodreeve followed, without further question, yet misliked he the manner of his conductor more than ever. Nor had he failed to observe, that, unless at intervals, when reproof was to be conveyed, or hope raised, no eyes met his, so bent were those of the Prior towards the ground. They passed on through other vaults, and, whether it were the bad air there, or apprehension of what might follow, Woodreeve felt himself so faint, that hardly could he drag his steps along. Soon they came to a round chamber, whose roof, supported by a central pillar, rose in vaultings, that terminated in corbeils of lions’ heads, upon a cornice of noble simplicity. The place seemed intended for a hall of some sort, but the merchant, who looked round it with surprise, could perceive no windows; there were two arched doors opposite to each other, and to one of these the Prior led. Having gone up a few steps, he undrew the strong fastenings, and unclosed it, Woodreeve hastily following him, for he once more felt the fresh air breathe upon his face. His conductor pressed forward, but suddenly checked himself, and drew back; he had nearly fallen into the foss below.

“I have mistaken the way,” said he, “this is a sally-port long disused, and the steps from it are removed.”

He had in trowth mistaken this for a sally-port, that had led under the rampart, and the castle ditch; but, this entrance having been considered as an inlet dangerous in times of siege, the steps had been taken down, and the door strongly secured. For the hall, it had once been a principal entrance to a tower on the walls, although it lay under a lofty flight of covered steps, that led obliquely to a larger portal, guarded by strong doors, one of which was of iron.

Woodreeve, breathing awhile the fresh air from without, recovered strength and courage; he almost blamed himself for his want of patience, and for having failed to allow, that an escape from a castle so spacious as this of Kenilworth, and so fully occupied and inhabited, as it now was, could not be made, except by many devious and tedious ways. But he did

not long enjoy this free air; the Prior suddenly closed the door, made the bars fast, and then, turning away, began to examine the wall, at a little distance, where he applied a key to a door, not seen till the lamp was held close to it; thence a steep stair descended, as if into another vault. They stepped upon it, and the Prior bade Woodreeve go first, while he locked the door; but here again distrust returned to the still baffled prisoner, for he perceived that this door was greatly different from that of the sally-port; so much so that he marvelled how one could be mistaken for the other; and he stopped, fearful of what might follow.

Yet had no apparent purpose been answered if the error were wilful; and, if Prior had an ill-meaning, so far as to intend him bodily harm, in their lonely track, he seemed to have missed an opportunity fitted for his purpose, since it would been easy to push him into the dark moat below. This thought encouraged him now to proceed; but he would not have been so soon consoled, had he known as much as his conductor knew. He asked, however, whither this second flight would lead them, and was answered, “Beyond the walls, where you shall soon find yourself at liberty; if you like not to proceed, return and deliver yourself up to justice.”

The merchant followed him down a very long flight of steps, ending in a passage, which he supposed lay under the foss. Here the air was so changed by an unwholesome vapour, that it was painful to breathe it; and the lamp burned so dimly, at times, that he feared it would expire. The Prior often stopped to nurse the flame, and once, as he lifted the lamp high, and it revived, his garment flew back, and Woodreeve now saw, beyond all possibility of doubt, a dagger at his girdle.

His eyes were fixed upon it, till his conductor saw that he observed it; and then, laying his hand upon the hilt, he said, “In times like these, every one should be somewhat armed.”

But now another object had seized the attention of the merchant, and he stood in horror. In drawing forth the dagger, his companion had turned aside his vesture, and, behold! a chain of gold hung about his neck, which from its ponderous but highly wrought ornaments, Woodreeve instantly thought was the very chain worn by his kinsman, at the time of his death, and he doubted not, that in the Prior he saw one of his assassins. A sort of amulet box was suspended to the chain, but of that he had no recollection.

At this conviction, he lost all presence of mind, so that he foresaw not how much he might hasten his peril, and lessen his chance, if there were any, of finally avoiding it, in betraying his thoughts to the Prior, whose revenge might be accomplished in such a place, without danger, as it appeared, from any human means of discovery.

He seized the lamp, and, holding it close to the chain, cried out, “It is the same — there are the very links, that shape — the initials of his name.”

“Of whose name?” said the Prior eagerly, and as he spoke, Woodreeve recollected the voice of the very robber, to whom he had delivered up his own treasure. The Prior, still without having changed his voice, repeated the question.

“Of my unfortunate kinsman,” answered Woodreeve; “I now know you.”

Instantly, the discovered ruffian, without one word, drew the dagger from the imperfect grasp, which Woodreeve had of it; and upraised his hand with a fierce and deadly intention, but the blow descended not; the poignard fell from his hand, and his eyes seemed fixed upon some object beyond.

The poor merchant, who, for an instant, had been motionless and confounded with terror, seeing this, gathered courage, and turned to discover what held his enemy in this trance; but nothing could he perceive, save the dusky avenue. Then, losing not another moment, he fled, with the lamp, along that unknown way; but he had neglected to seize the dagger, which had fallen on the ground, and might easily have been made a weapon for himself.

He followed the avenue, till his breath failed, and he was compelled to stop; but, soon thinking he heard steps behind him, he again went on, and, flying for very life, hope and fear supplied him with strength. He had now gone a great length of way, without having discovered any thing like an outlet, and he rested again for breath, to revive his failing lamp. He listened and, though he heard no footsteps in pursuit, he remembered the soundless steps, with which his treacherous conductor had, this night, passed along several chambers, and he was not convinced, that he was distant, though unheard. The intenseness, with which he listened for any remote, or lone sound, seemed to sharpen his sense of hearing, like as the

seaman’s sight discovers things so small and distant, as are unseen of others.

Thus, now while Woodreeve listened, he thought he heard — not footsteps, but, a little strain of music so faint and fleeting it was more like the moonlight shadow of a fleecy cloud, that glides along the hills, and fades ere you can say it is, than any certain truth. It served, however, at first, to revive his hopes; he judged it came from without the castle walls; but then perhaps, from soldiers on their watch, and, if so, his deliverance could not be nigh. Still, as his only hope lay that way, he hastened forward, and presently he again thought he heard music. He stopped and no longer doubted this; the sound was nearer, and he gradually distinguished a faint, solemn swell of voices and instruments. As he advanced, they sunk and were lost awhile; and then a high and long continued strain of many mingling voices was heard. Soon after, it sunk away, at a distance, and he heard it no more.

But now he fancied steps were coming behind him, and, quickening his own, he came to a bend of the avenue, and espied a door, which seemed to close its dreary length. Three massive bars secured it, but there was also a lock. While he stood before it, and looked back on the long sloping avenue, almost as far as his lifted lamp could throw its blunted rays, he heard no sound of either step, or breath, from within, or from without that door; nor saw the Prior advancing through that dim way behind him.

The bolts gave way to Woodreeve’s returned strength, and even the lock did not long resist. Already, he thought he felt the fresh air from without the castle walls; but, opening the door, he stepped not out upon a platform of grass, or under the boughs of the free forest; he stepped upon a little winding stair, that went up a turret, as he verily believed, of another tower, some outpost of the castle. At this, his heart sunk nigh to fainting; for how should he escape detection from those, who guarded it, and whose voices he now thought he heard singing, in dreary chorus, on their night-watch.

Having considered, a moment, to little purpose, for he had no choice but to go on, he went up the stair, and came to another door. He listened for awhile, but all within was still, and he undrew the bolt that held it, and would have stepped forward, but was baffled by what he thought a curtain, that hung before it. In this he deceived himself. It was the tapestry of a chamber. Perceiving this, he stopped again, before he lifted it, to consider

how best he might disclose himself, if any one within; but, all being silent, he ventured to lift the arras, and found himself in a great arched chamber. A lamp was burning near a reading-desk; but no person appeared, and he looked round, with a mixture of terror and curiosity, still holding up the arras, with one hand, and with the other his lamp, to survey the limits of the room; and he still kept one foot on the threshold-step, as ready to retreat, on the first alarm.

At length, perceiving that he was indeed alone in this chamber, he let the hangings drop, and ventured forward, in search of an outlet, through which to escape; but he saw none. The walls were covered with tapestry, which concealed whatsoever doors might be within them, and presented in colours various good deeds. A large oriel-window of fretted stone-work rose in sharp arches, closed with glass, stained in a mosaic of divers rich colours, like unto those in the great church of the city of Cologne in Germany. This window showed also the emblazoned arms of Geoffrey de Clinton, with many a golden rule in scrowl-work and labels on the glass.

All this Woodreeve espied, while, with his lamp in hand, he searched around for some outlet, to depart by. It seemeth not expedient to set down here all the objects he saw in this chamber; suffice it to say it was an oratory, and the histories on the tapestry and all the garniture were such as are meet for such a place. On a table lay divers folios well bossed with silver; among them was Matthew of Westminster and the Golden Legend. An armchair, with purple cushions, stood by the reading-desk, on which lay open a copy of the venerable Bede, and a Missal beside it, freshly illuminated.

At all he saw his mind misgave him, this was some chamber, not of the castle, but of the Priory; and, if so, whither could he turn, to flee from destruction. His eye again glancing round the walls, he observed a part of the tapestry inclosed in a kind of frame-work, different from any other part of the arras; and, hoping there might be a door behind this, he was advancing towards it, when he heard a rustling sound in another part of the chamber; and, turning, beheld the arras lifted, and the Prior himself standing under the same arch, through which he had entered.

His countenance was livid and malicious, and he held in his hand the dagger which he had dropped in the avenue.

Hardly did Woodreeve cast a look behind him; but, rushing towards that frame-work, he found it held a door, which opened upon a vaulted passage of the Priory, ending in a cloister. As he fled, he turned to see whether his pursuer advanced, and observed him standing at the great door of the chamber, making sign for his return; as if, after having let that dagger and that murderer's look be seen, it were possible to lure him back again.

It was Woodreeve's aim, should he be unable to get out of the monastery, to take refuge at the altar; and, with this intent, he proceeded hastily along the cloister, which opened, as he expected, into the chapel; and thence he soon heard the sound of voices and instruments; for the monks were now chanting the last matin, and he recollected the strain he had heard in the avenue. But, ere he could reach sanctuary, the Prior's steps were heard, along the cloister, and his voice calling loudly for help, and saying his life was in danger from a prisoner escaped of the castle; and, commanding, that they should stop him, ere he reached shelter. The monks, engaged as they were, at this hour, in service, heard not the alarm; till a lay brother, coming forth of the dormitory, raised a cry, which brought out from their cells a few sick brothers, who now joined in the cry, which those at matins presently heard.

Woodreeve, however, pursued his course; and opening a folding-door at the end of the cloister, found himself in the chancel, and gained the sanctuary, ere his pursuers reached him, or the amazed brethren there could understand they were to stop his way.

By this time the service had ceased, and all was confusion; the Prior pressing forward to seize the poor merchant, even at the altar-steps; and the monks flocking round him, to prevent sacrilege, and to learn the motive for his attempting to commit it. Scarcely was he kept back by the monks from offering violence to Woodreeve, who was still breathless and fainting, from the thought of peril so hardly escaped, though he turned, and in some sort, faced his enemy.

But, before he was calm enough to speak, the Prior began his say: he asserted, that, while he was sitting in the great chamber, studying, a secret door of the room opened, and he saw this stranger enter. He knew him to be the man imprisoned in the castle, for having falsely accused the Baron de Blondeville, and whose trial for unlawful arts of magic, designed to delude the eyes and minds of the whole court, by a false presentment of

the crime imputed to the Baron, and thereby to prejudice the King against him, to his utter ruin, was shortly to come on in the castle-hall. How he had escaped from prison he knew not, nor how he had reached the Priory; where, perchance, he had come undesignedly. On perceiving him quietly sitting at his reading-desk, the prisoner, possessed either by despair, or by desire of vengeance, for the part he had taken against him in the King's presence, drew forth a dagger; and, having vainly made a blow at him, fled, as they witnessed: "And here behold the instrument of his intended crime," said the Prior, "turned aside from my breast by my own hand. I found it on the floor of my chamber." And he held up the poniard.

Astonished and confounded by these audacious falsehoods, Woodreeve stood aghast, and his very looks would have condemned him, with the greater part of the brotherhood, could they even have questioned the truth of their Prior; who, however, was little loved amongst them. With one voice they cried out against the stranger, so that he almost gave himself up for lost; but, when his enemy said, that no place ought to protect such a criminal, they all at once stood up against violation of sanctuary, as became them; and marvelled, that he showed so little reverence for so high a privilege. Then the Prior, forgetful of what became his office, said that his life was yet in danger, unless the prisoner could be dislodged from the monastery; for, although the law of sanctuary could protect him, it could not restrain him; and, as the doors of the church could not be locked, he might come forth, at some convenient hour; and not only escape from the monastery, but, on his way, accomplish the very crime he had meditated.

The monks made answer, that the doors of the church should be watched, but that they never could consent to afford a precedent for violation of sanctuary; and much they were astonished, that their superior his-self, who ought to be the first to maintain this right, should wish to renounce it. But they excused him, seeing his terror of the evil he had just escaped. Then, the Prior perceiving he was betraying his own cause, and turning those against it, of whose goodwill he should hereafter have much need, gave up that point, but threatened sentence of exclusion against any one of the community, who should relieve the stranger's hunger. And was he nearly condemned to a lingering death more miserable than any, which the common law of the land could have pronounced against him, since it

was improbable, that any of the villagers should venture to brave the anger of the Prior.

Adversity had now well nigh persuaded Woodreeve, that, however just his cause, it would avail him nothing, where the criminal had such powerful support; and he forbore, at this time, to increase his difficulties, by accusing the Prior as an accomplice of the Baron de Blondeville. He spoke only to make a solemn denial of the charge against himself, adding, that, if the brethren would send to the castle for a guard, he would instantly relinquish the privilege of sanctuary, and deliver himself up to the King's officers, but to no other. This pleased not his enemy, who dreaded the tale he might unfold; and, however strange that might appear and hard to be believed, he knew, that in those lawless times, there had been instances of rapine, committed by wicked intruders like himself into the fold, and, therefore might some parts of the history be not wholly discredited; the more especially as the Lord Archbishop seemed to be not wholly his friend. So, he resolved to take his cause into his own hands, and to attempt that by poison, which he had failed to perpetrate by steel, when the merchant, as has been related, had imprudently made a charge against him in so lonely a place.

For, it is not to be guessed, that the Prior, in leading him forth from prison, had, at first, any other motive than to turn him loose and let him make his way to a distant part of the country, where he would be so well contented by having saved his life, as never again to hazard it, by endangering that of the Baron. However this might be, he now, in his folly and wickedness, as wickedness leads on to wickedness, and blinds its followers, judged it necessary for his own life, that the merchant should perish, and that, before he could have an opportunity of communicating with the King's officers. But to accomplish this it would be necessary to practise somewhat of the cunning dexterity, which with him supplied the place of wisdom, and which he was well content to mistake for it.

He, therefore, feigned to relax somewhat of his severity; and, saying the criminal should be allowed bread and water, while he remained in sanctuary, was so departing. But Woodreeve, now remembering the golden chain, worn by the Prior, and considering how helping it must be to his own cause to have that matter known, which might never be, if not now, wished to devise some means of making him show it to the brethren,

before he had taken the precaution of laying it aside, if indeed he had not already done so. Yet, to mention this chain, without putting him on his guard to conceal it, were not possible. That was however done for him, which he had not the art to compass.

When the Prior was departing from the Church, Woodreeve, again appealing to the brethren, bade them bear witness, that he utterly and solemnly denied all attempt or intention, to commit the crime now alleged against him, and that he could, at a proper time and place, unravel the mystery of his appearance there; “Look at me, who am scarcely of middle age,” said he, “and at the Prior, who, though large, is past his prime, and say, whether, if I had attempted his life, his arm alone could have withstood me.”

“I say not, that I escaped by my own strength,” replied the Prior, “I wear a charm, which protects me against evil sprites, whether instigating human beings, or acting as shadows.”

“If so,” said Woodreeve, “why do you fear me, that you, but now, refused to grant me sanctuary, lest I should step forth from this place, and aim at your life. It cannot be credited; you have no such charm.”

“You are a deceiver,” said the Prior; “here is your falsehood proved,” and he drew forth the amulet, suspended by the chain, but, in an instant, withdrew it, perceiving whither fear and anger were leading him. On seeing again this memorial of his dead kinsman, Woodreeve was so much disturbed, that he had almost slipped off the place of sanctuary, as he reached towards it.

But, checking his steps, he cried out, “Wretch, whence had you that chain? Would it had been annexed to any real charm of defence, when my poor kinsman wore it in the forest of Ardenn! He would now, perchance, be alive to claim it.”

The brethren looked on Woodreeve, with surprize and displeasure, while no one, save the Prior, understood fully those words; and his countenance, nathless all his art and boldness, fell when he heard them. “Venerable brethren,” continued the merchant, “mark well that chain; for hereafter it may unfold a tale which ye guess not of.”

Upon this so pressing a call, they thronged round their superior, entreating, indeed, to see the amulet, but wishing chiefly to see the chain attached to it; and the Prior, who saw their motive beneath their pretence,

was aware, that he could not resist them, without giving irremediable strength to their suspicions.

As they looked on it, Woodreeve said, “You will observe, above what he calls a charm, three golden letters, being part of the chain itself, and also three jewels, the middle one of great value; the others are rubies.”

The monks then ventured to examine it further, and found it was as he said.

“In the clasp of that chain,” said the merchant, “is a painting, the likeness of a noble lady, my unfortunate kinsman’s wife; it was drawn by a Florentine, a famous illuminator.”

“We see nothing of that,” answered the brethren. “There is no such thing.”

While the Prior now exclaimed eagerly, “Mark his falsehood.”

But Woodreeve, addressing himself to the brethren, told them there was a secret spring; and, instructing them how to find it, said they would then behold a fair and unhappy lady. They did as he directed, when, a golden plate of that noble clasp flying up, they beheld, not the portrait of a lady, but that of a knight in armour, whose look was mild and full of thoughtful sadness. On seeing this, they cried, that he knew not the chain; for that it showed only the semblance of a knight. Hearing this, the merchant stretched forth his hand impatiently, and descended two steps of the sanctuary to examine the portrait, ere he well knew what he was doing. Then he entreated them, that they would allow him to see it; for, it was surely the likeness of his deceased friend; but they all assented to the Prior, that it must not be so entrusted.

At last, however, two of them yielded so far to his loud and earnest entreaties, that they held up to him the picture, beyond his reach, but where he could yet distinguish the features by the strong light of the tapers. On viewing that wellknown countenance, tears stood in his eyes, and his looks alone might have convinced many, he had indeed spoken the truth, touching that chain, though he his-self was amazed by the portrait, having never seen it before. The Prior failed not to make his advantage of this unexpected circumstance; but, while he was yet triumphing, the merchant bade the brethren press once more that golden plate, as he directed, when a lid on the reverse side opened, and behold! a lady’s

countenance, meek and fair, with lifted eyes, and like unto some blessed saint.

They all at once exclaimed, “it is here,” and passed the chain from one to another, some looking with wondrous dread, upon the prisoner, and some again on the Prior, who stood darkly watching, and they cried out, “How may this be!”

Then the Prior, with looks of derision, said, “Can ye ask that question, knowing as ye do, that the man before ye is about to be tried in the King’s Court for practice of unlawful magic? It avails not, that he has been prevented from touching that chain with his hand; he has exercised a stranger power upon it, than if he had touched it. Those paintings were not there before; the chain has long been mine, as most of ye know. I bought it, before I was of this house.”

“And thus it may well be,” said one of the monks, “for this is not so marvellous, as those delusions conjured up in the castle-hall.” And they blessed themselves and delivered up the chain to the Prior, who received it, with secret triumph.

“You now behold the charm which has preserved my life from the attempt of that ruffian,” said he, pointing to Woodreeve; “and will no more doubt, why his strength failed, when he assailed me.”

Too late, the prisoner then perceived, that, in compelling his enemy to produce this chain, he had brought out an argument against himself. The monks had not refused their assent to their Prior’s assertion; and, if there were any amongst them, who compared what he had asserted of the protecting virtues of this charm, against the malice of the poor merchant, with what he said of the magical influence of the man upon this very chain, even while it was in his own hands, they did not dare to point forth the contradiction. The Prior, still dreading lest the prisoner should throw himself into the hands of the King’s guard, as he had offered, now determined, in order to deter him from so doing, to make further use of his over-sight; and, holding up the chain, he called out, “When you shall have surrendered yourself up to justice, here is an evidence, that shall convict you of unlawful arts, if others fail. This picture, which you have conveyed hither by secret magic, shall be more than a living witness against you.”

The latter words of the Prior were resounded, it might be by an echo of the aisles: “more than a living witness against you.”

The brethren looked round, and Woodreeve listened. There were some among them, who fancied they heard a moaning from the ground underneath, between them and the north wall; others took it for the wind murmuring in the vaults near; but none of them spoke his thoughts. It might be the hollow blast, that sounds, at fits, before a tempest; for a storm came, soon after, which shook the walls. However this might be, Woodreeve shuddered often as he heard it; and, looking round him, recollections rushed suddenly on his mind, that filled it with dismay. He examined eagerly the spot he stood on, and found, that he had indeed taken sanctuary near the grave of his unfortunate kinsman, though no name now appeared on it.

On this discovery, the blood rushed back to his heart, and he was nigh to falling into the like convulsions he had suffered under, when first he saw the Baron de Blondeville, beside the King. On recovering, he knelt down on the grave, raising his hands and eyes, and so continued, for some time. Then, rising and turning to the Prior, who seemed little affected by any thing that had passed, he calmly said, that he was willing to deliver himself up to the King's officers, soon as they could be brought hither. To this the Prior answered he would send early on the morrow; but, as not even the King's officers might enter that place of sanctuary, to take him thence, he must come forth of himself, ere he could surrender to them. Woodreeve, fearing treachery on the way, liked not this; and so the Prior had foreseen, who for his own purposes, further said, that the officers should wait for him, at the outer gate of the Priory, that so all the world might bear witness the church had not betrayed him to the secular power.

"And, when the world shall bear witness, that my surrender is voluntary," said Woodreeve, in order to daunt the Prior from his purpose; "then will it judge me innocent by that act alone."

So resolute a reply convinced his enemy he had no time to lose in effecting whatever wrong he might intend to perpetrate, in pursuance of his wretched policy; and he now departed, meditating on the means of accomplishing it.

Leaving a guard of monks behind at the entrance of the chancel, he gave sign to Wischard, a brother, whom he had long favoured, to follow him to the great chamber. How to compass the death of the prisoner, in so short a space by any poison, that should not betray itself, and bring suspicion on

its inventor, he knew not. Sometimes, he thought it were better to give him his liberty to flee away; and so he would have done, could he have been certain the liberty would be so used; but he was rather certain, from what had lately passed, that this would be otherwise; that the prisoner would urge his offer of an escape, as evidence against him, on a charge of having been an accomplice in the murder; and that other things might come to light, which would be more easily proved than the guilt of the Baron alone.

With these doubts and fears upon his mind, he remained in the arched chamber, in close consultation with Wischard, till all in the Priory were at rest, save the poor merchant on his kinsman’s grave, and those monks who watched him there.

THE SIXTH DAY .

At the head of this chapter was an illuminated drawing of the inside of the White Hall, with the King’s court assembled. The King was in a chair, but without a cloth of estate over it; and near him was his high Justicier, who sat on the same platform, in his robes of office. On the steps, near the King’s chair, stood a youth, with an observing countenance, intended, no doubt, for Prince Edward; also at the footstool knelt a young man, with a spirited air, offering a chain to the King, who seemed to gaze on him, with amazement and terror. Throughout the hall appeared general consternation; many of the Bishops and Barons stood up, and leaned forward, as if to view what was passing near the King’s chair.

Early on the morrow, the Prior of Saint Mary’s was at the Castle, in close conference with the Baron de Blondeville, and awaiting a hearing of the King. And, when they had obtained this, having already settled their plot, they set forth, in their own way, so much of the adventure of the night before at the Priory, as they thought necessary to win the King’s consent, that the trial of the merchant should be had, on this very day. His Highness had designed to defer it awhile, both because the argument of the Archbishop had taken some hold of him, and because he thought it not for the honour of the Baron de Blondeville, that this matter should seem to be held of such importance as that, just at this time, it must be further inquired into.

But now, being sore pressed upon by those about him — and it was ever his weakness to be ruled by those nearest at hand rather than by fixed principles either of his own, or of those wiser in council than himself — being sore pressed by the false representations of the wily Prior, he yielded his consent, that the Jury already warned should be summoned to attend in Court, this day, the trial of the poor stranger for divers practices of magical delusion and of the black art, in the great hall. Should they fail to substantiate this head of charge, the Prior had another in the tale he had already told the King of the merchant’s pretended attempt upon his life, and his evil practices upon the golden chain.

As matter connected with this charge, he also told his Highness, that the merchant had escaped from the Castle to the Priory, where he then was and where he might be secured; for that he, trusting to his own arts, yet unable to elude the vigilance of the brethren placed there, had audaciously declared he would resign himself to the King's officers, and throw himself upon justice. The Prior failed not to point out, that there was a daring artfulness in this giving out, and to caution his Highness against the seeming consciousness of innocence, which it was meant to imply. And thus the King seeing, that each day brought forth some new danger, plotted, as it appeared, by the merchant, against the peace and even the lives of his quiet subjects, commanded, without further hesitation, that his trial should commence, on this very day; and his Highness determined to be present his-self in Court, the while.

The Court had indeed already met in the White Hall, and divers small causes had been tried there, the preceding day; many other remained to be settled, during this time of the King's keeping court, at Kenilworth; but it was resolved, that the charge against the merchant should be inquired into immediately on the meeting of the court, which was now beginning to assemble. Notice of this was speedily given there, and the jury and witnesses, being all nigh at hand, were easily brought together.

Meanwhile, a guard was despatched to the Priory gate, there to await the surrender of the merchant. Nor was it without extreme anxiety and fear, that he, on receiving their summons, stepped from the sanctuary, and passed along the passages and chambers to the outer gate, where he gave himself up to justice, and was soon after again a prisoner in the turret. A night of watchfulness and terror had ill prepared him for the approaching trial; but he endeavoured to support, with the consciousness of innocence and with a recollection of his just motives, the burden of calumny and danger now laid upon him, and to meet, with calmness, the malice of his enemies.

Nathless, so haggard and wan were his looks, when he came before the Court, and beheld his chief accuser, the Baron de Blondeville, that many there scrupled not to say he was guilty even before he was tried. And, as ignorance is always a child, so were there many nobles then in the hall, who, profiting nothing by their years, did hold that magic could be wrought by such as fully applied themselves unto it, and that it had been

practised in the banquet-hall by this poor stranger, or by those in league with him. And, as vanity never grows old, but changes its shape only with the stages of a man's life, so many an aged Baron, now sitting in the King's court, who, in his youth, had valued himself for a handsome person, gorgeously apparelled, and, in his maturer years, for the number of his vassals and the abundance of his castle-banquets — many such a Baron, now in his age, as freshly priding himself on sagacity, such as no arts could baffle, came hither, fortified against the evidence, to abide by his first opinion.

There sat in the White Hall, that day, many bishops and barons of the realm, such as usually composed the King's court, when he wore his crown and held the high festivals of the year. These seldom had been kept at Kenilworth, but, when his Highness was not at his palace at Westminster, either Winchester, or Windsor, Salisbury, Gloucester, York, or other great cities of the realm were the scenes of them. At such times, not only was justice administered to his subjects, but the great councils of the realm were held, and laws were made. Then also were honours dispensed; the King making some knights, others barons, as it so pleased him, and the opportunity required. There too, sometimes, were contracted, or solemnized, such marriages of his own family, or of his nobles, as he countenanced; and often was it said of King Henry, that he bestowed upon strangers, favourites in his court, the richest heiresses of his kingdom.

At these high festivals of the year, he was in trowth a sovereign, wearing his crown, sitting on his throne, and swaying all the princely power of his sceptre. Then he received homage of his tenants in chief, knights and other; levied fines, and with the help of his justicier, barons and prelates, managed his revenues. How far his Highness was governed by their council, when he was so hard upon the golden citizens of London, who, in his reign paid in fines for his favour, twenty thousand pounds, I know not. But, never did he practise such cruel means of extortion as did his father, King John.

At such times, too, were decided trials by combat; and among the gorgeous spectacles, then held forth, tilt and tournament surpassed.

But to come back again unto this festival of Kenilworth. The King sat not, this day, upon his throne in court, but upon a chair, beside his justicier, whom he wished to do his part there. He meant not his-self to speak

sentence upon the prisoner, as at Westminster he had done upon Peter de Rivallis, his treasurer, whom he sent from open court to the tower of London, by his own word of command. Amongst other of the King's chief officers, who this day kept state in court, were the Earl of Hereford, Lord Constable of England; the Earl of Norfolk, Lord Mareschal of England; Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the King's Seneschal; the High Chamberlain; the Chancellor, and the Treasurer. The Archbishop of York was not there; being, as the Baron de Blondeville and the Prior of Saint Mary's well knew, yet at Coventry; and, therefore, had they so hurried forward this business.

It was suspected, that the Baron and friend had taken special means, that the jury, chosen for this trial, might be such as were likely men to serve their views; and they feared not, that the King would now do as he had formerly done at Winchester. There, as is well known, the merchants of Brabant, having accused to his Highness some of his household of having robbed them, the thieves, on being brought to trial, were acquitted by the jury; who, though wealthy men, were proved to be in league with the offenders; on which, the King, without scruple, commanded them to prison; and caused another jury to be summoned, who found them guilty of that they had been charged with. But the Baron trusted enough in the King's kindness not to fear he would do the like now.

What passed in the merchant's mind, while now in court, waiting his trial, may not be told, within compass; save that he resolved, when opportunity should come, boldly to charge the Prior with possessing the golden chain, worn by his kinsman when he fell, and of having been an accomplice in that foul deed.

For, well he now remembered, where he had first seen his face and heard his voice. This was at a little hostel, where he and his companions had rested them awhile, a few hours before the robbery. There, in the settle, beside the blazing logs, sat that same Prior, drinking mead. He wore not then the garments of the church, which he should never have put on, but the livery of war; and the merchant had taken him for a common follower of some knight, so coarse and worn were the clothes beneath his hauberk. When they were departing, he asked which road they went, feigning to be

fearful, in those times, of passing alone through the forest: and, having learned their way, said his was different, and bade them well to Kenilworth, ere night should come on.

Afterwards, during the perpetration of the crime, the merchant, who discerned not his person, nor his features, through the disguise he had taken, soon as he spoke, recollected the voice; and, within a short time, he had recognized both voice and features in the same man; though the countenance was so changed and bloated, and the present voice so artificial, that this recollection had not come, but by accident. The present dress of the Prior, too, and his station had gone to retard this. But now, when tones and countenance had been partly recollected, and that golden chain was seen on the same individual, Woodreeve was not suffered to doubt, that the Prior of Saint Mary's was one of those, who had robbed him. Nor was that so wonderful in times, when lawless violence had almost overrun the whole land; and when the King, as has been seen, found it necessary to commit to prison twelve householders of Hampshire, for having leagued with thieves in his own household!

But to come back, once more, to what passed this day, in the Court. It were tedious to tell of all this — of the names of such as assisted in the judgment, or of the forms and ceremonies, observed during the trial; though these were curious to behold, and in themselves most grave and princely. Nevertheless, some things shall be related, which more nearly concerned the prisoner, and which struck many persons with marvellous dread. We vouch not for the truth of all here told; we only repeat what others have said and their selves credited; but in these days what is there of strange and wonderful, which does not pass as current as the coin of the land; and what will they not tell in hall, or chamber, seated by night over blazing logs, as if their greatest pleasure were to fear?

Some, who tell the story, say they were witnesses in court of what passed there, and that the marvels brought about, were through the arts of that same joculator, who came into the banquet-hall, before the visions there shown, and who, they scrupled not to say, was one of those magicians, from the East, who were well known to have raised strange delusions in many a hall here in England. But this man was not seen in court, that day, nor had he been seen, any where, either in the castle, or

town, since that memorable night of the festival, though strict search had been made for him.

The accusation against Woodreeve ran thus. It charged him with having raised up certain delusions, by means of unlawful arts of witchcraft, or of magic, to the end of persuading the King and his nobles, that the charge of a dreadful crime, imputed by the prisoner to the Baron de Blondeville, was true. And it farther alleged, that he had by witchcraft acted upon the person of the Baron, causing, at divers times, a suspicion of all his faculties, and, as it were, binding up his whole soul in a trance, so that he could neither speak, nor see, nor move. There were, it was affirmed, hundreds in the court, who had seen the marvellous pageant, which had appeared on the night of the great banquet, and not one could tell how it came thither, or by whom it was invented. They were many also, who had seen the Baron's condition, both in chapel and hall.

And it seemed plain enough, that all this was the work of evil sprite, in league with an artful man. Who this might be, whether the poor merchant, or that strange minstrel, that had entered the hall of festival, who was there, that might tell? Many and divers were the opinions and sayings upon this affair; but, though all thought the delusion supernatural, none held the merchant to be guilty of it. Nay, there were not wanting those, who willingly credited, that the Baron was guilty of all, which the vision seemed to accuse him of; yet none dared hint such thought, knowing the place he held in the King's favour. And, perchance, this very high favour, shown forth by the new title granted to him, did incline many, though the cause was unknown of themselves, to judge the worst of him.

Now, when all the proceedings were finished, the jury thought the same as the many, that, though there had been evil practices, there was nothing to show that the prisoner knew ought of them; and so they said by their verdict. But when all looked to him to remark his joy, they saw his countenance still anxious and fearful. The trowth is, he dreaded the Prior, more than any other enemy, and that he would pursue him far more artfully than the Baron had done.

The King was much disturbed at the verdict given, and the Baron would have been more so, had he not trusted to the further measures of his friend.

But now it was, that the poor merchant, finding himself detained and seeing the peril in wait for him, accused the Prior of Saint Mary's, of

having been one of the robbers, confederates of the Baron de Blondeville, affirming that he his-self had seen on his neck a chain, which had been taken from his murdered friend.

By the King and most present, this accusation was considered as the effort of desperate man; and it took away from him all pity, and turned their hearts against him. Others there were, who judged less hardly of him, and these suspected, that his brain was disordered by the fits he was subject to have at times, and would have had him withdrawn from the judge, and taken in hand by the physician.

But the Prior had already delivered in an accusation against him, not only of having practised magical arts, but of having forcibly attempted his life; and the court must do their duty. So, a new jury having been called, this second trial of Woodreeve began, at the especial petition of the Prior and by command of the King. The Baron remained in court, and some observed he seemed as earnest in the Prior's cause as he had been in his own.

This latter charge having been fully stated, the first witness examined was the prison-keeper of Cæsar's tower, and the jury scrupled not to hear his say, though he must condemn himself of want of vigilance, at least, if he did not accuse the prisoner of arts superior to human resistance. This man said, that he had secured the prison-chamber, at the usual hour, and that, during the night, all had remained so still, you might have heard a leaf stir, save, that, at the second watch-piping, the wayte had called out to him, that some one had entered the tower; when he, finding the strong door fastened, as he had left it, and not having before heard any noise, knew this could not have been, and so had told the wayte. On the morrow, going as usual to the prison-chamber, he found that door secure, as he had made it, but when he undid it — the merchant was no longer within! He could account for his disappearance by no mortal means; and so he ended his say.

Then the knights, on service at the great portal, were questioned, and their answers were partly to the same purpose. One of them, indeed, said he had heard a noise from the room over the dungeon, soon after the wayte had piped the third watch; but, on trying the door, he found it fast, and so thought no more of it. And now it cannot be doubted, that the knight, who was the secret friend of the Baron de Blondeville, had tampered with his

companions, or, in some way, had deceived them, since they could thus slightly treat that, which had caused a clarion to be sounded. But, they could truly say, as they did, that they had seen no one go forth of the gates, or move any where, save their own men. And, knowing that they had been too bountiful of wine to those of the portcullis chamber, they might dislike, and avoid to say anything, that would lead to a discovery of the condition of those drowsy guards.

These wardours of the portcullis room being questioned, touching the fastening of the tower-door, one of them took that matter upon himself; for, though none of them knew what had happened, yet did they, for their own credit, conceal their ignorance, save he, who said, that he thought one came in the night and gave him a blow; but he knew not how he got away, nor any thing more about his assailant! “You were slumbering on your post, Carle,” said his examiner; but this he stoutly denied, to the admiration of the poor prisoner, who knew the whole party had been in such deep sleep, that he had heard them snorting two chambers off. For this the Prior had his-self accounted, as before rehearsed; but he allowed not himself to smile.

Next were called the wayte and his groom; and the old man deposed he had seen some one pass through the upper court, as he was going the second round, so closely muffled up, he knew not who was, and the person had passed by so quickly, that, though he pursued his steps, yet could he never see him after. He thought he had gone to Cæsar’s tower; on giving an alarm there, he found he had mistaken, the keeper having declared he had seen no one enter. Afterwards, he had searched the upper court, and questioned those on guard there, but they had neither seen nor heard any thing. Still, not being satisfied that all was right, he had taken his station in the porch opposite to the great tower, and there watched out the night, save when he had piped his rounds; but he had not seen any one come forth of the tower, nor any persons but the guard, the whole night long. This testimony of the wayte the guard confirmed.

During these narratives of the witnesses, the Prior kept an unconcerned countenance, and none present suspected him of being that unknown person; while many thought the prisoner his-self was the man, on his way out of the castle, and that the wayte had mistaken the course he took.

When the sentinels of the ramparts and posterns were questioned, all were found to agree, that no living thing had been seen, or heard, from wall or battlement, to pass forth of the Castle, during that night. Then were most of the persons present confirmed in their suspicion, that the merchant possessed some secret art, by which he had conveyed himself from the Castle into the Priory. It signified not to their apprehension, that such art, if he had possessed it, might have conveyed him clean away from his enemies; they troubled not themselves to think so far; or, perchance, they guessed there were certain limits and boundaries to the power of magic. But, whether the limit here drawn is consistent with the end designed, who was there, that could judge?

After these witnesses, the Prior his-self came forward and repeated his own tale, at length, such as he had already related it to the King. And he brought several of his monks and others of the convent, as evidence, that the prisoner had, in the midst of the night, fled from the great chamber of the Priory to the church, and there sought refuge at the sanctuary, as if he dreaded punishment for some crime. They dwelt on the disorder and emotion he had betrayed, the seeming consciousness of guilt, and the boldness and desperation, with which he had accused the Prior of having unlawfully possessed himself of the golden chain, which he, this day in Court, had made the subject of accusation against him. This chain, they said, pertained to an amulet, which had preserved their Prior’s life from the dagger of the assassin; on which chain the prisoner had, though standing apart at the sanctuary, so wrought, it being then in the hands of certain brethren of the house, as to cause a painting to appear, that was not there before.

While this tale was telling, the Archbishop of York, who was just returned from his visit to the Bishop of Coventry, then lying in grievous sickness, had entered the Court, and taken his proper place. He it was, who inquired, whether this golden chain were at hand; on which the high justicier ordered it should be produced. Then, the Prior, who pretended a wish to show it, drew it forth from his neck, and, it was carried to the King, who examined it, looking long on the painting of that fair dame, the widow of the unfortunate knight. Close within the rim of that picture was drawn a little face, like unto a cherub looking up, in peace, to the Lady, who seemed to smile upon him, in tender affection. The Archbishop, when

he perused the picture, was wonderly struck both with the resemblance to the shadow he had seen in the hall, and with that of the fair dame, which had been there presented in the pageant.

The King, looking again upon the picture, acknowledged the likeness, and then summoning the Baron to his side, showed him the portrait, and put the chain into his hands; who, having received it on his knee, rose up, and withdrew to a window, the better to examine it. Thither followed him the eyes of the Archbishop and the Prior, but each with different interest and motive for watchfulness. My Lord of York observed the chain to tremble in its holder's hand, and believed, that Woodreeve had spoken the truth.

The Prior saw, that the countenance of his associate was altered, and hoped that he would be resolute, during the whole trial; each was contented, in his own way, and awaited calmly what might follow. But, when the Baron had gazed awhile, he became agitated. He seemed to shrink, and, averting his face from the object he contemplated, he held it nearly at arm's length. Then, he looked again, drawing the portrait nearer to his sight, and then, again withdrew it, while a livid paleness overspread his countenance, and he seemed hardly able to support himself.

Then, as if regaining all his courage, he left the window; but, instead of returning the portrait to the King, he was conveying it to the Prior, when my Lord Archbishop cried out, "My Lord, his Highness, hath not yet done with that chain; give it into the hands, from which you received it."

The Baron stopped; he seemed to be angered, and, half turning with a haughty mien and frowning look, he answered, "I obey no command but the King's."

On this the King, graciously smiling, said, "I desire it of you."

The Baron, immediately advancing to the state chair, dropped his knee, and presented the chain; on receiving which and looking again upon the picture, his Highness spoke with surprise to the Baron, who bowed, with a disclaiming gesture, and said a few words, which none nigh could hear; while Prince Edward, who stood on the steps, below the King's chair, viewed him with a suspicious eye; for, young as he was, he had observed that in him, which he liked not. And now he saw with wonder, the

earnestness, with which his father looked upon the picture; for he knew not, that it showed the likeness of the knight, who had appeared in the banquet-hall.

Unknowingly, the Baron had touched the spring, which disclosed this portrait, and had shut up that of the unhappy widow. Prince Edward looked again on the Baron, thinking he had wrought some change in the picture, leading to mischief and designed against the prisoner, to whose cause his heart secretly inclined him. From all that he had seen before, and on this day, he judged him to be innocent of evil intention; and he had not failed to tell the King, his father, privately all his thoughts.

But his Highness, whose understanding was often baffled by his humours and by the arts of cunning men, thought not with his son in this matter; and, he moreover, suspected this change in the painting to be wrought by the merchant, or his agents, as the Prior had before affirmed; or by some new art of magic. Still his sight dwelt on that portrait, whose look of quiet sadness so much remembered him of that, which the knight in the pageant had shown, when departing from his family and his native shore. After long perusing the portrait, the King lifted his eyes from it and beheld! once more before him, the form of that very knight, such as had appeared on the steps of the dais.

It was in truth the very image of this shadowed forth here in miniature; the same armour, worn in the same way, with vizor up, and the eyes showing that same solemn and resigned look, save that they were now fixed, somewhat sternly on the King. It seemed as if his Highness only perceived this person, while he sat motionless, and, for some moments, silent.

Then he rose hastily, and commanded, that the stranger should be secured! Vain command. Those, who heard it, perceived not for whom it was designed; but looked upon each other with wonder and amazement: and many there were near him, who feared his Highness was stricken with sudden distemper. Whether the Archbishop saw aught, or only suspected the cause is not known; but he was observed to make that holy gesture, which formerly he had used in the greater hall. The King, with some anger, repeated his command! but he whom he would have seized, no more appeared.

For awhile, his Highness seemed struck with dismay; he sat and covered his eyes with his hand, reclining him in his chair, Then, imputing this appearance to the same art as the former, dread gave way to indignation against the prisoner; and he resolved to have immediate justice done; not only in punishment of past offences, but to put an end to those deceits and mischiefs, from which it seemed, that even his-self was not secured. Sometimes, too, he doubted whether this man might not be an agent of his bitter enemy, Lewellyn of Wales; by whose evil arts he had, as he deemed, been formerly robbed of that precious ring, which was to render him invincible in war. If this were so, the prisoner added to the guilt of being a spy and a traitor, that of feigned agitations and sorrow, touching a deed never committed.

Order being given that the trial should immediately proceed, the Baron de Blondeville, who, while this image had remained before the King, was busied in another part of the hall, and thus escaped its influence, advanced to the chair, and received again the chain, with intent to deliver it to the Prior. Now, that which follows, was reported of many present in the court, with what truth I know not; but it is here faithfully related.

No sooner had the Baron received into his hand that golden chain, than the eyes of all near were fixed upon his robe. It was the same he wore on the night of the banquet, and on which, when passing from the King’s chamber, through the brown gallery with the Prior, and meeting there the marvellous stranger, three drops of blood had fallen. These had been partly erased, but they were now not unnoticed, though none knew whence they came.

No sooner had he received this chain of the deceased knight, then each little drop began to spread, till that side of his garment became covered, as it were, with crimson, seeming to maintain the notion, that is gone forth, that after some prolonged presence of the murderer, the blood of the deceased will become fresh again, wherever it may be found, as if newly shed.

The King, ‘tis said, beheld this in silence, not knowing what it might mean, though guessing it to be some new device of sorcery. The Prior remained in his place, with downward look; while the prisoner, in his, lifted up his hands to Heaven.

My Lord Archbishop rose and turned himself to his Highness as though he would address him; but he did not. Prince Edward's looks were bent steadily upon the Baron, as were also most of those, that composed the King's court, but no one spoke, each awaiting for what another might first say. There was a general confusion and amazement in the hall.

The Baron his-self stood looking down upon his garment, with the chain trembling in his hand. How long he might have continued standing there none knew, had not the King's voice recalled him from his trance, and bade him deliver the chain to the secretary at the table, there to remain, till the trial should conclude. He obeyed with looks, that seemed to say this command foretold some diminution of favour; and, after his having delivered it, behold a new marvel; for that great crimson stain began to separate into three parts, and then to lessen and fade away, till it wholly disappeared, leaving his robe bright and rich as before.

Then there was a general tumult and outcry in the court, of, "justice, justice! the prisoner hath spoken the truth! The chain of the deceased hath borne witness against the Baron, the Baron de Blondeville."

At these words, the Baron seemed to recover all his spirit; he threw a glance of indignation round the court, and then, walking firmly up to the King, did homage, and remained on his knee, ready to plead for protection, when the tumult should subside. Again my Lord, the Archbishop, turned towards his Highness, calmly awaiting the return of silence. The Prior also stood up, and was haranguing, with vehement gesticulation, though no one could hear a single word he uttered. But the poor merchant, having seen this second marvellous sign in his favour, testified no presumptuous joy; he had sunk down, overcome with humble gratitude, unable either to speak, or to shed a tear.

In vain the King raised his arm on high, and his chief justicier stood up, with stern countenance, to restore order; each individual spectator followed the promptings of his own thoughts, and uttered them without scruple, though scarcely any one could be heard. And thus it went, for some time, till divers of the crowd, without the hall, hearing that something extraordinary was passing within, pressed forward to the court, so that those sitting there became afraid for their lives, and the King's guards were called upon to do their duty, which they at last performed, with no small difficulty.

At this so flagrant a breach of good ‘haviour in the King’s court and in his very presence, his Highness was much moved, and he willingly attributed it to the malignant passions of pride and jealousy directed against the Baron de Blondeville, who was doubly obnoxious, as being a stranger by birth and exalted by favour. So his Highness became more warmly attached to his cause than before, and more resolute to protect him against the united force of his enemies. Silence being at last restored, his Highness bade the Baron de Blondeville “Rise, and fear not; for justice shall overtake the guilty.” The Archbishop liked not the King’s frown, as he spoke these words, and he sat down disdainfully, without uttering what was in his mind.

Not so the Prior of Saint Mary’s, who had been impatiently watching for the moment, when he might be heard, and who now boldly cried out, “My Lord Archbishop, will you now credit the truth that is before you? Will you now deny the power of sorcery? Here, in the very court, this false accuser has unwarily betrayed his guilt; here, in the face of justice, exercising his art, with a view to deprive the Baron de Blondeville both of honour and of life, he has made evident the truth of my accusation against himself. You yourself, have now witnessed, that a spell is in that chain, which his presence has put in movement, and you can no longer question what I have related of yesternight, or of his motive for exercising his infamous art. He has caused these paintings to appear in the chain, that he may claim it for his deceased kinsman’s, who, he pretends, was murdered, that by this circumstance he may prove the extravagant and ridiculous charge he has fabricated against me. By the same arts of sorcery, exercised upon the Baron’s robe, he would confirm the other slander he has uttered — that against the Baron de Blondeville; and, by connecting this second marvel with the first, he would fain make it appear, that the Baron and myself were confederated in the same crime. But, in so doing, he has proved nothing but the force of his spells and of his malice, and has turned them unwittingly against himself alone, since his Highness cannot be deceived. My Lord Archbishop, will you now deny the power of sorcery?”

When he had ceased, the Archbishop rose with calm and dignified countenance, as of one, who holds the balance in his own hands; and, without deigning to notice the Prior, he called upon the justicier to put an end to this irregular proceeding, and to make the trial go on. It was only in

submission to the King, that this disorderly interruption had been permitted by the High Justicier, his Highness having given him a sign, that the Prior should be heard; but now he willingly resumed his duty. However, the words of the Prior had not been in vain; for, they took effect upon the minds of many in the court, to the prejudice of the poor merchant, and to confirmation of both charges against him, that of sorcery, and that of attempted assassination. And thus it seemed, that the very marvel, which at first made against the Baron, being now warped and twisted by the so crafty Prior, was likely to end in the prisoner's ruin.

Then, the merchant his-self was examined; but the truth which he told, of the Prior having come to him and offered him liberty, appeared less plausible than his accuser's falsehood. That he should have hesitated to accept the freedom thus offered, few could credit; yet the testimony of the wayte, seemed to support Woodreeve's story, which, had he been suffered to proceed, would have been further proved by his account of the many secret ways, through which he was conducted, and which were so little known, that by hardly any other means than those of experience, could he have been made acquainted with them. But, when he began to tell of that door in the Constable's great chamber, which led into those passages of the walls and so, by covert windings, down into the portcullis room, and to those hidden vaults below, he was suddenly checked in his story. Those, who willed not, that these secrets, and, partly, safeguards of the castle, should be made public, denied that there were such; and, feigning to be weary of so long-winding a tale, they brought it to a speedy conclusion, by commanding the prisoner to be less tedious and to account for his appearance in the Prior's chamber, which surely was not in the castle, but in the Priory. Now, how could he fully do so, but by tracing out all his steps thither? And this he was forbidden to do; and he could not but see, that he should be resolutely contradicted by those, who, if they had no concert with his enemies, fancied they were required by duty to tell a falsehood — as if any duty to man could require that! Being then, forbidden to take this course, he only related, that, having followed the Prior into a subterraneous way under the castle-ditch, hoping it would lead him to the forest, his life had been threatened by the Prior, on his discovering and claiming that very golden chain, which had been shown this day in court. He further told, that, having escaped from the uplifted

dagger, he had fled along that avenue, which brought him to the Prior’s chamber, whence he had again been compelled to fly from pursuit, which had scarcely permitted him even the rights of sanctuary.

While the prisoner was telling this part of his story, the most profound silence reigned throughout that hall, where lately not one voice could be heard from another; nay, hardly the trumpet of the King’s guard, amidst the stormy multitude. Many, while they listened, found themselves inclining to the merchant’s cause; and some would entirely believe, that he had spoken only the truth.

Amongst the latter, were the young Prince Edward and the venerable Archbishop — ingenuous youth and discerning age. Always, indeed, had the conscientious sagacity of the Archbishop inclined him to Woodreeve’s cause; and what he had heard formerly and lately at Coventry, respecting the Prior, confirmed his opinion. He knew also enough of the ways, employed by some in those times to procure riches, to be incredulous of the strange history of this Prior, whose unaccountable wealth had procured for him his present rank from the Pope’s legate.

Others present there were, who, though but too well acquainted with the lawless and desperate manners of those days, yet refused to acknowledge, that a man of the Prior’s office and rank could be guilty of the crime. Amongst those, who inclined to the prisoner, were some of the jury; when now there came into court, one Aaron, a Jew of Lincoln. He came in not by accident; but, as some shrewdly guessed, was sent by those, who, knowing the man, and his way of trade, designed to make him an instrument on this occasion.

The business, that first brought him to Kenilworth, was to pay the Queen that usual surplus of a King’s fine, called “Aurum Reginæ.” This man had been heavily fined; and, as it is said, for having falsified a charter. However this might be, he had now to pay, to the Queen alone, about six hundred marks; in present payment for which sum, her Highness took of him a transfer of a deed, by which this Jew held in pawn of John Vavasour, the manor of Hazlewood, which that ancient family had held of the de Percies, even in the Conqueror’s reign. The deed, thus rescued by the Queen from the Jew, who had withheld it, that he might extort for it an exorbitant sum, was by her returned to the same John, on his paying to her the rehersed sum of six hundred marks. But this circumstance is here

related only, that it may appear what sort of person this Jew was, on whose word might probably depend the life of an innocent man. Now, this Aaron, when he came into the hall, and was produced as a witness, desired to see that same golden chain, worn of the Prior and sworn to of the merchant, as having been about the neck of his deceased kinsman, at the time of the murder.

On this, the Prior, looking hardly at the Jew, feigned to remember him, saying, as he delivered up the chain, “You should know it well; for, if I err not, it was of you that I purchased it. I was then returning from a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Hugh, at Lincoln.”

“You are right,” quoth the Jew; “this chain, I remember me, I sold to you for fifty marks of gold, some five or six years back. You were not then Prior of Saint Mary’s, but a brother of Coventry.”

“Behold!” said the Prior, “one who can bear testimony against the false story of the prisoner. Let an oath be administered unto him.”

“He is a Jew!” cried out a voice; “his oath may not be taken.”

“The *law* is against it,” said another; “but who may prevent his word being credited?”

The Prior then demanded of him whether he remembered any paintings concealed in the chain? and the Jew replied, that there were no paintings, when he sold it to him; but to the chain itself he could swear, if he were permitted to do so. He had bought it of a goldsmith of London, then living in Chepe; it was of fine gold, and of the best workmanship; for that citizen of London had in his workshop one Giocondi, a Florentine, who was famous for such things; and by him was it made. With those fine paintings, he should have valued the whole at not less than one hundred marks.

Here again was a contention, whether the oath of a Jew could be received; some saying the law was against it; others, that, when King John’s reign ended, that law had ceased. And thus it went, for some time, till the King, rising from his chair, commanded that an oath should be administered, and this was done, after the Archbishop had obtained of the court, that the oath to be taken of the Jew should not be such as we swear. Then the Archbishop, turning towards the Prior, demanded of what house in Coventry he had been a brother, and at what time he had purchased the chain.

“At the time of my pilgrimage to Saint Hugh, of Lincoln,” answered the Prior; “then I purchased that chain of Aaron.”

“Of what house where you a brother?” repeated the Archbishop sternly.

“Of Saint Nicholas.”

“Of what order.”— “Of the benedictine.”

“I know not of any house at Coventry, that is both of that name and order,” observed the Archbishop.

“I said not I was of Coventry,” replied the Prior.

“Your *friend* has said so,” urged the Archbishop, “and till now, you have not contradicted him.”

“The Jew is mistaken,” said the Prior; “I know not that he is my friend; if he were so, in trowth, he would have been better acquainted with my former abode.”

“Answer, without further evasion,” said Archbishop, “and tell to what town and brotherhood you belonged at the time of your pilgrimage.”

“I was then of the Priory of Saint Nicholas, in Exeter.”

“Your’s was a long pilgrimage,” said Archbishop, fixing his eyes attentively upon the Prior.

My Lord Bishop said not more, but listened constantly to the further evidence of this Aaron, which went hard against the merchant, touching the matter of the chain, and when one, who pleaded for the Prior, drew up each particular of the prisoner’s tale, such as he had his-self related it, many improbable circumstances appeared on the face of it. To those unacquainted with his enemies’ true history and character, there seemed to be little motive for his attempt to lead away Woodreeve from his prison, to give him liberty, if that were in trowth the end he had in view, when he was said to have conducted him from the tower; and, if that were not his end, and he had designed to prevent any discovery of his own former guilt, by the assassination of the merchant, why, said they, did he pass over the opportunity, afforded by that avenue described by the prisoner himself, as so secret and remote. To these persons there appeared neither cause sufficient to have urged the Prior to draw forth a poniard with intent to kill, nor, having done so, any motive to restrain his hand, in a place so convenient to his purpose.

For Woodreeve, when he related that the Prior appeared horror-struck at the moment of aiming the dagger, had not explained the cause of this, nor

did he his-self know it, though by it his life had been saved. Neither, if he had known and related it, would they, in all likelihood, have heeded him; but it was afterwards supposed, that the Prior, at that dangerous moment, had been awed by the appearance of the deceased knight.

These considerations, together with the evidence of the Jew, at last determined the jury against the poor merchant, who was adjudged guilty of having attempted the life of the Prior and of having practised arts of sorcery, which, it was supposed, had been made visible this day, in open court.

On this verdict, many made known their satisfaction, and approached the Baron de Blondeville, and the Prior, with joyful words. But there was not one to shed a tear with the prisoner, or who dared to show him any sign of sympathy.

My Lord Archbishop seemed much disposed to do so; for, his countenance expressed grave displeasure, when all was joy around him. Even the smiles of the King could not move him to any show of accordance. It became plain he thought the condemned person innocent; and, perhaps, he suspected, that the witnesses and even the jury had been unduly practised with; but of this he spoke nothing. Prince Edward, too, seemed not well pleased with this transaction; for, his eyes were sometimes sternly fixed on the Prior, and even on the Baron himself, whose heart was now at ease, who stood on the steps of the King’s chair, cap in hand, discoursed to by his Highness.

But there was one present in the court, though unseen, whose joy did equal his. This was the Lady-baroness, his fair bride, who, from a gallery on high, concealed from view by a lattice-work, had anxiously watched all, which passed in court, and now, that the honour of her lord was rescued from what she had been taught to think was but the malice of a secret enemy, she had nearly sunk under the tumult of the contrary feelings of joy for one, and pity for the unhappy instrument of the other.

Woodreeve, weighed down with grief and despair, was led back to his prison through a curious and busy crowd, too many of them willing to see him suffer death without delay, eager for some new spectacle. But his sentence was postponed, during the King’s pleasure, who, well contented with the verdict, meant not that the dreadful infliction should take place, till after his own departure from Kenilworth; and thus the court broke up;

Woodreeve to his prison-tower, there to await his fate; the Prior to his home, secretly to exult in the success of his wicked wiles, and to plot new ones; the Archbishop to his chamber, there to meditate alone; the Baron, to rejoice with the unsuspecting Lady Barbara; the King to refresh himself, and the whole Court to talk over what had passed; and to prepare them for the diversions and merriment appointed for the approaching evening, unsuitable as they were, at this time.

The merchant, when he had once more taken possession of his solitary turret, desired means wherewith to send a letter to his wife — for he could write — that she, now at distance, and in daily expectation of his return, might be somewhat prepared for his fate. But, even this poor request was denied him, under pretence, that it was feared he might work, with unlawful characters in the black art, further evil against those he had accused, or those, who had the custody of him.

While the trial had been proceeding in the White Hall, the Queen, with many noble ladies attending, went into the Hall of Banquet, to view the shields of the knights, candidates for prizes in a tournament, which had been appointed for the morrow; and there a strange accident happened. The shields were hung in array, round this gorgeous hall, and the banner of each knight waved over his shield. An officer of arms attended, who called aloud to whom each shield belonged, with the name and full titles of the owner; that, if any lady had cause of complaint, against any knight-candidate, she might touch his shield; and, without aid of words, this action was sufficient to cause that shield to be taken from its place; that, if, on inquiry, there were reason to suppose him guilty of any ‘haviour derogatory to the honour of chivalry, his name might be erased from amongst those of the candidates, and himself adjudged unworthy to break a lance on the field.

There was now in the hall a great display of shields; for, besides the many nobles and knights of the realm of England, who had entered their names for the lists, there were knights, drawn hither from all quarters; some from France, some from Scotland, and some from Germany. Amidst this show of shields, which had been here for some days, and which had not been disturbed by the late trial, three spaces on the walls betrayed, that three knights had been already accused. To many, who looked upon these vacancies, the blanks there seemed to plead for those whose shields had

been condemned; when, perhaps, their enemies could not have proved aught against them, had they been accused in any other manner. The Baron de Blondeville's was not one of these proscribed shields.

Now, it happened, during this visit of very many ladies, that one amongst them went from shield to shield, examining the bearings in each, without awaiting the due progress of the herald, in his course of explanation, around the walls. Looking deliberately at every shield, she stood still before several, and seemed to meditate. Meanwhile, the singularity of her conduct and appearance drew the attention of many persons. She was not habited in the fashion of the court, or in any dress of ceremony, but wore a mourning robe and a veil, that flowed to her feet, but this had been lifted, while she was examining the shields, and even now partly betrayed her face. She was not of the court, nor was she known of any of those, who gave attention to her; yet had she an air of distinction and of graceful ease, with, as some thought a foreign aspect; and each, who knew her not, supposed she was known of some other, and had good right be there; perhaps, the sister of one of the foreign knights.

Her beauty was faded, yet seemed she young, and she had a look of sorrow and of wildness, too, that touched the hearts of many, that beheld her. By her own thoughts she was so much enwrapt, that she observed not how much she was noticed, though indeed little was said, her Highness the Queen being present.

When the herald came to the shield of the Baron de Blondeville, which was blazoned high, with all his new honours, he called forth loudly his name and titles. Then, on a sudden, this lady seemed to know where she was and what she came there for. With grave air, yet confident, walking up the hall, she stayed her steps before his shield, and examined it deliberately, the herald somewhat lingering the while. Having so stood, some little space, she bent her head, and, covering her eyes with her veil, she seemed to weep.

Then, lifting up her veil she stepped towards the shield, and touched it, looking at the herald, as she did so; but she spoke not one word. And this was sufficient, as the custom went. Immediately, the officer at arms advanced, to take down the shield from the wall, which he did not without some difficulty.

The Queen, seeing what was done, and that it was the Baron de Blondeville's shield, that was displaced, inquired who was the lady, that had caused its disgrace. But no one could tell, and she had already left the hall, well contented with what had been done. Then her Highness, blaming the herald for his speed, commanded, that the steps of this fair accuser should followed, and her name and rank declared, that it might appear now whether her act were worthy to take so much effect, and, afterwards whether she had just cause of grief and complaint. And, until these things, or some of them, should be known, she bade the herald replace the shield on the wall.

So the Lord-Marshall of England, who was attending upon her Highness, was then compelled to speak; and he said, with submission, that might not be done; the laws of chivalry forbidding, unless by especial command of the King. So her Highness let that pass, well knowing, that the King would order the shield to be replaced, except insurmountable cause should appear against it. And then, having viewed the remaining shields, she, with all that company of noble ladies, withdrew.

But this accident caused much marvelling in the court, many thinking it was occasioned by some new offence of the Baron, and that a great deal yet remained to be told against him; others, that the unknown lady was the widow of the Knight, who, it was said, had been slain by him; and that she had not gone away, so far, or so fast, but that her name might be easily learned by the heralds, if they were more fully ordered to discover it. Others, who held the Baron innocent, said this was only some new device of his enemies; and that, if any such female had really appeared in the hall, she had doubtless got out of the reach of discovery, into some sufficient, though near concealment.

The King, soon as he heard the report of this adventure, commanded, that strict search should be made for the lady-accuser and that, meanwhile, the Baron's shield should be restored to its place, unstained by suspicion; there to remain until the morrow's tournament, or until surer cause should appear for removing it.

This night, his Highness kept state, not in the hall, but in the great chamber; my Lord, the Archbishop, being ever at his right hand, whose gravity seemed not to yield, for one moment, to all the mirth around him. In trowth, he was not a man to be capable of festive enjoyment, when a

fellowcreature had been recently condemned to wretchedness, had he even thought him guilty; but he thought not so. On all that passed, he looked with equal eye, and said little, answering only when his Highness spoke to him. Some thought he looked with displeasure on that extravagant pomp, which was here displayed in every thing, at a time, when the King had little in his coffers, and knew not well how to fill them.

With this King Henry it was ever so, on the score of money; good as he was, on many other points, he ever lived for the present hour, and suffered the next to shift for itself. His brother, my Lord of Cornwall, did otherwise; he took good care to gather up some of what he saw so bountifully scattered; and to keep it safe for his own purposes in time to come. He had both cooler heart and head than King Henry; who spared neither trouble nor money, to advance him to the height, which he had obtained for him, and had caused him to be chosen King of the Romans, although he had once nearly raised a rebellion, with no better motive than that he wished to possess the manor of Berkhamstead; and so no more of such matters. Only those, who attributed the Archbishop's more than wonted gravity, to the wasteful magnificence, which was then displaying itself before him, did not reach the whole course of his so thoughtful mood.

It was, above all, the weakness of the King, which subjected him to the sway of designing men, and to be drawn aside from the administration of justice, that alarmed and grieved the Archbishop. And, this day, he thought he had beheld in him a striking instance of blindness to the cause of the oppressed. He knew, better than any one, the efforts he had made to warn the King against the Prior of St. Mary's; and to persuade him, it was quite as possible the Baron de Blondeville should be guilty of one crime, as the prisoner of another; so that his Highness should listen, without prejudice, to what appeared on either side; but he could not so persuade.

Now, before the Archbishop had left Kenilworth for Coventry, the King had been so far influenced by his advice, that he had promised to postpone the intended trial of the merchant, till some further light should be thrown upon so extraordinary an accusation, and one made with astonishing hardihood; and it was chiefly to obtain this information from the Bishop of Coventry, that his good brother went so hastily thither; but it was of a bootless hope. The Bishop and the Prior there knew little of the character,

or the former history of the Prior of Kenilworth; what they could communicate, confirmed the former suspicions of the Archbishop.

This day, when the trial was ended, he despatched a messenger to the Prior of Saint Nicholas, in Exeter, to learn whether he knew aught of the Prior of Saint Mary's; and whether the Prior had spoken the truth, when he said, that he had been a brother of the Benedictine Priory, of that name, in that city. Yet the great distance to be travelled through difficult roads, made it doubted whether his messenger would return, during any delay, which he might have sufficient influence to obtain of the King, in counteraction to that of the Baron de Blondeville and the Prior; who, for their own supposed security, might be urging, unceasingly, for speedy sentence upon their accuser.

If the Archbishop, on this night, looked sad in this courtly chamber, so did not the Baron de Blondeville. He had now regained all the gaiety of his nation and age; and danced a measure to the joyance of all present; the Queen and her ladies declaring their admiration to the Baroness. Then, was there solemn dancing of many lords and noble dames; the King's five harpers playing the while.

Prince Edward, with the Baroness de Blondeville, performed a bass-dance, to the noise of the harps only. And then, finding himself oppressed with his mantle, which was of velvet, thickly embroidered, and besides heavily guarded with gold lace, he impatiently threw it off, and danced a round right merrily in his jacket, to the sound of the recorders, and to the great diversion of the King and Queen. Which dance being ended, the Prince brought his fair partner in his hand, up to the Queen, who said many gracious things to her; and, certes, for either high or solemn dancing, there was none that excelled her.

After the dancing, Richard, the King's minstrel, sang to the harp one of Maister Henry's best ballads, which were so bright and cheering, raising up the spirits and the laughter of all present; and this, if it flowed not from the famous Helicon, certes, it might be supposed to have come thence, and all held that it well deserved the butt of sack, which his Highness had lately bestowed upon him.

There was not any banqueting, or late wassailling, this night in the hall; for, on the morrow was to be the great tournament, and the most sumptuous feasting yet given; and every one was willing to prepare for it

by taking an early rest. And thus, after Ypocras, and wafers had been served, with the usual state, the King and Queen avoided the Great Chamber, for that night, followed by a goodly train of estates and gentils. Each departed to his own bower; some to think on what had passed this day; others to forget that such a day had been; and others again, to watch for that, which was to come; since joy, or the hope of it, often makes the young as wakeful, as habitual care doth the aged; and many there were, whom delightsome expectation of the finery and pomp they should display, or behold, tomorrow, kept sleepless, till the wayte had piped the third watch and longer, Knights and esquires, lovers and ladies, country folk, serving-men and waiting-women, many a one; and all impatiently looked for the coming hour; but specially the young knights thought how they should triumph, in all the pride of prowess, before their courted fair ones; and doubted not, that the happiness of their whole lives depended upon the coming day.

And thus the prompt feelings of youth gave shape and colour and consequence to small circumstances, wrought into visions of their own imagination; all vivid and expansive now, but which would be dim and cold and contracted, as their sun should decline. But woe to him, who would have taught them to detect these bright illusions, which belong to youth, as do the golden lights and songs of joy to morning! Woe to him, who would have set before their eyes the severe form of experience, and have reduced the gaieties of their boundless hope to the many checquered scene of real existence! All in its season, comes the noontide ray, and melts the beauteous visions of the morning; all in its season, comes the evening ray, when lengthened shadows fall on the long landscape — when the purple cloud loses its golden edge, and the world below sinks into shade, which leads again to the bright tints of dawn — to the brighter, oh! how much brighter tints of a cloudless and limitless dawn! Are we, who would derange this order, and cast the hue of twilight before the morning or the noontide sun, better sighted than the Wisdom and the Beneficence which have ordained it otherwise? We may watch and regulate — to do this is our duty; and let us neither omit it by careless and total indulgence, nor spare our vigilance by total proscription; — gradually we may prepare the mind for the great truths, that time will cast over the thousand hues of hope and joyance; and gradually a sense of the vanity and nothingness of

this fleeting part of an eternal existence, instead of being a melancholy, will be a complacent perception, more than reconciling us to the shortness of its imperfect joys and deeply consoling us for its sorrows.

THE SEVENTH DAY .

Here was a drawing of a field of tournament, bordering on the lake, beyond which appeared the towers and lake of Kenilworth. A procession of knights, before a lady, drawn in a stately car, was moving round the field, trumpeters on horseback going before them, and dancing figures following. On the opposite side of the lawn, other knights appeared at a barrier, on whom seemed directed the chief attention of the company in the numerous tents and galleries around; who stood up, and leaned over one another, in their eagerness to view what was passing, or approaching.

Below, on the margin, stood a King crowned, in his robes, designed for King Henry; for it bore resemblance to his image in brass, placed on his monument in the Abbey of Saint Peter, called the West Minster.

But, before rehersing the events of this day, let us not forget the night, which the merchant passed in his prison. There, when all noise in the castle had ceased, and sleep, as he thought, rested on every eye save his own, it was said he heard, at first, sounds of the most mournful warning, and, afterwards, others so sweet passed by his turret, as seemed to remember him, that not for any crime was he condemned, but for the grief and generous indignation, which had urged him to point out the murderer of his friend and kinsman. It seemed as if the image of that friend stood before him, not wounded, and with face of wretchedness, such as of late his memory had been haunted with, but with a look of heavenly peace and kindness. Woodreeve knew this image was only in his fancy; yet, as the sounds went by, it seemed to stand more clearly there, and to smile on him with so benign a feeling, as imparted hope and comfort to his heart. He wept, but not in suffering sorrow; his tears were now such as hush the mind in deepest stillness, and strengthen and refresh it, like as the dew of heaven the withered herb.

The day of this great tournay, to which the King had invited lords and gentils far and wide, was now come; and all was bustle and expectation in the castle and country round. It was a pleasant day to behold, and most fresh and sweet was the forest-air to those, who came prancing through it,

and delightsome were those shades of green and red and orange-tawney, that over canopied the way, and seemed in stately mournfulness to bid farewell to summer. The redbreast, piping his lonely song amongst the leaves, seemed to have stolen their livery, and hardly could he be distinguished from the beechen bough, on which he sat. Thus stood the beech, the elm and chesnut, the slender ash, and lordly plane. Not so, with mark of past prime, stood the oak; warrior of winter — he yet stretched forth his mighty limbs, clad in strong verdure, to defy frost and storm, and, when he should doff it, to brave, in his crimson surcoat, even old Yule, when, with shrill whistle on the sharp north, he should come to scatter snows on his tawney crest.

It were most soothing now to melancholize under these shades, and think on many things in air and earth, real and unreal, that fly the lightsome noon; and thus might you ruminate, till time should bring you to the verge of your part in it, without your perceiving, that he was carrying you on your way, all reckless of its better use; so stilly would it move beneath this quiet gloom. But those, who passed through the forest-tracks this day, went with the swift foot of hope and high spirits; they came not to melancholize: and a greater number of coursers, palfries, hobbies, and other steeds never, ywis, tramped on the ground of Ardenn.

Ever since the first dawn, you might espy them passing among the woods from towns, and villages and hamlets and monasteries, whither they had gathered over-night; and now drawing on towards Kenilworth, and the castle, where, over the great gate, hung the helmet of invitation to all courteous knights, a summons not slighted by any, whether courteous and knightly, or humbly and civilly curious, or rude and forward.

It was in a fair meadow, which some call a plain, below the castle, on the opposite side of the moat, that this tournament was appointed; as a place where the Queen and her ladies might behold it from the castle, if the autumn weather should forbid them to be present: but all that great space was prepared and set forth at the sides, with tents, and stages, and galleries, as if nought might keep them away; the whole hung with arras, or cloth of gold. These you might see from the towers and walls of the castle; nay, from the bay-window of the great hall, standing like a little town of palaces and castles; for so were many of the tents, fashioned the midst of the woods, which rose up on all sides, around them, save where

the lake spread its broad light to the foot of the Swan Tower and the rampart-walls: and, certes, it was a noble sight to see those pavilions ranged around the open meadow, all amongst the green shades, with vanes and banners glittering in the sun, spreading to the very edge of the water, which there lay, smooth and bright as polished silver, and giving back this glorious vision.

And then again, to those in the field the castle itself was a goodly sight, with all its towers and battlements thronged with faces; the great banner of England, waving on the Keep, and overtopping even the forest-trees behind; the whole pictured forth on those sleeping waters, as if falling into the blue deep below. Every parapet, or tower, or rampart, where foot could stand, or arm could cling, was clothed with living forms, and every window and little grate was full of watching eyes, and showed shoulder beyond shoulder, and head crowding over head, looking towards the field, with an eagerness, that made all below, who had seen them, turn their eyes the same way, and feel yet a stronger eagerness for the spectacle they were expecting. Even behind the loop-holes there were faces; some of them, I ween, such as had never looked out there before; the darts of these warriors not being in their hands, but in their eyes.

Those in the castle could hear the trumpets blow up amain, and see the heralds on their great horses riding about the place of contest, before the knights appeared; and could clearly discern the different tents, and make out to whom each belonged. The King’s pavilion of scarlet cloth of gold was raised on a platform, above every other, and stood in the centre of that half-circle, formed by the rest. The platform was covered with silken carpets; and there, in front of the pavilion, but just within the canopy, were placed two state-chairs for their Highnesses. The curtains were drawn up in large folds, held up with golden ropes; and within them were showed seat above seat, filled with ladies of the court, gorgeously apparelled, awaiting the royal train: and below, on either hand, were ranged esquires and pages in the King’s livery. Over this tent played the royal banner; and the vanes showed the King’s crest, glittering almost as high.

On the right of this was the pavilion of the young Prince Edward; but his was raised only by a few steps above the turf. It was of green and white silk, not in any feigned fashion, but in that, which belongeth to tents in war; and it had a golden lion on the top for a vane. On the left of the

King’s pavilion, raised only one step from the turf, was that appointed for the great officers of state, when they were dismissed from standing about his Highness’s chair; and for other nobles of the realm, with whom were some bishops, but not in their state, though the King were present; and some abbots, also not in their state. Near this was the tent of the Baron de Blondeville, of white and azure, having for the crest an armed hand with a javelin poised in it, ready to strike at a shield.

It were tedious to tell of all the different pavilions and galleries, adorned with velvets and rich tapestries, that spread so gloriously round this fair meadow; or of the ladies, so sumptuously arrayed, that appeared within, delighting the hearts of all who beheld them.

But the tent of the challengers, whose chief was William de Fortibus, Earl of Aumerle, standing at the eastern barrier; and that of the defenders, whose leader was the Lord Simon de Montfort, nigh the western barrier, deserve notice. The Earl of Aumerle’s was shaped like a castle, beset with gilded turrets and bastions, the entrance gate showing a lofty arch, hung round with goodly trappings of purple velvet, ‘broidered and fringed with gold; and having within, hangings and seats of the same. But my Lord of Montfort’s outdid this glittering pomp; his tent was in shape of a princely palace, yet with walls and towers, approaching in some sort to a castle. The entrance was into a bannered hall, with stately crimson and gold beneath the banners; and of crimson and gold were the seats and cushions. Figures in armour stood round that hall, as though he would assert himself a warrior and a prince; and truly King Henry needed such, if he might find them true to him.

The lists were forty feet wide, and they ran nearly the whole length of the field. On the outside of them was a raised space to keep off the crowd, which was guarded by knights and their esquires, in armour, but bearing no weapons; and so, too, were the barriers guarded. These knights, as well as all the attendants of the combatants, had taken an oath not to assist either by word, look, or gesture, any of the combatants, not even when wounded and unhorsed, except as the Marshal of the Field should allow; but this oath was not on pain of death, as at trial by combat, in law.

The eastern barrier was for the entrance of the challengers, with the lady-prize; the western was for the defenders. At these points of the field were the greatest press and throng of the people; amongst whom, to wile

away their time of waiting, ran many stories of the deeds of some of the knights expected.

Anon, the heralds, who were riding about the place of war, drew aside to the barriers, and their trumpets blew up aloud for a long space, summoning the lords and knights, challengers and defenders, to the field, in manner of war, with such a stiring sound, that no man could abide in the castle, that thought he could get one foot into the field of tournay; but all ran speedily thither, not one allowing, in spite of eye-sight, that it was impossible to find the smallest space, not already filled. And then many, that had been on the walls, would fain have been back there again, for scarcely a glimpse could they get of the field; the fencing, the pikemen, and the horsemen being so deep around it, that the nearest to them had but a sorry peep. And, as for the stages and galleries, raised up for those, who came first, or who had some favour, they had been filled for hours, some having taken their seats there at sunrise.

Presently, the heralds were answered by the King's trumpets afar, which drew near and nearer, until they came into the plain, and took their station before the King's pavilion, still blowing up, with their banners displayed. There, rode two King's at arms, Garter and Clarencieux: then was every eye turned thither in expectation of what might follow; and presently came into their tent the King and Queen, with a long train of nobles, and ladies, and took their seats on the chairs prepared for them, standing a little out on the platform.

His Highness, this day, wore armour, and was attended by the four esquires of the body. His helmet, with the vizor open, was circled with a crown, surmounted by crescent, encompassing a blazing star.

The Queen was in purple and palle, and on her head she wore a crown of jewels. The Lady Cornwall, her sister, was ceremoniously apparelled with a coronet of pearls; as was the Lady Pembroke-Montfort, her sister, whose lord was, this day, to enter the lists. All the ladies present were ceremoniously attired, with fillets in their hair, or garlands, each according to her rank. And amongst those who stood by the Queen's chair, none looked more lovely than the young Baroness de Blondeville; her head was circled with costly pearls, and she wore a thin scarf of silver azure, drawn over her breast, the colour of her lord's banner.

Soon as the King and Queen were placed, the trumpets at the barriers sounded a charge, and a great many of nobles and knights entered the field. Amongst them was the young Prince Edward; for he liked not to ride alone, in the order that had been settled for him, but came in pesle-mesle with the rest, and so busy with his mettlesome steed, that he noticed not the observance which, nathless all the hurly-burly, was paid to him by those, who rode near him.

Cased in complete armour and mounted on a brave charger, he came, accompanied by his brother Edmund, a noble youngster, apparelled in mail, to witness the disport, though not to share it; sorely against his will was Prince Edward restrained from trying to break a lance this day. His heart beat high for martial deeds. The King and the Queen joyed to see him sit his horse as manfully, as did any knight in the field; and the Queen, although it was by her especial command that he forbore to try his skill with others of his age, looked on him, with even more delight than his father. In him she might have foreseen the corrector of such insults as were afterwards given to her by the citizens of London, when, by hurling of stones at her from the bridge, as she was flying by water from the tower, almost for her very life, they stayed her for a time, from her purpose of repairing to the palace at Sheen. And in him too she might have foreseen the queller of rebellion, the corrector of abuses, the restorer of general order, the enactor of wise laws, the administrator of justice, the mighty ruler, who, by his wisdom and vigorous perseverance, bound up the wounds of his country, strengthened its sinews, and pruned away its exuberant vices, which the tyranny and weakness of King John had by turns provoked and encouraged; and which the incapacity of Henry had suffered to engraft themselves on and to encumber almost every useful institution.

This young Prince, in whose character yet lay hid the virtues which were hereafter to restore the kingdom, now came into the field with high spirits; and, having paid his duty before the King’s pavilion, took his station. Perchance, it was with remembrance of his delight in this tournay, that, in after-times, when he his-self was King, he caused that magnificent feast of chivalry to be enacted here, which brought a hundred knights and as many ladies to give more fame to Kenilworth, for, they trooped to that festival from all parts, even from over sea, to witness its splendours and to

increase them: yet did he not, I ween, delight so much in that, as in this present, now before his eyes, when all was new to them and wore the gloss of his own youth.

Soon after Prince Edward had so placed himself, the Baron de Blondeville appeared; and none came on with a more gallant air, (the white plume depending aside his cap to show the easy sway, with which he adapted himself to the curvetings of his managed horse,) or rose on his stirrups with more courageous grace than he; and the whispers and smiles of the ladies seemed to say this: the young Baroness, proud of his affection, and of his distinction, looked on, with beating heart and with tearful smile. Having paid reverence to the King and Queen, his banner was bowed also before his bride, and he saluted her with a homage, that seemed to say he was ambitious only to prove himself worthy of her love.

In this magnificent show, it was a question, which most excelled in gorgeous array, or seemed most proudly conscious, the knights, the ladies, or the coursers.

And now the trumpets, without the barriers, sounded a charge; for the challengers drew nigh the field, and were answered by others already there. Then it was, that neither Prince Edward nor his steed could longer endure restraint, so that both set off full tilt, coursing the plain, round and round, with most courageous bearing, the latter prancing, curveting, bounding, to the great joy of all, who beheld him, save the Queen. Her Highness, though herself of good courage and well skilled, for her sex, to manage her horse, feared he would be thrown headlong from his charger, while he rejoiced, with firm hand and steady eye, to urge, to watch and to command the strength and spirit of the noble animal.

A loud murmur of applause ran from tent to tent and from tower to tower, afar; and then might it be said the warlike people began to feel for their Prince the affection and respect, which hereafter assisted him to rule them. Where this curveting would have ended, none knew, for, the Prince was nothing weary, had not the appearance of the challengers at the barrier checked his career, when he turned slowly towards the King’s tent, sitting his charger with a proud negligence, as he looked back on the approaching knights.

Now, the Lord Mareschal of the field, the Earl of Norfolk, richly apparelled in arms, and with his truncheon in his hand, riding a brave

horse, right bravely trapped, and attended by his king at arms, heralds and poursuivants, rode up to the eastern barrier, and, in the King's name, demanded of the champion, abiding there, completely armed, whence he came, who he was, and the cause of the grief that brought him hither thus clad in steel.

To which he made answer, his herald, with his banner, standing at his side. "I am William de Fortibus, Earl of Aumerle;" and then he delivered his challenge, engrossed on embossed vellum, in which he defied to arms any one, who should deny the peerless beauty of his lady-love. Then the Lord Mareschal made him undo his vizor, that it might appear he had rightly called himself; which being done, the knights, his aids, did the same. Then was administered to the champion and all his followers the oath, that they came not armed with any spell, or word, or other instrument of magic, but with lawful arms only. After which, the knights of the Lord Mareschal and those, who guarded the lists, took oath also, not to assist either champion, during single combat, by word, look, or gesture.

This ended, the Earl of Hereford, High Constable of England, who stood by with his staff of office, ordered the barrier to be thrown open; and forthwith the herald of the champion, attended by his poursuivants, to the number of four, entered the lists, the herald bearing his banner, and standing aside, where he proclaimed, with potent voice, the name and titles of his lord, and whereupon he came hither in array.

Having done this, he threw down the gauntlet, and advanced to the tree of honour, where he placed the written words of the challenge on a bough, and where also were suspended the shielded arms of all the knights, who, this day, meant to run their course of chivalry on the field. Then straight the Earl of Aumerle and his followers were admitted to the field, bearing up the King's flag, nearly in the state and order as here set down. First, came, in solemn march, eight trumpeters, four abreast, blowing up amain, in their yellow tabards and high caps, their banner rolls displayed; then cornets, drums and clarioners, in warlike fashion. Then came twelve knights armed, two and two, on foot. Next came the banner of the King's Highness, carried by a knight completely armed, and borne up by four other knights armed, but bareheaded, each having his two shield-knaves (now called by most, shield-bearers, or esquires) beside him, carrying his spear, shield and helmet. Then followed eight knights, appointed like the

first, each with his two knaves, bearing his helmet and shield; then forty yeomen, in doublets of scarlet and gold, bearing their partizans upright, their coats broidered with a golden lion and the King’s crown above, surmounted with a crescent and blazing star. Then followed two score of demi-lances, four and four.

Next came four trumpeters on horseback, blowing up; then four esquires; then a herald at arms; then the banner of the Lord Mareschal, borne high by a knight armed, four esquires walking beside it. Then appeared the Lord Mareschal his-self in complete harness, mounted on a barbed steed, right nobly and gorgeously trapped, with crimson velvet, embossed with gold and the shielded arms of his lord; esquires and pages going beside and following.

Then came, in separate order, the champion’s five knights, his aids, armed cap-a-pé, mounted on goodly coursers, richly trapped, each having his banner borne before him, and four trumpeters blowing up; also with esquires and pages in his livery.

The Earl was cased in gorgeous armour, bossed with silver and laid in with gold. His helmet bore a scarlet plume and, for his crest, a winged griffin of solid gold, as were the bars of his vizor. The head-piece and breastplate of his steed were bossed in like manner, as was the shaffroone and crivet for the neck; and the high pummels of his saddle were also edged with gold. Over this lord was borne by four esquires on horseback, wearing his livery, a silken canopy, the colours of his tent, fringed also with gold and surmounted by his crest, in silver.

And now were heard sounds of sweet minstrelsy, and, immediately following the champion, came the minstrels and the lady-prize, seated in a chair, covered with crimson cloth of gold of Florence, having a canopy of crimson silk, bearing a white plume, which played upon the air, and drawn by four milk-white harts, for so they seemed. Each was led by a page apparelled in rose-coloured silk, striped with gold, and holding in his hand his cap of velvet, wreathed with roses, and laced with gold. Their buskins were all of swan-down white as snow. These milk-white harts had their horns tipped with gold and hung with roses, with chainlets of the same round their necks. The reins were of crimson silk, studded with gold and precious stones, as were the traces. Within this so sumptuous car sat the Lady Aveline de Bohun, daughter of the Lord Constable, the Earl of

Hereford. She was beautiful as morning, rising from the sea; her look was peace and joy. She wore a robe of palest silver, and her hair was coronetted with eglantine, in bloom, and with pearls, that night might have scattered. In front of the crimson canopy above her, beamed a diamond star of purest splendour. Four knights walked beside her car. And thus she came on to the sound of dulcimers and harps, with her maidens playing on timbrels and lutes and sweet bells. Ever and anon they stepped dancing-wise, tossing the tabors on high and turning with so sweet a grace, as was the marvel and delight of the whole court; although many present liked them not the better, for that they were of the Queen's country. Still, as this lady passed, welcome, peace, and joy, spread around her: she was called the Lady of the Morning Star.

Then followed a goodly train of esquires, and gallant youngsters, in shining trim, bearing the livery of this Earl, to the number of twenty-five, riding on noble steeds; their trappings glittering in the sun, and tinkling with silver bells, that made merriment as they advanced. After them forty of the Lord Aumerle's yeomen, on foot, appeared in his livery, with his badge in silver, on their sleeves.

And thus, with proud paces, these processions passed on the field of tournament, till they reached the King's tent; and then they halted and did homage. So fair and pleasant a show was never seen before in woods of Ardenn. The crowds on the castle-walls beheld the whole order of it, and better than many that were nearer; yet were they not contented; and often, as the shouts of the people mingled with the clangour of the trumpets, they bemoaned themselves, that they were so far off. Yet those on the level of the field beheld not half of the show at once. Three times that gorgeous train moved round the field, to the sound of trumpets and other brave instruments; never failing, each time, their homage at the King's tent. From the very topmost turrets, those there perched, could see this processioning; the sun glittering on the armour of the knights, and glancing on their crests and helmets and on the heads of their spears, as they moved.

They could see, when the procession had the third time reached the King's pavilion, that it rested to deliver up the lady-prize unto the fair company there assembled, to remain in safe custody, till the end of the tournay. They could perceive her approach the Queen, who turned

graciously towards her, and that then she retired amongst the crowd of ladies, behind her Highness's chair. This done, they saw the Lord Mareschal, with four knights, advancing towards the centre of the field, in front of the grand pavilion, there to plant the King's great banner; but they could not see every one of the ceremonies, that attended this, nor hear the chaunt of the minstrels, which accompanied each part of them, though they caught the swelling strain of the louder minstrelsy; and on every charge of the trumpets and every shout of joy, did they set up fresh lamentation.

"If I was but in that tree," said one, "how much nearer I should be." "Why do not you see," said another, "the branches are so full already they can scarcely bear up the people? they will break presently, and tumble them into the lake." "But look," said another, "if there is not the roof of the Swan Tower, with neither man, woman, nor child, upon it. Oh! if I was but there, I could see and hear every thing; I will try for it." "You may as well stay, where you are," observed a fourth; "you may be sure, if the roof could be reached, it would have been full of people long ago."

Then would come a loud blast of the trumpets and a great huzza, but nobody could tell what it was about. "Why this is worse than seeing nothing at all, to be tantalized in this way," says one. Then another spies out some friend, at a distance in a valuable place, as he thinks, and hallooes out with might and main, "Can you make any room for me in that tree? Do my good Hodge. If you cannot, speak to Ralph for me; he will, I know." Straight, some score of faces are turned at his shout, but his friend maketh not out that he is spoken to; all hear him but his friend; till another shout comes amain on the wind: "Hodge o' the Chase-side, I say, can you make any room for me?" and then a dismal "No!" silences the non-content, and makes those laugh, whom he would have left behind; and thus they went on murmuring, and wasting what pleasure they might have had, because they could not have all, just like their betters; for thus it is in life, that we often employ our wits only to turn good to evil.

Those below, at the castle-windows, ladies and gentlewomen, who could not get places in the tents, or on the galleries in the field, murmured too; but not so much for that they could not see every thing there, though that seemed to be their grief, but that they could not their-selves be seen, dressed as they were in apparel, which they had gotten from Coventry,

long before. They saw plainly enough knights, esquires and pages, prancing, or pacing, about the field, in all their splendour; and lady-aunts and lady-cousins in the galleries, in all their sheen and joyance, and fain would they have shared with them. Some too there were, who spied out their knights looking towards the windows, yet were they unable, for the crowd there, to make themselves distinguished; and some few there were who, often as he, that each esteemed, advanced, in glorious seeming, shrunk back, with timid glance, fearing lest they should be noticed.

Above them all, perched in his prison-turret, was the poor merchant, looking upon this splendid field, with different eyes from every other that beheld it. Too little interest had he in what was passing there, to view it with curiosity. No vanity had he to make him feel the jealousy of rivalship, or the fretfulness of disappointment, where all around was pomp and pride, or mortification, or joy, from another's triumph; or aught but sense of his own misery and fond remembrance of his home. The weight of grievous evils left him no leisure to feel the presence of small ones. How blessed would he have thought himself, were it possible for him to have considered, as disappointments and causes of murmur, any of those trifling circumstances, which now prevented the peace and joy of hundreds, possessing here health and liberty and prosperous estate, now looking on the same spot with himself!

He had been lying on his pallet, thinking on his hard fate and on that of his friend, when first he heard the trumpets blow up, and the hum of many voices from walls and battlements and tents below; and, judging this to be some pageant pertaining to the marriage festivities of his triumphant enemy, he had no heart to witness it. But anon, this noise of trumpets, with the heavy trampling of hoofs on the field and the loud ringing of the harness, and, at times, the shouts of the multitude roused him from his weighty sorrows; and, looking through his little grate, he, perched so high in air, like a poor bird shut up in prison-cage, looked down upon that field of warlike seeming and princely magnificence.

There he beheld the King's dreaded person, on whose single word life, or death, depended, sitting calmly in his estate, and right glad of heart, thoughtless of the suffering he now inflicted, or reckless of it, having persuaded his weak and willing mind it was just. There, too, he could distinguish the Baron de Blondeville, caressed and honoured by his

Sovereign, admired by the court and loved by his fair bride. Then, as the memory of all that had passed in the woods beyond, returned to Woodreeve, his very heart bled, while he beheld, as he too well believed, the guilty author of his woe, standing amongst honourable men and gallant combatants, attended by a noble train, and ready to achieve the fame of noble deeds in arms.

Now, the challenger and his five knights, directed by the Lord Constable and Lord Mareschal, having planted the King's banner in the centre of the field, the Earl of Norfolk delivered unto each his lance, and they withdrew to the Tree of Honour, standing on a little hillock, raised near the King's pavilion and bearing on its boughs the shields of all the knights, who offered themselves, this day, for the lists. There they pointed to the words of the challenge, which having done, they retired in procession to the eastern barrier, where their tent and the empty car of the lady-prize stood, there to await the appearance of the defenders. And not long did they wait, ere they heard the trumpets sounding without the western barrier, which were well answered by those within, and straight appeared the chief defender, with his five knights, all clad in white-harness. These, having passed through the same ceremonies, as had been already performed by the challengers, and a herald having proclaimed the name of their chief in the field, having hung his words of defiance on the tree of honour, and taken up the gauntlet of the champion, their procession entered.

And here it were tedious to set down all the particular splendours and doings of it; but some things may be told, both to be a record of certain remarkable appearances and also to show some traces of the characters of the chief persons, who played their part in this pageant.

The chief of the defenders, as has already been rehersed, was the Lord Simon de Montfort, the same whom the King's Highness had created Earl of Leicester, and on whom he had bestowed his widowed sister, the Countess of Pembroke, with this his stately castle and wide domain of Kenilworth; how worthily it needs not for this history to declare, since it is known to all, that he armed this very fortress against his King and benefactor. He, this day, wore on his scarf the Lady Pembroke's colour, and he was in truth her champion; his five knights were Sir Stephen de Segrave, Sir John de Plesset, Sir William de Cantalupe, Sir Robert de Grendon, and Sir Osbert d'Abrissecourt, a foreign man.

And, first of these, after heralds at arms, duely appointed, esquires and pages in pairs, and, after his raised banner, all in form and order much like to the procession of the challengers, came Sir Stephen de Segrave. He was on a stately charger, trapped with flame-coloured velvet, bossed with his arms and hung round with little lions, in silver, such being his crest; his horse white and heavy, with broad chest, whose head-stalls and bridles were studded with precious stones. The lion on his helmet was rampant, and his plume and scarf of flame colour. Four esquires walked beside him, followed by four pages; leading spare coursers. Then came twenty-five gentlemen, clad in the colour of his scarf and having also flame-coloured plumes in their caps. Fifty of his yeomen, apparelled in the same hue, but of different fashion, followed; and a crowd of his servants closed his pageant. He was of lofty stature and surpassing strength, and moved upon the field with looks of sullen pride. Some present augured not well from this, and indeed his pride was so plain, that King Henry liked it not.

Next came Sir John de Plesset, Earl of Warwick, of most graceful person and demeanour, though he was a stranger, being Earl of Warwick only by right of his wife, who was sole heiress of that house and by the King’s courtesy. He was mounted on a noble roan, whose breastplate was chased with silver; and he was most gallantly caparisoned. His plume and scarf were of rose-colour, and the crest on his helmet was a leopard. He came attended by a brave show of esquires and gallants, with a train of fifty yeomen, besides forty servants, all in his livery of the colour of his scarf, and making a most stately show.

Then came Gaston, the young Baron de Blondeville, who had changed his cap for a helmet, and was duely caparisoned, as a knight; for, his shield, which the King had caused to be replaced in the hall, had not again been challenged, nor had any one made complaint to the Lord Mareschal against him. He rode so fiery a charger as hardly might be restrained, within the pace of dignity; yet, being curbed with his hand, he moved with proud and stately steps, well suited to his lord and master, who kept his seat, with gracious ease and looks of happy triumph, knowing he was admired of all, who saw him. His banner was well carried before him. Four esquires were at his side, and four pages, leading spare steeds, followed. Twenty-four gentlemen succeeded, and a goodly train of yeomen and servants, all in his livery of light blue and silver, brought up the rear. His

plume and scarf were of azure, but not of the fullest hue, and his train of pages and servants, in the gallant fashion of their apparel, were outdone by none.

When he came opposite to the King's pavilion and paid his homage, his courser, whether he was frightened at aught he saw, or that he gloried in the loud noise of the King's trumpets, or that he was secretly goaded for the purpose, began to curvet and play off such high tricks, as terrified the Lady Baroness sitting there. But, after he had gone through certain paces and high threatenings, the Baron the while commanding him with unmoved countenance, he fell into a gentle mood, and followed, with due order, in this pageant chivalry.

And now came a knight in most curious device, riding upon what seemed to be a red dragon, conducted by one personating a giant, as he might well do, who bore in his hand a spear of immense size, which incontinently he applied to the dragon's throat, which forthwith sent forth fire and smoke, to the great diversion and delight of all beholders. Following him, a page led his courser richly caparisoned, and he was compassed all about with brave gallants and followers. This was no other than Sir William de Mowbray, who at all times, was fond of mirth, and certes, he caused much; for, on his displaying himself, tents and walls and battlements and turrets, nay, the very trees, up to topmost bough, sent forth peals of joy and laughter. He was much beloved of the crowd, and well liked in the court, none envying him.

Next came Sir Hugh de Bois, mounted on an iron grey. His plume and scarf were of orange colour, and he was not wholly wanting in esquires and servants to fill up his estate; yet was he far from being on a par with the rest, his means being much smaller. So, I say not more of his appearance, seeing he made not much, when compared with others, on that day; only this I will add, he was of a most compassionate and honest nature; and might have vied with the rest, if he would have pressed harder upon his dependants, or would have mortgaged his lands, as so many did, to the Jews.

Next and last, came the chief of the defenders, the Lord Simon de Montfort, in his estate, under a fair pavilion of silk, with turrets and

battlements shaped like unto a castle, his banner flying over all. This was carried along by six stout men; but it appeared to be borne by a multitude of his servants, in purple jerkins of silk, laced with gold. His charger, trapped in purpled velvet, bossed with his arms in gold, was led by pages; and its frontlet and breastplate were so brightly burnished, that, as the sun shone on them, the splendour cast around him was enough to dazzle, if it could not daunt, any knight, his adversary. And this was made ground of complaint against him by his first adversary in the lists; so that, when he began to place himself for combat, he was commanded by the Lord Mareschal not to advance against the sun; but, in the changes and shiftings of the struggle, this command availed but little. Squires and gallants and pages followed almost without number.

Of kingly purple were the Lord Simon's plume and scarf; and his golden helmet seemed one blaze of light. He bore himself with a most lofty carriage; looking as though he thought none, but the King's Highness, might compare with him, and hardly that either. Not more audacious, I guess, could he have looked, when, in after-times, he traitorously gave his Sovereign Lord the lie, in the field at Evesham! and there paid with his life for his ingratitude and rebellion.

Little weened King Henry now, when he saw before him this knight, arrayed in the pomp of chivalry, that he beheld one, who would hereafter turn his arms against him, excite his subjects into rebellion, and lead him prisoner through his own kingdom, until his life and liberty should be rescued by his brave son, Edward, here beside him. Little weened his Highness of this, or he would not have raised him to highest honour; bestowing upon him that sister, who had withdrawn herself to convent-life, and taken the veil, but not yet the ring, that would have wedded her to it; else not even the Pope his-self might have sent her dispensation. Happier had she been in her peaceful cloister than living in the world, with so proud, yet base a spirit, that could walk in arms against the Sovereign, who had lavished favours on him with so lavish hand. Yet were there some near his Highness's chair, who, from what they saw this day, could guess something of what high favours might work in him; the venerable Archbishop was one of these.

The defenders having passed in solemn pomp, three times, round the field, paying, each time, due homage at the King's pavilion, their chief

received from the Lord Mareschal his lance, which had been duly measured with that of the chief challenger, and his shield from the Tree of Honour; and then the defenders withdrew to the western barrier, and took station before their own tent, till the summons of war should sound.

They waited not much, ere the trumpets blew up a charge loud and long, which set the hoofs of every steed in motion to prance and curvet, with proud impatience for the onset, so that hardly could the knights, whose turn was not yet come, rein in their arched necks. Then the Lord Constable of England, and the Lord Mareschal rode gravely round the lists, to see that all was right and in due order; and examined again the lances of the two chiefs, who, upon the second charge of the trumpets, advanced each from his station, near the barriers, and, each crying out aloud the word of combat given him by his lady, they ran together furiously.

The Lord Simon first brake his lance upon the Earl of Aumerle, shivering it into splinters, and with the blow making the Earl stagger on his courser. It was the marvel of all, that he fell not; but, adroitly recovering himself, he passed the sword-guard of the Lord Simon, and struck him on the chest, with a force, that made his armour flash fire, shivered his own lance into a thousand pieces, and had nigh brought his enemy, both man and horse, to the ground. Then the trumpets sounded, for victory, the cries of the people cheered him, and a murmuring sound of many voices rose from the King’s pavilion.

A second round was run by these chiefs with lances duly delivered to them, while tumultuous shoutings from the more distant spectators on the castle walls and towers and on the trees encouraged them, those nearer being kept in order by the laws of the field, which forbade any to make sign by word, or deed, during the time of combat. But the knights, who, in armour, kept the lists, found it no easy task to preserve silence there; for, as the fate of the battle swayed, so was the clamour of hope, or joy, ever ready to break forth; and it was well these knights carried not arms, lest they might have been provoked to turn them against the unruly people around them. Those afar off, on the walls, being beyond the reach of the laws, seemed to shout forth in very bravado, as if to revenge themselves by liberty of voice, for that which was denied them of a better view. And how incessantly they did peal forth, sending out all the signs they could to

either combatants, and calling loudly a “Fortibus,” or a “Montfort,” followed by hooting, or applause, just as their humours chanced!

The combat of these chiefs lasted, till each had broken on the other several lances, but was at last decided, in favour of William de Fortibus, who unhorsed the Lord Simon and broke his shield.

Then was victory proclaimed by the heralds, to strains of minstrelsy, the name and titles of the victor being repeated, on every pause of the music, with these words, “Renown to heroes and to the sons of heroes.” Immediately there rose from the lists cries of joyous triumph, and the woods resounded, far and wide, with the multitude of voices proclaiming the conqueror’s name and “Renown to heroes.” Convents, buried in the wilds of the forest, opened their gates, and let forth the startled monks, to listen to “Renown to heroes.” Never had they heard such sounds, till then. Travellers from far, journeying through the forest and hearing such sounds of joy and triumph, where they expected only lonesome silence, or the joy of birds, looked round, on all sides, under the boughs; but, seeing nothing, save the sun-light, and the farther woods, that close them in, they feared this might be some witchery to deceive them. Coming, perchance, to village, or hamlet, of the forest, they ask what mean these sounds, of aged men, or little children, the only inhabitants left there, and whose opposite extremes of life alike disabled them from following to Kenilworth. And then, having learned somewhat near the truth, the travellers urge their weary hobbies over deep roads, at the risk of their necks, that they may come in for a glimpse of the spectacle of chivalry. So they leave behind these lonesome cottagers to the quietness, which (ah! ungrateful man!) they now think dreary, and would fain exchange for the many pains of another entrance into crowded life; the distant shouts tantalize the curiosity of the young, and bring back the regrets of the aged; the old man reflecting on his long-past youth, and the child anticipating his, when he shall no longer be left at home, while his elder brothers go to fairs and to Kings’ tournaments.

These shoutings of the multitude and the clamour of “Renown to heroes,” recalled to his prison-bars the poor merchant, who, on sight of the Baron de Blondeville, prancing in procession amongst the defenders, had, in the bitterness of his heart, withdrawn and thrown himself on his pallet, there to calm his throbbing spirit. Returned to the barred window, he there

beheld that, which he could not well understand, not having witnessed the combat. This was William de Fortibus courteously returning his lance to the Lord de Montfort, together with the golden chain of his mistress, which he had worn on his shield in combat; at which rose up fresh shoutings of applause, but both were received by the vanquished with a very ill grace; and his countess might rejoice that she was not known to have bestowed this chain upon a conquered knight.

This ended, the chiefs withdrew, each to his own tent, and then advanced four knights, two of each party, and ran their courses together. They combated with strong spears, of great breadth, and ran with most courageous skill, to the wonder of all beholders. It were hard to say, until the very last, which of the four most excelled; but then, at last, one knight of each party bore away the prize, worn on the helmet, or shield, of his adversary, to whom it had been given by the lady of his love.

Next advanced to single combat the Baron de Blondeville and Sir Robert de Grendon. On sight of the Baron, Woodreeve turned from his grate, and his heart sickened to behold the assassin appear before the whole court and the multitude of the people, arrayed for triumph, or, at least, for honour. Yet might it not be so; for, the triumph, and even the honour might attend his adversary. It was, however, long before such possibility occurred to Woodreeve; soon as it did, he resolved to abide the sight of the contest, yet were his fears much stronger than his hopes.

And now the trumpets blew up the field, and the onset began. They fought with spears, and such was the shock of the first encounter, that both knights were nearly unhorsed. At the second course, the Baron brake his spear on his opponent. At the third course, Sir Robert shivered his on the Baron’s shield. Then, they ran with lances, or long spears, and the shock, with which they met, brought both combatants to the ground. The Baron quickly recovered himself, and, as some thought, made a blow at his adversary, ere he was fully risen. On this, there was a great outcry, and the Lord Mareschal rode up, and stood before the King’s tent, but said nought. Then, the King commanded, that the combat should proceed. On this, there was a murmur of discontent; but, each knight being now remounted, it did accordingly proceed. Some said Sir Robert had received the Baron’s blow on his head; others said it had missed him; Woodreeve now, as he watched, thought he sat not steadily on his courser.

However this might be, his horse tournayed, and passed with him along the lists, to meet the Baron, like unto a glance of lightning. The Baron, now well prepared to meet him, sustained the shock, and the combat was renewed with such force, as though it were but just begun. It lasted not long. Sir Robert seemed to support himself with difficulty, and sometimes almost to stagger on his steed; and, at the last course, he sank beneath the Baron's blow, and fell to the earth. Then he was borne away to his tent, and his armour unbraced, and the tale went, that he had been hurt unfairly.

The Baron, having snatched from the shield of his enemy his mistress's pledge of favour, a tress of her hair, bore it triumphantly on the point of his lance unto the King's tent, where sat with the Queen the Lady Baroness, his wife, and presented it to her. Then their Highnesses said many gracious things to the victor, and many noble ladies there assembled testified their joy no less. Then was his name proclaimed, as victor, by the heralds, and his song of triumph chaunted round the King's banner.

The poor merchant, from his turret, seeing how matters went, and that nought but applause and honour seemed to follow the steps of him, who, in justice, deserved only shame and punishment, felt as if his last hope was gone. His pang of sorrow was at the uttermost. He turned from his grate, sickening even at the pleasant light of the sun, and once more he threw himself upon his pallet.

But why do the trumpets now blow up so loud a charge, so shrill and dread, that all, which went before, was sleep and silence in comparison of it? No shoutings mingled with this charge, nor was any other sound heard contending with it in the vault of the sky, where it rolled alone. So long it lasted, that it roused the prisoner again from his pallet, and recalled him to the window.

Thence beheld he, in the field below, not among the combatants, but among the spectators there, an extraordinary turmoil, and a sort of solemn, or fearful, curiosity, very different from that which they had before showed. Their faces were all turned one way, that was towards the place whence the sounds came, which was not from the heralds at arms. In all the tents the company were standing up, but none there, or in spots more exposed to his view, seemed satisfied, that they knew what was going forward. On the place of combat, the prisoner saw only the Lord Mareschal and the Constable of England riding about, and the heralds

gathering at the barriers, to answer the summons (of which it seemed there would not, for a long time, be an end), and the knights, who kept the lists, watching for one to enter.

At last, Woodreeve saw, at the eastern barrier, a knight enter, armed cap-a-pé, mounted on a black charger. There, the Mareschal, who was ready, demanded in the most urgent terms, who he was, whom he came to challenge, and what was his cause of grief? What was answered, those only, who stood nigh the barrier, might know; but the stranger's herald was seen to raise a banner before the Mareschal's eyes, that he stood gazing on, like one amazed! while the knights of the barriers drew eagerly round him; when the Lord Mareschal again demanded, why he came? The knight his-self made a sign in the air with his lance, and held it raised; and, during the wonderment, which this spread around, a herald, not waiting for order, but moved by his own notions and fears, administered to him the oath, that he came not armed with any unlawful weapons, or means of harm; after which, the stranger-knight dropped the lance into its rest.

The Mareschal seemed still to marvel and to be at a loss, how he should proceed; but then, recollecting himself, he advanced close to the knight, as is the custom, to unclasp his visor, that it might appear he had spoken the truth, as to who he was: but he, drawing back, his-self unclosed it. What face the Mareschal discovered within, the prisoner, from his turret, could not know; but he saw both the Mareschal and the Lord Constable turn aside their steeds, and the knights of the barrier step back; while a tumultuous noise arose amongst the pikemen behind the barrier, as if they expected the stranger would attempt to retreat, and they intended to oppose him.

But he showed, that he meditated not any such thing; for, swift as an arrow from a bow, he cleared the barrier; and, having done so, moved upon the field of war gloomily and sullen, like unto a thundercloud, spreading terror as he passed. All the multitude of voices was hushed around him, and the air was so still, that nothing was heard but the sound of his charger's steps; and, sometimes, the unknown trumpets sending their clangour to roll away amongst the woods.

His banner was borne highly before him, in good state, and with ceremony of demeanour; but what it displayed the prisoner could not, at his height, discern; neither could he see the face, nor the crest, of the

stranger. As he advanced, a murmuring ran through the crowd, mingled with faint shrieks; but, when he was present, an interval of hushed silence followed; as if suspense and wonder held the breath of every gazer. Slowly, but strait and with due steps, as showed an accomplished knight, the stranger rode up to the King's pavilion, and there stayed his horse, yet making no sign nor gesture, nor having even his banner lowered by his herald. Immediately Woodreeve perceived a rising up, and some confusion in the pavilion; the King motioned with his arm; the Archbishop made a sign in the air; some of the nobles, who stood round his Highness's chair, pressed forward — others drew back; and those behind, seemed to move to and fro in disorder.

The Queen and her attendants appeared no less agitated; her Highness turned away her face from the stranger-knight; all her ladies on the seats behind, rose up, and some so eagerly leaned forward, that they had nigh overbalanced themselves, and fallen down to the platform. The Baron de Blondeville, who, after his course and triumph, still rested, beside the pavilion, sat fixed on his courser, with his arm holding his spear on high.

Those on the field saw upon the knight's banner the image of a murder; they saw, too, upon his black helmet, a wing of fire, for a crest; but what his face was they knew not; for his visor was now closed; and his eyes only appeared above the flat bars of it; and they, it was said by many of the beholders, gleamed like flame. Some went so far as to say, though they saw too little to warrant such guess, he was the same who had appeared in the banquet hall; others thought not so, and eagerly denied it.

On the banner was a motto, which greatly disturbed the King; for, soon as he saw it, he called for the Lord Mareschal and the Lord Constable, and his own trumpets sounded a summons. My lords, the Mareschal and Constable, were still at the eastern barrier, the confusion there having detained them, and very great it was, though no one, at the distance of the King's tent, knew the cause of it, not a foot having stirred from that barrier of all, who witnessed the first turmoil, on the approach of this so strange an intruder.

Every one there was either too busy, or too curious, to run to spread the half-known news. Some, who had been thrust aside after their first glimpse, said the Mareschal had fallen off his charger; others, that he was dead; and others again, that he was held in thraldom of the Lord Constable,

and the knights at the barrier; which last was but an unlikely tale. But let this pass; whatever the cause was, there he was at the time; when the stranger-knight, advancing a few steps nearer to the King's pavilion, did make somewhat of an obeisance, and then held up, far as his arm could reach, before his Highness, a sword of strange shape, unknown in our tournays; which, as some nigh affirmed, bore on the scabbard, in characters of fire, the word "Justice!"

Whether this were so or not, on sight of that sword, the King was sore disturbed; and straight commanded his Lord Chamberlain, who stood close behind his chair, to ask of the knight his name and style, and why he approached in so extraordinary a way.

The knight made none other answer than by pointing with the same sword to the Baron de Blondeville. Then, the King guessing him to be that secret enemy of the Baron, who had appeared in the festal hall, and that he was in league with the prisoner; nay, suspecting he might possibly be that man his-self, escaped by his supposed potent arts, disguised also by them, and instigated with designs against the life of the Baron de Blondeville, promptly despatched a messenger to the Lord Constable, with orders to secure the stranger; and he also privately sent one to know, whether the merchant was safe in his prison? and again bade his trumpets sound a summons for the Mareschal of the field!

For the merchant, King Henry might have spared his page the trouble, and his-self have seen, with little pains, if he had leaned that way, the poor man's face through the grate of the turret-window, looking upon what was passing, in this place of now-disturbed pomp, and knowing less about it, than did his Highness, little as that was; and, for the Mareschal, he was now leaving the barrier and slowly advancing over the place of war, like one faint, and hardly able to support himself on his steed. Two knights of the barrier followed his steps, hardly less in dismay.

Meantime, the stranger-knight, having remained awhile, pointing with that sword to the Baron de Blondeville, who, sitting on his courser, upheld his spear seemingly without power to launch it, if he had been so permitted, or to advance a single step; — the stranger-knight, this having passed, withdrew a few paces: yet he fled not, because of the approach of the Mareschal and the Lord Constable, who gave orders that he should be

seized; but stood in the place, to which he had slowly receded, with his lance couched and his shield lifted, as if he defied all attack.

No one of those, who heard the command, had approached him; whether they were withheld by fear, or by reverence; and, when the Lord Constable his-self indignantly rode forward, demanding why he thus unlawfully intruded upon the sports, and disturbed them, with intent to turn that, which was designed for recreation, into revengeful and malicious war, he received no answer; but saw the stranger suddenly in a distant part of the field, in the same attitude of defiance.

Then was the King's anger changed into an ecstasy of amazement; and, turning to address himself to the Archbishop, who was at his right hand, he beheld, in the solemn tranquillity of his countenance an image rather of death, than of life. It seemed to bear the reflexion of some awful truth! while his eyes were directed to some object, which so engrossed his attention, that he appeared to be insensible, not only of the King's words, but of his presence! His Highness, on then looking for that which caused such deep interest, beheld again the stranger-knight, on his charger, before the pavilion, with the sword again raised: where, as many say, appeared that word, "Justice!" in letters of blood, and now also the name of Gaston de Blondeville!

Then the knight's visor flew open, and his Highness beheld the very countenance he had seen in the banquet-hall; that countenance looked upon the King more sternly than before; the eyes were not, as then, dim and melancholy, but seemed to shoot forth fire; and the stranger pointed again with his sword to the Baron de Blondeville, who wore one, that resembled it in the hilt, though not in the shape, and who now, after having sitten so long motionless on his charger, dropped his spear; he seemed to totter in his saddle, his head leaned aside, and, in the next moment, he swayed, and fell to the ground, a dead weight. The clash had drawn all eyes towards him, when his terrified steed, running wildly along the lists, conveyed to the distant spectators, some knowledge of the truth. His two esquires, and others who were near, hastened to his assistance, and a general consternation ensued.

The King, who had not observed his fall, and understood not rightly the occasion of it, seeing his fiery courser fleeing over the place of war,

guessed he had taken fright, and thrown his master; meanwhile the Lord Mareschal had ridden forward to secure the stranger.

With confusion and almost palsying terror, the Queen and her ladies had witnessed the truth. Some swooned; others, who were the least overcome, endeavoured to convey away the Baroness de Blondeville, who had sunk down, and was senseless; others, on recovering from their first sensations, pressed forward to learn what might further happen; and others retreated, wishing to avoid all further view of so distressing a spectacle. Those farther off, on the castle-walls and windows, who beheld this uttermost turmoil and consternation, wished only for wings, that they might fly forward into the midst of it; for, the vexation they had suffered from their ill-satisfied curiosity and their imperfect view of those pageants and courtly imitations of war, was nothing in comparison to that caused by this glimpse of truth.

The fall of the Baron had been seen by the prisoner from his turret; and immediately he heard shrieks and the busy hum of mingled voices loud and deep: he saw the charger flee, and somewhat of the confusion in the King's pavilion; he observed the Lords Mareschal and Constable riding at full speed towards it, and that the armed knight, who had stood alone before the King, was no longer there, yet he had not observed, which way he had departed, nor his herald.

Now saw he his Highness rise up, and turn to leave the tent; while his esquires and pages raised the Baron on a kind of bier, and carried him from the field.

Then, the Queen and her ladies, supported by divers of the lords, departed as speedily as might be. The Earl Mareschal continued to ride about the field; as did many of the knights, that those, who guarded it, might not think their duty at an end; a double guard was placed at the barriers, and all was hurry, examination, and suspicion. His Highness, when he had understood the Baron's condition, conceiving that he had swooned in consequence of having seen and of having been viewed by that extraordinary personage, whose presence had before dismayed him, sent his physician to assist him; and commanded, that strict search should be made for the person who had caused such repeated consternation.

But, when he learned the whole truth, and that the Baron's life was irrecoverably lost, his grief and horror were unspeakable. He broke up the

present field, and with all his court, save such as were left to assist in guarding the barriers, while search for the stranger was going on within them, quitted the scene, and withdrew to his privy-chamber, with the Archbishop and a few of those whom chiefly he trusted.

That honest Prelate failed not, on this occasion, to give sincere and wholesome council; which, though his Highness little liked it, he was observed not to speak against, at first, save that he said his thought, that this was no mortal business, but a deed of sorcery; to which the Archbishop answered, he thought not this was an act of sorcery; it might be otherwise accounted for, when an innocent man was in so great peril, and justice was to be brought on a guilty one, against whom other means might not prevail, before judges unfortunately prejudiced in his favour.

At this so bold avowal of his opinion of the deceased Baron, whom now the King most sorely grieved for, and charge implied of injustice in himself, his Highness became angry, and answered sharply. The words of the Archbishop had fallen upon his wounded mind, as boiling oil upon a wounded body, exasperating it almost to madness. When he had departed, one craved admission, who better knew how to turn the passions of this Prince to his own account.

This was the Prior of Saint Mary’s, who, having learned the fate of the unhappy Baron, came hither to provoke immediate vengeance on the poor prisoner, and to ensure, as he hoped, his own safety; and, for that purpose, he had recourse to his old subject of sorcery. And he seemed so deeply to sympathize with the King in grief for this sudden death of the Baron, that his Highness listened to all he said, and was inclined to do whatsoever he entreated. The Prior urged, that, if speedily justice had been done upon the merchant, the Baron’s life had probably been spared; and were justice long deferred, another innocent life, it were not unlikely, might fall under his mischievous arts; nay, that the life of the King himself might be assailed. He reminded his Highness, that he had both urged and dreaded the probability of what had happened, when he supplicated, that his false accuser might be punished, without delay; nay, that the unfortunate Baron had his-self urged this, and, if his entreaty had been attended to, he had, in all likelihood, been now living.

On this, the sorrow of the King redoubled; he seemed to accuse himself as a cause of his favourite’s death; and, before the Prior left the chamber,

he had promised to sign a warrant for the prisoner’s death, bidding, that he should be told to prepare himself against the morrow. Then the Prior departed, grieving less for the Baron’s fate, than rejoicing that his enemy would soon be destroyed.

On learning this fatal resolution of the King, the Archbishop again claimed hearing; for, he was of his Highness’s council; and he tried by every argument to counteract the pernicious advice that had been given. He could now no longer conceal his suspicion of the Prior; and he entreated for a delay, at least, of the sentence, hoping that his messenger might, in the mean time, bring from Exeter some certain intelligence, on the subject of his suspicions. But the misled King, accusing himself bitterly for former delay, as the cause of the Baron’s cruel end, and having been moreover prejudiced by the Baron, for his own purposes, with a notion of some pretended cause of the Archbishop’s dislike of the Prior, refused now to listen either to remonstrance, or to entreaty.

Sorrow and remorse, arising from a misapprehension of the truth, alone seemed to occupy the King, who now, with the intention, as he persuaded himself, of preventing further evil, was about to execute an act of injustice and stern cruelty. And thus it is, if kingly power pertain to a weak head, not carefully warned by early instructions against the dangers, which must beset all power, whether public or private, whether in Prince or subject; for, the passions are the helm, whereon designing men seize to steer into action, as they wish. And thus was pity now about to be made the instrument of cruelty.

Prince Edward, though young, saw this matter more clearly than did his father; and he entreated for the poor merchant; nay, he even dared to express his opinion that he had used no unworthy arts. But the King was yet obdurate; and he bade the Prince remember that precious ring, which was to render him invincible in battle, how it had been conveyed away from his secured cabinet to his enemy Llwellyn of Wales, who had triumphed accordingly.

On this, the countenance of the Prince showed fiery red, and indignation sparkled in his eyes. “Give me an army,” said the Prince, “that I may fight your enemies, and prove that ring to be not invincible.” The King turned his eyes upon his noble son; and, for the ardour of his spirit, forgave him his importunity.

The Archbishop’s brow relaxed, and his look dwelt long upon the Prince, with high benignity; while the young Prince cast down his eyes, which had met those of the Prelate, and he felt, that to deserve such dignified approbation, he could encounter worse enemies, than he had spoken of.

The King now dismissed his suitors, even his son, and abandoned himself to grief and to ill-placed remorse. But what was grief, like his, compared with that of the distracted Baroness de Blondeville? who, innocent herself, had loved and honoured the Baron for such as her imagination painted him, not for what, in truth, he was. But what, had he lived, must she hereafter have known him for? She must have known him for the perpetrator of that lawless and wicked act, of which he was accused, and moreover for the cruel destroyer of domestic faith and happiness.

A tale was yet to tell, that would have abolished her peace for ever, and which that unknown and unhappy lady, who in the castle-hall challenged his shield and then departed, could have sadly related. The person of that lady was here a stranger, but somewhat of her story had gone forth, and was partly understood by divers at the court, amongst others by Pierre, the Queen’s minstrel, who, in her bower, had darkly told it on his harp, enwrapping and disguising truth with fiction. There the Baron de Blondeville had heard it, and he alone knew how to separate one from the other; he had heard it, and with such consternation, that he stayed not in the bower to inquire how Pierre drew the line between them.

On that same night, there had been also in the Queen’s presence one distantly related to the most unhappy character in the minstrel’s lay, and whom the guilty Baron then suspected of having prompted it. He burned to tell him so; but he dared not, since that would have brought to light a truth, which would have ruined and disgraced him, for ever. Whether this suspicion were just, or not, is uncertain; but he bore deep rancour in his heart against that supposed suggester of the truth, and, on the first opportunity, determined to act, as if he had full proof that insult was intended.

And, this very day, he had done so, when, in the field of contest, he had encountered Sir Robert de Grendon, and had cunningly given him that dangerous wound, which had felled him to the ground. Those in the court,

who knew the lady’s mournful history and her relationship, though distant, to Sir Robert, questioned whether, even on his part, the encounter with the Baron was wholly accidental.

Nay, some suspected, that he had forborne to appear formally as her champion, only because he knew, that the King would then forbid the combat, and that he should be laid in jeopardy, like unto the poor merchant; wherefore, they said, he had concerted with his kinswoman her challenging of the Baron’s shield. All this well might be, but nothing certain was known on the subject, nor has it come to light, to this day. Sir Robert, however, was so sorely stricken by the Baron, that the King’s physicians long thought his life in danger.

The poor lady, his kinswoman, pined and died hereafter of grief and remorse for her own former misconduct. With such a husband as the Baron de Blondeville, how then could his unfortunate wife have known happiness? But he died ere she knew him!

Woodreeve, who, from his prison-window, had seen the Baron fall from his charger, and had beheld him afterwards borne away from the field, knew not yet the whole truth; but this sudden reverse, appearing like a judgment on the crimes of his enemy, had filled the poor merchant with hope, yet with a kind of solemn astonishment, — a sort of tranquil awe, which fixed him in earnest gaze at his grate, till all the multitude of the people round the grand plain, in gallery, tent, or on tree, on coursers, on hobbies, or on battlements, had dispersed and vanished away, like cloudy freckles before the morning breeze. And thus was this tournay so soon broken up, to the sad discomfiture of those who had come from distant parts, many a weary mile, to behold it. Many, who had been up with the dawn, and had endured hunger and uneasiness for hours — neither the King’s castle, nor the villages round, having wherewithal to supply the wants of the vast multitudes here assembled — were now compelled to return home, with curiosity as little satisfied as their appetites, unable to tell the real conclusion of the festival. They did, however, carry with them a vague knowledge of a spectacle more marvellous than that they came to behold; and widely did they spread it into distant towns and other shires; some to the heaths of Lincoln, some up the pleasant hills of Leicestershire, some to the forests of Nottingham, and some to the high regions of Derby.

THE SEVENTH NIGHT .

Here was miniatured a stately chamber, in part richly illuminated. Under a canopy, was a long sleeping-couch, but no person appeared there. In another part of this spacious room, where the light prevailed less, sat one, who leaned thoughtfully on a table, his hand covering his eyes; another figure stood near, but so obscurely drawn, that for what designed could not be certainly known. Images, holding lamps, were pictured in the chamber.

That same night, King Henry signed the death warrant of the merchant; and he gave notice, that, on the morrow, he would depart for his palace of Woodstock. And that same night, as was said, the prisoner thought he heard again his death-warning; the same song of peace passed by his turret, as at this hour of the evening before. Others there were, also, about the castle, who, that night, heard strange sounds, and witnessed more than they could well understand.

Amongst these, were the wardours of a postern, near the north walls, who reported they heard grievings, and, more than once, saw some one pass, almost within reach of their spikes. When they spoke the watchword, it answered not, and, when they raised their spears, it fled. The same appearance, though not the same moanings, was heard of those, who kept guard on the east ramparts; and the groom wayte, it was said, as he sat within the porch of King Henry’s lodgings, on a sudden, saw some one standing still before it. He had not heard a step, but, on raising his head, perceived that figure. It was suspected he had been slumbering, and had dreamed of the strange accident, which had befallen the day before. But, whether this appearance were a reality, or only an impression of his fear, certain it is, that, being on watch alone, for his master had never piped the first hour, since the night of his alarm, he had not courage now to speak, or even to step forward, till the object of his terror had passed away. Then, he came forth of the porch to little purpose; for, all without was still and lonesome, and nothing to be distinguished, save the huge shadowy towers around the court, and the stars twinkling bright above them.

But he also heard, at times, a strain of mournful music, and thought it was a requiem in the chapel. Remembering the late strange occurrence in this very court, as he had paced his round there, he began to think this was in very truth the Prior of Saint Mary, come again on some secret errand of mischief; and straight he wended to the keepers door, in Cæsar's tower, to give alarm.

But no one heard him there, the keeper being, at that very time, in the King's hall, waiting his command. Then he went to call the ancient wayte, his master, who was sleeping out his sleep in his own lodge; and, by the time he came back with his groom, this unknown person was no where to be found. If these men, in the midst of the castle, were confounded with fearful thoughts, the poor prisoner above, distant, forlorn and distressed was no less so; for, as he lay, in watchfulness and sorrow, ruminating on the extraordinary occurrence in the field of Tournament, suddenly he thought a voice, without his door, called upon his name. He would not turn at the sound, fearful of beholding behind his grate the dim visage of the Prior of Saint Mary, as he had seen it on a former night. He knew that malignity alone could lead him hither; and, dreading even the sound of his voice, he drew his cloak over his head, and covered himself close, hardly daring, at the moment, either to see, or hear.

A loud knocking, and then a call roused him, and, at last, he heard his name spoken; when, instantly turning at the sound, he perceived, behind the grate, not the dark countenance of the Prior, nor the stern one of his keeper, but that of his beloved and unhappy wife. Hardly daring to trust his senses, he held the lamp nearer, before he became convinced it was her very self. Without question, or one word of endearment, she called tremulously upon him to save himself by flight; and, repeating his name with hurrying fear, entreated him to unfasten the door on his side, telling him that means were provided for his escape, but that he had not an instant to lose, ere the keeper might return.

Then, almost swooning with apprehension, she undrew the outer bolts, and was so much exhausted by the effort, that she clung to the bars of the grate for support. Woodreeve did not now, as on a former night, hesitate to undraw the inner bolts: no; with the eagerness of hope and joy, on this unlooked for meeting and intelligence, he forced back the bolts, and expected, such was the enchantment of his elation, that the door would

open. He had forgotten, that the keeper’s key, or the Prior’s, was necessary to unfasten it.

With this recollection despair returned, for, all his strength was not sufficient to force the lock. When he had ceased his efforts, and had somewhat calmed the distress of his wife, he inquired by what means she had heard of his situation; for the messenger he had despatched, he well knew, could not, in so short a time, have reached her. He asked, also, how she had gained admittance to his prison. To these questions, she answered, that she had received a former letter, mentioning the time of his landing at Hull, while, with her sister, living in Gloucestershire; and had written by the carrier, to tell him she would abide there, till he should pass thither on his way home. While there awaiting him, she had heard of what had passed at Kenilworth, from one who being at Warwick, when the King took wassel there, had returned almost in his train to witness the festivals at the castle.

There, hearing the name of the prisoner, whose extraordinary accusation of the Baron de Blondeville had become known over the whole forest and county, he had relinquished the expectation of fine sights, that he might hasten to acquaint her with her husband’s danger; and it was by his contrivance, that she had gained admittance, and had hoped to effect an escape; that, for two nights, they had walked about the castle; and, when all was still, she had sung aloud, in the hope, that he might hear her voice, and know that she was near him. He now doubted not, that he had heard this, when he thought he listened to a warning of his death.

She was then proceeding to give him some particulars of the plan for his escape, when they heard footsteps ascending the stair. She made no attempt to conceal herself; for, since all hope for her husband was gone, she had nothing more to dread, and she awaited the expected appearance of the keeper, with indifference.

The keeper — for it was he — came on, with lamp in one hand, and a parchment in the other; and, seeing a stranger at the chamber-door, he surlily demanded who she was, and what she wanted. Her answers told part of the truth; on which he seemed somewhat softened, not refusing her admittance to the prison-chamber of her husband. Then, the poor prisoner saw enter it, at the same time, his beloved wife, and the keeper bearing his death-warrant! Happily for her, she saw not this; she saw only her husband, and ran into his arms, and wept upon his breast. What he then

suffered, who saw not only the evil prepared for himself, but for her, none may tell.

When Woodreeve could recollect himself, he made sign to the keeper, to conceal that dreadful instrument from his wife, and to withdraw awhile, that he might prepare her for what was to come. This man so far respected the misery he witnessed, as to yield, and leave the chamber. Then, Woodreeve, calling forth all his fortitude to bear him with composure through the relation of his adventures since he had landed on English shore, led her, step by step, to the knowledge of all that had passed. But, when he came to relate the manner of his trial, and all that had happened during it, all his endeavours to prepare her for the sad result were of no avail to his distressed wife; who, before he could come to his sentence, was gone beyond hearing, having swooned, as if dead, by his side.

The keeper, who was brought up to the chamber by the cries of Woodreeve for help, was moved at what he beheld, and aid was administered, which slowly brought her back to consciousness. Soon as it did, they conveyed her out of that chamber, while the keeper showed to the prisoner his death-warrant, which gave order for his execution early on the morrow. It were vain and cruel to dwell upon the misery of this innocent man, thus brought into jeopardy by the repeated crimes of others. How to break the unhappy message to his poor wife he knew not: yet know it she soon must; and he thought it were better she should know his sentence from his own mouth than from any other. So lately met, after long absence, and now to part for ever! He desired the keeper to bring her to the chamber, soon as he thought she had recovered strength enough to hear, without destructive suffering, the truth he must unfold. And here a dark veil of misery falls upon a scene of pangs, too acute, too searching, to be made known.

And to many others in the castle was this night dreadful! To the young Lady Baroness, and to the King himself! How changed, indeed, was the whole appearance of this castle, from that it wore on yester-eve; where, if the inhabitants were wakeful, it was only from the restlessness of joy, and preparation for the grand festival of the morrow! Where were now the mirth and music, with which these walls had rung? where the feast, the dance, that had made every minute pass so quickly to the poor mortals, whose hours were fleeting away beneath these princely roofs? All was

changed to grief and silence. The footsteps only of attendants were heard along the halls and galleries; no voice spoke there; it seemed, indeed, as if every one were fearful of speaking. When, perchance, the door of a chamber was opened, no burst of merriment or song came forth, no harp sounded, no hum of voices. The impression of this whole change may be best signified by conceiving what one might feel on another change, on a smaller scale; that in one hall, for instance, of this same edifice, which should have been lately deserted of its splendid guests, where the few lights still burning might serve but to show its lonely grandeur, while one heavy step proceeds about the tables to extinguish these; and then the long sound of the closed door denotes the vastness and the emptiness of all that space.

Now of the King’s condition and the things, that befell, on this night, there go divers tales. The truth were difficult to hit, because of the closeness, that guards a King from eye and ear, within his private chambers. Yet there be occasions, when the strangeness of occurrences, that seem not of this world’s ordering, surprize and thus overcome the fidelity of servants, nay even the prudence of others, most concerned in them, and they speak of many things, which, at less pressing times, they would keep safe locked, within their secret thought, to feed alone their own fear and wonder. Thus might it be, on this night. There went forth many strange tales. This, which followeth, was much received at the time. Nay there were strong witnesses of some parts of it in the attending pages, and even in words dropped by the King himself, to warrant the passing of the story. But, be this as it may, I tell but what was told, in the Court itself.

It was said then, that King Henry, after signing the death warrant of Woodreeve, dismissed every one from his presence, and retired to his chamber for all night. There, he would hardly endure the necessary presence of his pages, while he underwent the usual ceremonies of his wardrobe. No sooner had they divested him of his mantle and surcoat, and helped him with his night-robe, than he would permit no further intrusion upon his melancholy and vexing thoughts. Full of sadness was he and of self-reproach, it may be believed, for the premature death of one he had loved and esteemed, and for whose fall he blamed himself, since, had he not so long delayed to execute, what he called justice on the merchant,

whom he was still willing to think a false accuser, the Baron, he held, would be still alive.

He sat thus ruminating, while all was still around him; and what he heard afar was not likely to change the temper of his mind — sad and solemn music it was, mingled as he thought, with lamentation. He listened, and distinguished a choral chant of voices, faintly rise and fall. It was the dirge, which was performed in the chapel for the departed Baron de Blondeville, in that very chapel, where, so few days before, his nuptials had been solemnized, in the King's presence, and where strains of joy, and hope and benediction had lately ascended.

Now, ever and anon, the trumpet groaned, and, in dismal and interrupted strain was sung, "Darkness is my bed — the worm is my sister. I am covered with the mist of death, nor may the sight of man behold me."

The King went to an oriel-window, that looked towards the chapel, and heard the chant of the choristers swell with these words, "Eternal rest give unto him!" And then the faint response concluded with, "Rest in peace!" Then, the instruments sunk low into a murmur, and the voices were no more heard.

Now, the tale goes, that, when his Highness distinguished these words of the requiem, he was overcome with the sad thoughts they brought forth, and he sat down in his chair, and even wept, leaning his arm upon a table, without noticing what lay there. When the King took his hand from his eyes, he beheld a sword — the very sword worn by the Baron de Blondeville, and which Woodreeve had claimed, as the weapon of his murdered kinsman; the same, of which a resemblance had this day been raised up before the King, by the stranger knight, in the field of tournament, who had there pointed it, with deadly power, against the Baron.

On seeing this, his Highness was greatly amazed, marvelling how, and with what intent it had been conveyed. While yet he gazed, the blade became dull and cloudy, and large spots of rust began to appear, which turned to a bloody hue. Then his Highness, terrified by what he saw, and thinking it the work of sorcery, looked towards the ante-room, where lay the esquires of the body, with intent to call them, and perceived some one, as he thought, passing along his chamber. The silver images, which had held lights, stood not there, and a gloom, nigh to darkness, spread through

this spacious chamber, save just where some one seemed to watch. To that side the King directed his voice, and then rose up to learn the truth. Now, the hangings of this chamber were storied with the famous siege of Aeon, where the first King Richard performed such valourous deeds, and the light so fell on that King on horseback, that to the King Henry he seemed to be verily riding out of the arras, and the sword he held to be gleaming to and fro.

This was but a passing phantasie of the King's own mind, as was afterwards declared: but that, which followed, was said to be no deceit of his fancy.

He had risen to discover whether any person was in his chamber, where there had been that appearance of some one passing; he saw a gleam of light, like unto the glistening of Richard's sword, yet neither substance, nor shape, there. Again and nearer, that light appeared, and did not vanish immediately as before; and, before it faded, it assumed a form and countenance; and the King again perceived before him the stranger-knight. Having now lost all power to summon to him those who watched without, his Highness only heard these words, "The worm is my sister!"

The King gasping in breathless terror, said, "What art thou? Wherefore art thou come?"

The voice answered, "Give me rest — the worm is my sister. The mist of death is on me!"

The King again said, "Wherefore dost thou come?" to which the phantom answered, " Give me rest!"

"How may that be?"

"Release an innocent man."

"How may I know him to be such?" said the King.

"By the sword of justice, that lies before thee. A knight-hospitaller was slain by that sword; it has, this day, slain his slayer, Gaston de Blondeville. The Prior of St. Mary's was his accomplice. Punish the guilty. Release the innocent. Give me rest!"

The King, as was said, had now sufficiently recovered from his surprize, to demand proof of the Prior's guilt, on which the vision answered, "I will call up one, who may no more deceive."

It is said, that the King's courage here failed, and he called out, "Forbear!"

“Recall your warrant, then,” demanded the spectre solemnly, “ere it be too late to save an innocent man.”

At that moment the matin bell sounded. “My time is short,” said the vision; “if he perish for my sake, he shall not fall alone. Be warned!”

While these words still vibrated on his ear, the King again heard the chant from the chapel, and knew that they were performing the second requiem.

“I am summoned,” said the vision; “My bed is in darkness; the worm is my sister. Yet my hope — — “

The King, on looking up, saw only the dim countenance of the knight; his form had disappeared; in the next moment, the face too had passed away. But who may speak the horror of the King, when, in its place he beheld that of the Baron, but as in death; an expression of solemnity and suffering overspread his visage; and the King heard the words, “My guilt was my doom; I shall behold you no more. The prisoner is innocent. The Prior of St. Mary’s is gone to his account. Be warned!”

At these words cold drops stood on the King’s forehead, and his eyes remained, fixed on the vacant air, where the countenance of the Baron had just appeared. At the same instant, these words of the distant requiem rose on his ear, “I go unto the dark lane; that is covered with the mist of death, — a land of misery and darkness, where is the shadow of death and no order. The eye of man may no more behold me.”

Then the King lost all recollection; his ear was closed against every sound. How long he remained thus none knew; only it was yet early morning, when the esquires, sleeping in the ante-room, were roused by his summons. Then, his Highness despatched one to the constable of the castle, with command to attend him in his chamber, another to St. Mary’s, to know how it fared with the Prior, and yet another to bring the Earl of Cornwall to him. For my Lord Archbishop, the King as he believed of himself, wished not to disturb the repose due to his age; but in truth he liked not to see him; for he had spoken truths, which his Highness now too heavily feared it had been his duty to listen to.

The messenger, despatched to the Priory, had no sooner passed the castle-ditch, and gotten on the outside of the great portal, than he espied carts, drawn up under the walls, in waiting, to carry away the poor merchant, ere those in the castle could behold the sad sight of his removal

for the dreadful purpose, that had been determined upon. He spied, too, under the gloomy dawn, the whole of that dismal assemblage silently watching to take away their prey. The page rued the jury's sentence on the prisoner, and he went on his way, with heavy heart; for the merchant was pitied of many.

When he reached the Priory, the brethren were at matins; and he was told the Prior was in his chamber. Marvelling, as they did, at the King's early message, one delayed, as little as might be, before he went to acquaint the Prior with it. He struck upon his chamber-door; and, receiving no answer, he went within, and the Prior was found, as had been foresaid; he was lifeless in his bed, stretched grim in death.

He, who beheld him thus, descended the stair, with all speed, to acquaint the brethren then assembled, with what had happened, and found them in consternation great as his own, though from a different cause.

The tapers were dying away, and the only light, that glimmered strongly on the walls, came from a spot, where stood the armed figure of a knight hospitaller. His shield threw a deeper gloom around it on the tombs and even on the tapers of the monks. He pointed with his sword to the ground he stood on, and exclaimed mournfully, "A murdered knight hospitaller lies below; search for his bones, and save an innocent man from death!"

The figure stood for a moment; and, as it raised its shield, the flame thereon flashed, within the hollow helmet, and showed the stern, yet mournful countenance of the knight, such as it had appeared before the King.

Then sunk the figure with the flame, into the earth.

For a while, the brethren stood in utter silence and amazement; then they began to look upon one another, and to ask what this meant; and, even while they did so, a thrilling voice groaned from beneath. Then, without further hesitation, they sent for him whose office it was to dig graves, that search might straight be made, where that sound had seemed to be heard. Such of the monks as, in this tumult of fear and wonder, had time to understand, that their Prior was said to be dead, now hastened to his chamber to learn the truth — others remained in the church.

Some of these dared to approach the spot, where the spectre had appeared; and found it to be over that nameless grave, near to which the poor merchant had found refuge; and where their deceased brother,

Eadwyn, had borne witness to a supernatural appearance. When the lay-brother, the digger of the graves, came, who had not long been in office, he pored over the stone, marvelling that one so little ancient should have neither name, nor date, nor inscription of any kind, on his tomb. There were some standing by and observing, who, if they had been so minded, could have told, that it had not been always thus: but they held their peace.

On raising that stone and turning up the earth beneath, a coffin appeared, bearing this inscription: —

"Reginald de Folville, Knight Hospitaller of St. John, slain in a wood of Ardenn, rests here!"

There was neither taper, nor visible flame of any kind, over the grave, yet was this distinctly shown, by a strong light. The coffin-lid, which was of stone, like the receptacle, and was cut in shape of the head and helmet, being removed, there lay exposed to view the figure of the dead knight, in the armour in which he was slain, and such as had but now appeared on the grave; the shield was on his breast; but no sword was at his side. At this spectacle, some of the brethren shrunk, overcome with so sad a sight; others pressed forward, and bent over the grave with intense curiosity.

The features of the knight were entire, though shrunk and changed in death. They were of a noble cast, and bore the very countenance of the apparition. On the forehead appeared the death-wound. While yet they looked, the appearance of the knight began to change, and the countenance to shrink and fade away. Some said this was only an effect of the living air upon mortal features so long shut up in death; others said not so, but that it was, like all the rest, to bring truth to light and administer justice to an innocent man. Then the coffin lid was replaced, and that awful spectacle of mortality was hidden from view, for all time. During this, still music was heard in the air, like unto a requiem, hymning some blessed spirit.

The brethren, while they listened, were hushed in holy peace; some knelt over the grave; others stood, with hands and eyes lifted up, as if following the sound with their attention; and others, drawing the cowl over their eyes, bent their heads and wept in silence. Without the church, the old oaks, swaying in the wind, mingled in high and solemn harmony with the lessening chorus, till their murmur alone remained. Those, who had heard that soothing strain, long stood, as listening, still rapt in the quietude

it had breathed forth, till, at length, their peace was enlivened into cheering hope.

The grave-digger, who had withdrawn to some distance, was the first to recover himself, and the sound of his footsteps drew back to present life the thoughts of the holy men around him.

Then, they recollected the death of their Prior, and that the King's messenger was yet waiting for the tidings, which his Highness, by his extraordinary anxiety, appeared to have foreknown. One of them returned to the castle with the esquire, who, when he came near the gates, looking anxiously to see, whether the poor merchant was yet gone to his doom, perceived, that the carts, with the whole mournful apparatus of death, were already departed. On perceiving this, he struck his hands together, in sorrow and despair, with a force of action, which drew the observation of his companion, who soon learned the occasion of his honest emotion, and suffered with him.

How much more would each have suffered, could he have witnessed all, that had passed within the prison-chamber, while those marvels were passing in court, and Priory, as already told! How much more could they have seen all the struggles of Woodreeve, for composure and resignation, and, yet harder task! his endeavours to prepare and reconcile his wife to calmer sorrow. Of late, she had refused to allow it possible, that her husband could thus unjustly and ignominiously perish in the cause of humanity; and she would have forced her way to the King's presence, there to have pleaded the truth, nothing doubting she could have convinced him of his mistake, had not bars and bolts withheld her. For the arguments of her husband, on this subject, they were as nothing with her, in this state of desperation. And thus passed the heavy hours of this night to those poor sufferers, till the keeper came to bid Woodreeve prepare for death, the guard being then in waiting to carry him away. Then, the poor prisoner perceived, what until this moment, he had been unconscious of, that hope, in spite of reason, had lingered at his heart; for, now only was it, that he felt the full pang of despair.

And, when he heard the summons afar off, that deep and dismal bell, he stood trembling with horror, unconscious where he was — unconscious even that his wife lay senseless on his pallet! Again it called, that hollow murmuring death-sound! He heard not the footsteps ascending the stair,

nor the bars of his prison withdrawn; that shuddering sound alone crept on his ear.

He perceived, however, the keeper standing now not in the room, but near the door; and he began to recover his recollection, like one, who has been stunned by a blow; yet was there a gloomy and dreadful stillness at his heart and over all around him. He turned to his wife, and leaned over her, without shedding a tear, or uttering a groan. She was pallid, as a corpse; his own cheek was of the same hue; yet he called not for help.

The keeper advanced into the room; others, as if from respect for misery, waited without, at the door. Perceiving the condition of the poor woman, he sent off some one for assistance; and, taking Woodreeve by the arm, he looked upon him, as if he wished, yet feared, to speak. But the prisoner saw not this; for, he raised not up his eyes. Then, the keeper shook him by the arm and spoke; but he heard not the words; he only answered, that he was ready; and then, turning to give one long, last look to his poor wife, he found his eyes could not well distinguish her.

He groaned heavily, and was departing; but still the keeper told him, and, in a voice less rugged than usual said, “Read this paper.”

“I cannot see the letters,” answered the prisoner; “my sight is gone; and it is also useless to read my death-warrant.”

“Can you endure to hear it read?” said the keeper.

“Why not?” replied the merchant; “What have I to fear, in this world?”

“Have you nothing to hope?”

On this the prisoner lifted up his countenance; his sight began to return, and he looked at the keeper; his soul was trembling in his eyes.

Then the keeper ventured to call out “Respite!” — and instantly the whole aspect of Woodreeve was lighted up, like one called back from death.

But this spirit was short lived; in the next instant he called out, “My wife! my wife!” and bent over her in an agony of woe. “Is no help to be had?” cried he. “She is gone! your respite comes too late.” But, while he so spoke, one, who had been sent for a restorative, returned, and, after long application, she revived.

Then Woodreeve, when his first joy had subsided, began to consider this was a respite, not a release, and that his sufferings, perhaps, were not ended, but postponed. This respite, which now began to be viewed by him

with doubt, had well nigh destroyed his wife with sudden joy; to her mind it brought, not merely hope, but certainty of life for her husband. A convulsion followed, and she was, for a short time, in as much danger as before. Hardly had she recovered from this, when an order came from the constable to give Woodreeve his liberty and a chamber in the castle better suited for him. Assured of this, he drew his cloak over his eyes, and stood, for some time, weeping in silence, save that his sobs were audible; then he raised his hands and eyes to Heaven, and bowed his head. His wife remained weeping on his garment, till he took her to his heart, and then they left that prison-chamber, hand in hand together.

When the King had heard of the Prior's death, he was struck with marvellous dread, and with conviction of his falsehood and of the merchant's innocence. He bitterly repented of the favourable opinion he had so long adhered to, respecting the Baron de Blondeville, and of the weak credulity, with which he had listened to the artful suggestions of that false Prior, rather than to the arguments and to the strong conviction of the Archbishop of York. But the former went with his passions, the latter against them; and he helped to deceive himself. Yet, when he did find out his error, he was warm and generous in counteracting it; and, now that he was assured how unjustly the poor merchant had been made to suffer, he loaded him with present kindness, and prepared to repay him hereafter by certain grants and privileges, that made Woodreeve the most wealthy merchant of his guild.

Nor did his Highness forget the forlorn widow and children of the deceased knight, whom he fostered and nobly supported. The miniature of that knight and the golden chain he had worn he returned to his family; and the Jew, who had forsworn himself, at the instigation of the Baron, was punished with heavy fine and imprisonment, the fine being amongst the King's gifts to Woodreeve. But, though his Highness found it now his chief delight to do kindness to the merchant and to the family of his unfortunate kinsman, yet could he not endure to behold him, nathless the expectations of most in the court.

And now that the Prior was dead, many things came out, concerning him, which had not been suspected. He was of birth so low, that no one could learn whence he had sprung; but it appeared, that, not many years before, he had been in arms, and in the class of a follower of Sir Gaston de

Blondeville, one of the retainers, whom the latter was obliged to produce, on receiving his gilt spurs.

He was conjectured to have come with him from Gascony; for, he spoke that tongue, and had all the craft and soaring vanity of that people; but he was not born there; he had no foreign sound in his discourse. How he came by his wealth in those lawless times, and the use he made of it to procure him power, may be easily guessed. And it appeared this was well suspected by my Lord of York, who had never looked upon him with a favourable eye, and had constantly endeavoured to counteract his pernicious influence.

When, hereafter, his messenger returned from Exeter, it appeared, that none in that neighbourhood had ever known the Prior of Saint Mary's, such as he had described himself to be. The arts too, practised by this Prior with certain of the brethren, who remembered the interment of Reginald de Folville — and with certain people of Kenilworth, who recollected his story, were now all exposed. Those, who, from education and station, might not have been suspected of such baseness, were now brought to truth, and were fain to hide their heads for shame. The Prior's memory was thus condemned to detestation. Be it remembered, he was no true son of the church.

THE EIGHTH DAY .

Here was a drawing, divided into two compartments. In one, was presented an Archbishop, kissing the hand of a crowned King; in another, was the sole portraiture of a Prince; who, from his mantle, and the feathers embroidered on it, appeared to be a Prince of Wales.

On this day, the merchant and his wife departed from Kenilworth, where they had suffered such extremes of good and evil. They departed, carrying with them joy and blessings. But it was not till they had gone a good distance through the forest, that they felt themselves fully at liberty. Then, as they looked back, and saw afar off the grey towers of the castle, above the tawny woods, nay, that very prison-turret, perched over all, which Woodreeve had never expected to leave, but for death, their hearts overflowed with thankfulness, and tears of joy fell fast. Yet, turned they suddenly from view of it, and then went forward, even faster than before. After leaving these woods of Ardenn, they journeyed homewards in peace.

And many others departed from the King’s court homeward, on this day; especially, my Lord Archbishop took solemn leave of his Highness, who gave him all due honours, for his wise counsel, regretting also, that he had not sooner followed it. The Archbishop, pleased with the release of Woodreeve and with the bounties since bestowed upon him, bowed himself, with willing homage, to his lord the King, and bade farewell to the young Prince Edward, with affectionate respect and with lofty hopes of what he might hereafter prove himself.

And, this day, left Kenilworth, the unhappy lady, Baroness de Blondeville, conveyed away by her noble parents to their own castle, there to pass in quiet shade this season of affliction. And those, who have mourned with her in this chronicle of her sad story, may haply like to look into the glass of her futurity. There, may they see many dark years of grief and sadness, passed within her father’s towers; but onward they will see the gleam of hope and joy striking athwart her path, and further still, the calm sunshine of happiness settling on her home, where she is married to a

nobleman right worthy of her. And here we veil this mirror of futurity, and come back to the passing time.

And, on this very day, the King his-self, who now loathed Kenilworth, broke up the court, and departed in all state with the Queen, for his palace, at Woodstock. The eventful days and hours of a very short period had wrought great change in the King's mind, and in the views and hopes of many in his train. Some had profited in wisdom by what they had experienced, or witnessed; others had suffered truth to glide before their eyes, without attention enough to derive one lesson from it.

And now, the King and all his court passing away under the battlements of this stately castle, in the pomp and order, with which, eight days before, they had approached it, his trumpets sounded their last to these towers, which echoed back the farewell; and then they were left to solitude and silence. This was the last gleam of courtly splendour, that lighted up the walls of Kenilworth, in this King's reign. And now the fading woods strewed yellow leaves on the long cavalcade, that wound below, whispering a moral to departing greatness; and their high tops, rustling in the blast, seemed to sigh over those, who were leaving them for ever to their own quietness.

The King's banner still waved on the Keep, till his Highness had reached the end of the furthest avenue, the last spot, from which he could look back on the castle, standing, with all its solid masses of tower and bastion, amidst the rich and varied hues of autumn. While he gazed, a cloud overcast it, and then a gliding light showed every battlement and turret, wall and bastion, window and loop distinctly in succession, nay, the very grate and spikes of the portcullis, hanging in the arch of the great portal, under which his train had passed.

Just as his Highness turned into the close woods, his banner on the Keep bowed homage, and then was lowered to be no more raised till long in after years, when the King's camp lay in Ardenn, and Prince Edward planted the royal ensign over the sons of the rebel Montfort, and restored Kenilworth to his sovereign lord and father.

This vision of the living world, which had so suddenly appeared in these wild solitudes, which had, in so short period, carried the joy and mourning of human passions, beneath these shades of Ardenn; which had banqueted and striven, had hoped and feared, had plotted and punished, had fretted

and triumphed, had shown the extremes of princely grandeur, and of domestic misery, of deep villany and generous humanity, of supernatural power and mortal weakness, of human craft and of controlling, overpowering justice — this vision was now all vanished as in air, to be no more seen, or traced here, peace and silence closing over the towers where it had been.

The halls, where late the banquet revelled, or the sceptre of justice threatened, now echoed only to the straying steps of ancient menials. In the courts so lately filled with princely pomp and tumult, where the hurrying foot passed incessantly to and fro; where the many sounding hoof trampled, and the hum of voices rose, all was now so still, that, when the solitary sentinel ceased his measured pace, you might hear only the shivering of the ivy, or the distant echo to the closing door of some deserted chamber, murmuring through empty galleries, which, of late, to have looked upon would have filled you with marvel of the high dames and gaudy gentils passing through them. These courts now spoke only at certain hours, when the watchword went its round, or a single trumpet of the garrison called together the few armed tenants, stationed at gate, or rampart, and the guard was changed.

Thus quickly passed away this courtly vision from these woods of Ardenn. And so from before every eye departs the vision of this life, whether it appear in lonesome forest, in busy city, in camp, or court, — where may be pressed within the compass of a few short days, the agitating passions, with all their varying shades and combinations, the numerous events and wise experience, that make up years of ordinary life and the seeming ages of a cloistered one; for there, pale moment, lingering after moment, like rain-drop following drop, keeps melancholy chime with chants too formally repeated to leave, except on very few, the due impression of their meaning, and with slow returning vigils. Yet even here life is still a fleeting vision! As such it fades, whether in court or convent, nor leaves a gleam behind — save of the light of good works!

And thus endeth this Trew Chronique.

CONCLUSIO N

Willoughton, long before he had finished this “Trew Chronique,” had some doubts, as to its origin. With the enthusiasm of an antiquary, he was willing to suppose it a real manuscript of the monks, in spite of some contradictory circumstances. The illuminations it exhibited, with the many abbreviations and quaintnesses in the writing, only a few of which, however, he has preserved in this, his translation, and those few but here and there, where they seem to have gained admission, by their accordance with the matter then in narration, these traits justified, in some degree, his willing opinion.

Perhaps, one better versed in antiquities would have found out, that several of the ceremonies of the court here exhibited, were more certainly those of the fourth Edward, than of the third Henry, or the second Richard, and would have assigned the manuscript to a later period than that of the title, or than that afterwards alluded to in the book, whether written by monk or layman. And though that same title said this chronicle was translated from the Norman tongue, by Grymbald, a monk of Saint Mary’s Priory, it said nothing of its having been composed by one; and the manuscript itself seemed to bear evidence against such a supposition, by the way in which some of the reigning superstitions of Henry the Third’s time and of the monastic life in general were spoken of. He must have been a very bold man, at that period, who had dared to utter even from under a cowl, a doubt, concerning the practice of magic, or witchcraft. It is, however, to be acknowledged, that, on some other points, his notions were not unworthy of a monk of the thirteenth century, that is, if he really credited all the supposed incidents of the hall, and of several other parts of the castle. The way, in which he speaks of the melancholy monotony and other privations of a cloister, seem to come from heart-felt experience; yet, if it had been so, he might not have ventured thus to have expressed his feelings.

But at whatsoever period this “Trew Chronique” had been written, or by whomsoever, Willoughton was so willing to think he had met with a specimen of elder times, that he refused to dwell on the evidence, which went against its stated origin, or to doubt the old man’s story of the way in

which it had been found; and he was about to enter upon another of these marvellous histories, entitled “A trew historie of two Mynstrells, that came by night to the commandary of Saint John Hospitalier, at Dalby sur les Wouldes, and what they there discovered.”

But, behold! the beams of another day springing on the darkness! On drawing aside a window-curtain, he perceived the dawn upon the horizon; and, who ever yet beheld those first pure tints of light upon the darkness, more touching, more eloquent to the soul, than even the glorious sunrise, and turned abruptly from them? The towers of Warwick castle soon began to show themselves on the east, their mighty shadows raised up against the increasing light in peace and stillness. The morning-star alone rode bright above them, trembling on the edge of a soft purple cloud, that streaked the dawn.

The heart of Willoughton was deeply aFFected by the almost holy serenity, the silent course of order and benevolence, that he witnessed in these first minutes of another day; he looked up to Heaven, and breathed a prayer of blissful gratitude and adoration; and then departed to his rest.

“Tomorrow to fresh fields and pastures new.”

The Poetr y

Kenilworth Castle, one of the many places that Radcliffe explored while travelling through England with her husband

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY: WITH SOME POETICAL PIEC ES

St Alban's Abbey: with Some Poetical Pieces was published posthumously in 1826 and is Radcliffe's longest piece of poetry. She would frequently intersperse her novels with short poems, but did not devote time during her career to writing separate collections of poetry. *St Alban's Abbey* does not reflect Radcliffe's rich prose style and she does not maintain a steady rhyme scheme. The poem has a long, rambling quality to it and there is little to connect the famous author of Gothic fiction of the picturesque and sublime with this work. The poem is set at the beginning of the War of the Roses and includes a series of incidents which are connected with Richard of York's defeat of the Lancastrians in the First Battle of St Alban's in May 1455. York and his ally, The Earl of Warwick, overcame the Lancastrian Duke of Somerset and managed to capture the King Henry VI. The poem is a mosaic of incidents and events including monks watching the Battle from the Abbey, banquets and dirges for the dead.

In volume 39 of *The Edinburgh Review*, published in 1834, *St Alban's Abbey* is criticised for being 'miserably told....broken and confused by tedious description' and that ten cantos deep the reader has the 'most indistinct notion what the whole is about'. The reviewer censures Radcliffe for writing a non-cohesive poem and argues that 'the whole [is] blended in such a hazy mass, as absolutely to defy all attempts at decomposing it into its particulars'.

St Alban's Cathedral

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The Battle of St Alban's

ADVERTISEMENT .

Of the poetical powers of MRS. RADCLIFFE, apart from those examples of the *spirit* of poetry which breathe so vividly through her prose romances, there has hitherto been no adequate impression conveyed to the public — perhaps because they have only been presented, for the most part, in subordinate connection with her prose writings. It is intended, by the present collection of such of her detached productions as wear expressly the outward garb of the poetic muse, to give to her merits as a writer of compositions in verse a fairer opportunity for appreciation. The tale of “St. Alban’s Abbey” must doubtless prove, in an eminent degree, welcome to the imaginative reader, as superadding to the graces of poetic treatment the charm of a romantic story — that charm in which Mrs. Radcliffe so conspicuously excelled; and it may be safely affirmed, both of that production and of the minor poems which follow it, that, when examined, they will be found replete with rich imagery and felicitous expression.

ST. ALBAN’S ABBE Y

A POETICAL ROMANCE.

SPIRIT of ancient days! who o’er these walls,
Unseen and silent, hold’st thy solemn state,
Thy presence known where the gloom deepest fells;
And by th’ unearthly thoughts that on thee wait:
Descend, and touch my heart with thine own fire,
And nerve my trembling fancy to aspire
To the dread scenes that thou hast witnessed here!
Teach me, in language sipiple and severe,
(Such best may harmonize with ruder times)
With place and circumstance of awful crimes,
To paint th’ awakening vision thou hast spread
Before mine eyes — tale of the mighty dead!
And let not modern polish throw the light
Of living ray within thy vaults of night,
But give thy elder words, whose sober glow,
Like to th’ illumined gloom of thine own aisles,
Touching the mind with more than light may show,
Wakes highest rapture while it darkly smiles.
Presumptuous wish! Ah! not to me are given
Those antients keys, that ope the Poet’s heaven,
Golden and rustless! NOT TO ME ARE GIVEN!
But, if not mine the prize, not mine the crime
Lightly to scorn them, nor the simple chime,
Though tuneless oft, when to the scene more true
Than flowing verse, bright with Castalian dew.
Like Grecian goddess, placed in Saxon choir,
Is the false union of the cadenced rhime
And measured sweetness of the tempered lyre
With subjects darkened by the shroud of Time.
As Gothic saint sleeping in Grecian fane

Is ancient story, shrined in polished strain;
Truth views th’ incongruous scene with stern farewell,
And startled Fancy weeps and breaks her spell.

CANTO I .

THE ABBEY.

I.

KNOW ye that pale and ancient choir,
Whose Norman tower lifts it’s pinnacled spire?
Where the long Abbey-aisle extends
And battled roof o’er roof ascends;
Cornered with buttresses, shapely and small,
That sheltered the Saint in canopied stall; ‘
And, lightened with hanging turrets fair,
That so proudly their dental coronals wear,
They blend with a holy, a warlike air;
While they guard the Martyr’s tomb beneath,
And patient warriors, laid in death?

II.

Know ye that transept’s far-stretched line,
Where stately turrets, more slenderly fine,
Each with a battlement round it’s brow,
Win the uplifted eye below?
How lovely peers the soft blue sky
Through their small double arch on high!
Deepening the darkness of it’s shade,
And seeming holier peace to spread.
More grandly those turrets, mossed and hoar,
Upon the crimson evening soar.
Yet lovelier far their forms appear
When they lift their heads in the moonlight air
And softening beams of languid white

Tip their shadowy crowns with light.
But most holy their look, when a fleecy cloud
O’er them throws it’s trembling shroud,
Then palely thinly dies away,
And leaves them to the full bright ray.
Thus Sorrow fleets from Resignation’s smile;
The virtue lives — the suffering dies the while.

III.

And, as these moonlight-towers we trace,
A living look, a saintly grace
Beams o’er them, when we seem to hear
The midnight-hymn breathe soft and clear,
As from this choir of old it rose.
Each hallowed thought they seem to own,
Expressed by music’s heavenly tone;
And patient, sad, and pale and still,
As if resign’d to wait Time’s will.
Such choral swell and dying close
Stole on the Abbot’s hour of rest,
Like solemn air from spirit blest,
And shaped his vision of repose.
The pious instinct of his soul,
Not even slumber might control:
Soon as he caught the distant lay,
His gathering thoughts half woke to pray
Celestial smile came o’er his brow,
Though sealed in sleep the lid below;
And, when in silence died the strain,
The lingering prayer
His lips forbear,
And deep his slumbers fell again.

IV.

Bold is this Abbey’s front, and plain;
The walls no shrined saint sustain;
Nor tower, nor airy pinnet crown;
But broadly sweeps the Norman arch
Where once in brightened shadow shone
King Offa, on his pilgrim-march
And proudly points the mouldered stone
Of the high-vaulted porch beneath,
Where Norman beauty hangs a wreath
Of simple elegance and grace;
Where slender columns guard the space
On every side, in clustered row,
The triple arch through arch disclose,
And lightly o’er the vaulting throw
The thwart-rib and the fretted rose.
Beside this porch, on either hand,
Giant buttresses darkly stand,
And still their silent vanguard hold
For bleeding Knights, laid here of old;
And Mercian Offa and his Queen
The portal’s guard and grace are seen.
This western front shows various style,
Less ancient than the central pile.
No furrows deep upon its brow
The frown of seven stern centuries show;
Yet the sad grandeur of the whole
Gives it such a look of soul,
That, when upon it’s silent walls
The silvered grey of moonlight falls,
And the fixed image dim appears,
It seems some shade of parted years
Left watching o’er the mouldering dead;
Who here for pious Henry bled,
And here, beneath the wide-stretched ground

Of nave, of choir, of chapels round.
For ever — ever, rest the head.

V.

Now know ye this pale and ancient Choir,
Where the massy tower lifts a slender spire?
Here forty abbots have ruled and one, —
Twenty with pall and mitre on,
And bowed them to the Pope alone.
Their hundred monks, in black arrayed,
The Benedictine rules obeyed;
O'er distant lands they held their sway;
Freed from Peter's-pence were they;
The gift of palle from Pope they claimed,
And Cardinal-Abbots were they named;
And even old Canterbury's lord
Was long refused the premier board;
For this was the first British Martyr's bier,
And the Pope said " His priest shall have no peer
Now know ye St. Alban's bones rest here.

VI.

Kings and heroes here were guests
In stately halls, at solemn feasts.
But now, nor dais, nor halls remain
Nor fretted, window's gorgeous pane
Twilight illuminated throws
Where once the high-served banquet rose

VII.

No fragment of a roof remains
To echo back their wassail strains;
But the long aisles, whose? holy gloom
Still mourns and veils the martyr’s tomb.
The broad grey tower, the turrets wide,
Scattered o’er tower and transept, guide
The distant traveller to their throne,
Where they high-seated watch alone,
And seem, with aspect sad, to tell,
That they of all their Abbey’s power
Remain to point, where heroes fell,
And monarch met his evil hour,
And guileless, meek, and pious, bowed
To doubtful right’s victorious crowd.

VIII.

Now, if this cloister, fallen and gone,
Ye fain would view, as once it shone,,
Pace ye, with reverend step, I pray,
The grass-grown and forgotten way,
While murmurs low the fitful wind.
Winning to peace the meekend mind;,
And Evening, in her solemn stole,
With stillness o’er those, woods afar,
Leads in blue shade her brightening star,
As spreads the slow gloom from the pole,
And these old towers their watch more awful keep,
(Where once the Curfew spoke with solemn rule)
And the feint hills and all the valley sleep
In misty grey beneath the “dewy cool.”
Yet, if a worldly heart ye wear,
These visioned-shades forbear — forbear!
To thee no dim-seen halls may gleam,
For thee no hallowed tapers beam

On the pale visage through the gloom
Bending in prayer by shrine, or tomb.
Turn thou thy wearied step away;
Go thou where dance and song are gay,
Or where the sun is flaming high,
And leave these scenes to Evening's sigh.

IX.

But ye, with measured step and slow,
Whose smile is shaded soft with woe;
And ye, who holy, joy can know.
The glow beyond all other glow, — ?.
Ye, whose high spirit dares to dwell
Beyond the reach of earthly spell,
And tread upon the dizzy verge
Of unknown worlds; or downward urge,
Through ages dim, your steadfast sight,
And trace their shapes of shadowed light,
O come "with meek submitted thought,"
With lifted eye, by Rapture taught,
And o'er your head the gloom shall rise
Of monkish chambers, still and wide,
As once they stood; and to your eyes
Group after group shall slowly glide,
And here again their duties ply,
As they were wont, long ages by.
The twilight broods not yet so deep,
But we may trace where now they sleep
Beneath the sullen turf, aloof,
And where each solemn chamber's roof
Drew it's strong vaulting o'er their frames,
But urged on human praise no Claims,
Nor always bore their living mimes.

X.

On yonder brow, that fronts the West,
Where glimmering beams in stillness rest,
Once rose the Abbot’s Hall of Right,
That wont to view Ver’s stream below
And shallow valley Westward go
To farthest hills, that owned his might;
And from those farthest hills were teen,
Through oaken boughs of stretching green,
The fretted window of that hall,
The pinnacle, that crowned it’s wall,
And seemed to watch it’s portal grey,
With crimson light tinged by the setting ray.

XI.

Thus rose the Abbot’s vaulted Hall,
Where he, in virtue of the palle,
Spoke doom to all his vassal throng;
For life and death were on his tongue,
And scarce less ready to fulfill
His worldly, than his better will,
Were peasant, vavasour, and knight,
From London’s wall to Beechwood’s height.
His weighty robe of velvet fold
Was ‘broidered round, and clasped with gold.
A Prior helped his office to sustain,
A hundred monks did dignify his reign.
Pale were they and closely shorn,
Heedless they were of human scorn
And arts that wait on human pride;
In patience each with other vied.
‘Mong such had Matthew Paris stood,

Pious, learned, wise and good,
Though shrouded in a bigot’s hood.

XII.

Here, where the deeper shadows fall,
Once echoed o’er the paved hall
The weary step and staff of him,
Who, at this lonely hour and dim,
The last chill hour of eventide,
Had heard from yonder bleak hill side,
Where once stood Roman Verulam,
Faint o’er the wintry waters come
The bell of Compline, chiming slow
From forth this Abbey’s unseen tower,
And spied, amid the shades below,
The hearth-blaze in the stranger’s bower;
For here the Pilgrim’s Lodge arose,
Whose porch and hall and parlour warm
And well-dosed chambers of repose
Received him from the rushing storm.

XIII.

And, when he reached the cheering blaze,
How sweet to think upon those ways,
As the shrill wind and sleety rain
Against the casements strove in vain.
But crowding thoughts soon chased repose,
And nigh to sacred rapture rose,
As now he knew himself so near
The object of his long career,
And, safely placed, where all around
Was ancient, consecrated ground;

The precinct sought o’er sea and shore, —
The grave of him, whose sufferings o’er
Had now their glorious triumph found!

XIV.

There the Scriptorium spread it’s gloom,
To dead and living, like one tomb;
The living there like dead might show,
So mutely sat they, ranged in row;
Scarce seen to move, from hour to hour,
Copying the written folio rare,
Or tracing bird, or curious flower,
Round blessed Mary in her bower,
In splendid gold and colours fair,
On missal leaf, with painful care,
Or portraiture of Donor good,
That, closely kept and seldom viewed,
Still fresh and glorious should be
For century following century.

XV.

Others there were, who volumes bouqd
In silk, or velvet, ‘broidered round
And ‘bossed with gold and gems of price,
Enclasped with emerald palm-leaf thrice.
On the high WINDOW near would shine,
Transparent, the memorial line
Of him, who once had wrought below,
With patient hand and earnest brow;
Him, whose small pencil thus enshrined
In book of GOLDEN RECORD true,
The image and the noble mind,

And thanks to benefactor due.
There shadowed Kings and Abbots pass,
In crowned pomp, or sweeping palle,
Like spectres o’er some wizard’s glass.
There, as the lifted pages fall,
They rise to view and disappear,
As year steals silent after year,
Till came the blank leaf, turned o’er all!
Even o’er him, while here he wrought
On the dull page the living thought.
In after-time were here impressed
Those wondrous characters combined,
That stamp upon the paper vest
At once, the image of the mind.
The second Abbey this in all the land,
That stretched to learning a preserving hand

XVI.

Here cloister-walks, in spacious square,
Showed sacred story, painted fair.
And portraiture of famous men,
Who seemed to live and speak again,
In golden maxims from the walls.
Nobly these cloisters ranged along
By chapels, chambers, courts and halls,
Dividing from the cowled throng,
As with a dim and pillared aisle,
The Royal lodging’s stately pile.
There the Queen’s parlour, and her bower,
Hung o’er the sunny southern glade;
And here the place of monarch-power
Gleamed through the Abbey’s farther shade.
The foliaged arch, the well-carved door
Of chamber, hung from vault to floor

With storied scene, or cloth of gold,
Or ‘broidered velvet’s purple fold,
Rose beauteous to the taste of yore.
And slender shafts, entwined with flowers,
Lifted their high o’erarching bowers,
Traced forth with mimic skill so true,
Kings seemed their Windsor’s groves to view.

XVII.

The high-carved chimney’s canopy
Spread broad o’er half a blazing tree,
With pinnacle and mitre wrought
And shielded arms of Mercia’s court,
Three royal crowns; and blazonry
Of many an abbot lying near
In choir, or cloister, on his bier.
High in the midst a marble farm
Stood in it’s tabernacle shade,
Pale as the gleam of April storm;
Oft was the passing monk afraid;
So sternly watched the downcast eye!
Yet hardly might such monk know why.
On the brow a kingly crown it wore,
In it’s hand a Mercian sceptre bore;
‘Twas Offa stood there on his fretted throne,
Whom these holy walls for their founder own,
Who Charlemagne for foe and friend had known.
And in that chamber, not in vain,
With mullions light and roial pane,
Rose th’ oriel window’s triple arch,
That pictured forth the solemn march
Of Offa, with his pilgrim train.

XVIII.

Within these walls there was one scene,
Where worldly matters were discussed;
It was the Prior’s cloister-green;
There ruled he, by the Abbot’s trust.
For not amid the noise of men,
Disturbed by their familiar ken,
Dwelt the Lord Abbot; his recess
Was little easy of access;
No by the southern transept rose
(The shelves with store of learning fraught)
His Lodge and Cloister of repose,
His bower, where all apart he sought,
From convent-state and homage free,
Leisure and learned dignity.

XIX.

Lost now that Study’s farther shade,
Whose peace no stray step might invade,
Nor any sound of breathing life,
Save when the Choir, in faint, sweet strife
Of voice and citole offering
Praise, such as Angel-bands might sing,
Passed o’er the Vision’s patient head,
Like whisper of the spirit fled.

XX.

Far distant rose those walls upon the light,
The stately walls, with tapestry richly dight,
Of th’ Abbot’s Banquet-hall, where, as on throne,
He sat at the high dais, like prince, alone,
Save when a Royal guest came here,

Or Papal Legate claimed a chair.
Here marble platforms, flight o'er flight,
Slow rising through the long-lined view,
Showed tables, spread at different height,
Where each for different rank he knew.
And, with pleased glance, adown the hall,
Saw Bishops in their far-sought palle,
The Abbey's noble Seneschal,
Barons and Earls, in gold array,
And warrior Knights, in harneys grey.
There was the Prior's delegated sway.
The grave Archdeacon sat below,
And th' hundred Monks, in row and row;
Not robed in dismal sable they
Upon a high and festal day,
But all in copes most costly and most gay.
There, too, the Abbey-Marshal shone,
And there, beside the Abbot's throne,
CHAPLAIN OF HONOUR from the Pope, alone.

XXI.

Thus the Lord-Abbot, were he proud,
Might muse upon the chequered crowd;
Nor always did his mind disdain
The worldly honours, though so vain.
His board with massive plate was laid,
And rare inventions it displayed;
Each sewer-monk his homage paid
With bended knee and bowed head,
And Latin verse, half sung, half said
On every platform, as he rose
Through the long hall to it's high close,
Where frankincense from golden urns
In light wreath round the Abbot burns.

The chaunted Latin grace was sung
With pomp of instruments, that rung
The arched roofs and screens among.
And, when a Royal guest was there,
The Abbot, rising from his chair,
Blessed, with spread hands, the ordered feast,
While reverend stood each princely guest,
And far adown the hall might see
Knights, Bishops, Earls, on bended knee.

XXII.

And when came up, at old Yule-tide,
The boar's head, trimmed with garlands gay,
With shining holly's scarlet pride,
And the sweet-scented rosemary,
O! then what merry carols rung,
What choral lays the minstrels sung!
Marching before it through the hall,
Led by the stately Seneschal.
This was the joyous minstrel's call,
In Leonine with English strung:
"*CAPUT APRI DEFERO.*

*

"The boar's head in hand bring I
"With garlands gay and rosemary;
"I pray you, all sing merrily,
"*QUI ESTIS IN CONVIVIO.* "

XXIII.

Then, every voice in chorus joined
Of those who sat in festal row.
You might have heard it on the wind —
Heard it o’er hills of desert snow.
Thence might be seen, in vale below,
Through windows of that Banquet-hall,
The mighty YULE-CLOUGH blazing clear,
And the Yule-Tapers, huge and tall,
Lighting the roofs with timely cheer.
But, ere a few brief hours were sped,
The blaze was gone — the guests were fled.
And heavy was the Winter’s sigh,
As those lone walls it passed by.

XXIV.

Now, ere the Abbot’s feast began,
Or yet appeared the crane and swan,
The solemn Carver, with his keen
Knife, and well armed with napkins clean,
Scarf-wise athwart his shoulder placed,
And on each arm and round his waist,
Came, led by Marshal, to the dais.
There every trencher he assays,
O’er the GREAT SALT makes flourishes,
Touches each spoon and napkin fair.
Assaying whether ill lurk there,
Ere he present it to his lord,
Or offer IT AT THE REWARDE.
The Sewer, half-kneeling on his way,
Of every dish receives assaye
At the high board, as guard from guile,
The Marshal waiting by the while,
And ancient carols rising slow
From the young Choir and Monks below.

And thus, as every course came on,
These pomps an awful reverence won.

XXV.

Soon as the last high course was o’er,
The Chaplain from the cupboard bore,
With viands from the tables stored,
The ALMS-DISH to the Abbot’s board,
And ample loaf, and gave it thence,
With due form and good countenance,
That th’ Almoner might it dispense.
Next came the Cup-bearers, with wine,
Malmsey and golden metheglin,
With spice-cake and with wafers fine.
This o’er, when surnaps all were drawn,
And solemn grace again was sung,
Came golden ewer and bason, borne
In state to the high board along.

XXVI.

But, at high tide, ere all was past,
Marched the huge Wassail-bowl the last,
Obedient to the Abbot’s call,
Borne by the Steward of the hall;
The Marshal with his wand before
And streamers gay and rosemary,
And Ghoral carols sounding o’er.
‘Twas set beside the father’s dais,
Where oft the Deacon, in his place,
Who bearer of the grace-cup was,
Filled high the cordial Hippocras
From out that bowl of spicery,

And served the Abbot on his knee;
Then, sent around to every board
This farewell-wassail from his lord.
The Abbot, tasting of the wine,
Rose from his chair, in wonted sign
The feast was o'er; yet stood awhile
In cheerful converse with high guest,
Who from the tables round him pressed
Then, with a kind and gracious smile.
The wassail and the hoard he blessed,
Ere yet he left the gorgeous scene,
And sought the tranquil shade within.

XXVII.

Here, with proud grace, did Wolsey stand,
Signing forth blessings with his hand,
And oft the grace-cup had allowed
To move among the willing crowd.
Grandeur sat on his steadfast brow,
'Mid high Imagination's glow;
He seemed to feel himself the lord
Of all who sat beside his board,
And, whether Peer, or Prince, or King,
'Twas meet to him they homage bring;
And homage willed they, since his pride
Had genius, judgement, taste, for guide.
Which held it in such fine control,
Pride seemed sublimity of soul.

XXVIII.

Short while the Abbot d d repose,
When he had left the Banquet-hall;

For soon, where his arched chamber rose,
Would other pageant-scenes disclose
On days of convent festival.
Here, on the Martyr's annual feast
When Obits at his shrine had ceased;
When GIVE-ALE and the DOLE were o'er;
When Robin Hood had left his bower,
And in the Convent's spacious court
The morrice-dancers ceased their sport,
And on the rout was closed the Abbey-door;
Then torch and taper, blazing clear
Within the Abbot's evening room,
Banished the heavy, wintry gloom;
And Mysteries were acted here.
Then, Chronicle of Kings, pourtrayed
From England's story, long gone by,
In mimic garb and scene arrayed
Awoke the brethren's solemn sigh;
Such as we breathe o'er these, our theme,
Whelmed in the ever-passing stream.

XXIX.

Here, too, the Minstrels' chaunted song
Told of their sainted Alban's fate;
But, oft the measure wound along
With tales of Chivalry's high state,
Of knights, of ladies and of love,
Ambition's eagle, Beauty's dove,
And many a lay of Holy Land,
Of Richard's and of Edward's band.
The harpers, in the noble train
Of Abbey guest, oft joined the strain;
And, as they woke with fire the lay,
Or bade it's moving grief decay,

Each silent monk, with look attent,
His head, unhooded, thoughtful, bent.
Then might you watch, in the stern eye,
The busy, fretful passions die,
Such as in gloom and loneness dwell,
Gnawing the bosom's vital cell,
And spreading poison through the soul,
That yields to their malign control.

XXX.

'Twas sweet the softened mind to trace
Beaming upon time-hardened face,
Won by still harmony to rest;
And all unconscious of the tear,
That, stranger to such brow severe,
Upon the closing eyelid pressed.
But sweeter 'twas to mark the smile
Of the blind Minstrel o'er the strings;
Darkness, nor want, he knows the while,
As wide the storied verse he flings;
For Music can all wants beguile,
With bright perception chase his night,
And can awake that glow of heart,
Affection's dearest smiles impart;
For Music is — the blind man's light!
The beam, that does to mental ray
Image and sentiment display,
The world of passion, living thought,
All that the mind through sight ere sought.
Then sigh not, that he dwells in night,
For he hath Music for his light!

XXXI.

This vaulted chamber once was lined
With arras rich, where stood combined
The story of Cologne’s Three Kings,
With other far-famed ancient things.
Yet oft, on solemn festival,
A deeper tale spoke from the wall,
Such as might aid the mimic show
Enacted on the scene below;
Where the raised platform, near the BAY,
Served well for stage. That oriel gay
Rose with light leaves and columns tall,
Mid roial glass and fretwork small;
While tripod lamps from the coved roof
Showed well each painted mask aloof,
Lanfranc and Saxon Edward there,
Watching the scene they once could share.

XXXII.

That oriel shed bright influence
And charm, by its magnificence,
On all there told by eye, or tongue,
Morality, or Mystery,
Or Founder’s boon, or History.
In front, the velvet curtain, flung
In folds aside, not then for shade,
Or shelter, as when winds invade,
Made graceful ornament between
The roof and the fictitious scene.
How different from this festal grace,
How fit it’s blandishments to chase,
Were the long vistas, ranging here
Of the Great Cloister’s pillared square.

XXXIII.

And when could festal joy e’er vie
With the calm rapture of the sigh
Breathed in that Cloister’s solemn shade,
When the lone monk would muse and read,
And meditate on ancient lore,
Or view the warrior on his tomb,
With raised hands seeming to implore
Of Heaven a mitigated doom?
So shaded would such figure lie,
Tall arches pointing o’er the head,
That, though a window, placed on high,
It’s gleam through distant colours shed, —
So dim would lie in shades below,
That, whether living shape, or dead,
The monk, who gazed, might hardly know.
And often, at the midnight-watch,
(The shrine-watch in the aisle beside)
His ear attent low sound would catch,
That stole along the tomb and died,
As though he had some holy word
In whisper from the marble heard!

Followed a stillness all profound;
Was it some spirit from the ground
That breathed a spell of death around?
If the monk watched some little space,
Life would seem trembling o’er the face!
The pallid stone would change it’s hue,
And tremble to his doubting view!

XXXIV.

Gone is that Cloister’s shadowy walk,
Where the more aged would pace and talk,
Or, resting in the well-carved nook,
Leisurely read the rare LENT BOOK,
Turning each page with reverend care.
Th’ illuminator’s work to spare;
Or tell some legend of a saint,
Or allegory, little worth,
Of monkish virtues pictured forth
In leonine, of Latin quaint.
Whate’er it were, ‘twas fine repose,
In cloister-shade, at evening close,
To lean along that oaken seat,
And, all enwrapt in quiet gloom,
Hear the still Vesper, rising sweet
From sainted Oswyn’s shrine and tomb,
Or Obit from the chantry near
Of the good Abbot Delamere,
Swell faint and die upon the ear.
And solemn ‘twas and sweet, the while,
To mark upon some distant aisle,
Seen through deep arch of transept-door,
The streaming torchlight break the shade,
Strike the tall arches over head,
Or, slanting low that long aisle o’er,
Show, some dim sepulchre before,
The lonely, duteous mourner there,
Kneeling and veiled in watch of prayer.

XXXV.

There, ranged around in silent guard,
Seventeen kings yet watch and ward
The good Duke Humphrey’s mouldering form,
Here rescued from the earthly storm,

Raised by a rival — now a worm!
And, when the midnight chaunts were still,
Strange sounds the vault below would fill.
A ghastly shade, with mitred head,
Has stalked, that lonely tomb around,
And knelt upon the honoured ground,
With hands upon its white palle spread,
In seeming prayer and penance lost;
‘Twas guessed this was a murderer’s ghost,
Condemned to wander round the grave
Of him, whom kindness could not save.
There were, who in that shade could see
(Or ‘twas the moonbeam’s mockery)
Beaufort of cruel memory!
Such look as dying he had shown,
When hope of Heaven he did not own,
And Horror stared beside his bed;
Such grisly look this visage had.

XXVI.

And, at such hour, was sometimes seen,
Veiled in thin shadowy weeds of woe,
The image of a stately Queen,
Near the cold marble pacing slow.
The crown upon her hair gleamed faint,
And more of heroine than saint
Was drawn upon her lofty brow.
The proud, heroic graces there,
The grandeur of her step and air,
No softer charms of pity share.
Alas! that such commanding mind
Were not with truth and mercy joined!
Now, were her look, her eye of lire,
That once could warlike bands inspire,

Dimmed with the tear of vain remorse:
Far less had been a kingdom’s loss,
Than loss of holy innocence;
So said her fixed and anguished countenance.

XXXVII.

But Margaret’s moan, nor Beaufort’s word,
Was heard at Vesper’s hallowed hour
To musing monk, in cloister-bower;
Pious sounds alone he heard,
And listened oft, with saintly smile,
When Autumn’s gale swept o’er the aisle,
And bore the swelling hymn away
Up to the realms of heavenly day!
But, when the fitful gust was gone,
Rose that strain with a sweeter tone;
The hymn of Peace it seemed to be —
Her hushed and meekest minstrelsy —
Her welcome to the Just, when free
From this short world of misery.
The monk, who listened, many a still tear shed,
By trembling Hope and blessed Pity fed;
The listener’s self how soon among the dead!

XXXVIII.

But who the changing scenes may tell
This Abbey’s ancient walls have known!
When London tolled the Plague’s death-bell,
Justice here held her courts alone;
Here, in this nave, was placed her throne.
An earlier age showed scenes more dread,
For shrines and tombs around were spread

With bleeding knights and nobles dead.
Next age, the latter Henry's bands
Each consecrated altar spoiled,
Seized on the Abbey's ample lands,
And recklessly for plunder toiled.
Then, nearer to the living day,
Here other spoilers bore the sway,
Who, feigning Reason for their guide,
Indulged an impious, bigot pride.
All arrogant in their chicane,
They dared these reverend walls profane.
Then Cromwell's bands on gravestones lay,
And storied brasses tore away;
The sculptured marble tombs defaced
Of those, who, nameless, sleep below;
That the tall arch, with web-work traced
That shadowed form of Prophet graced,
Was shattered by their impious blow.

XXXIX.

Of all this Abbey's ample bound
One outer arch alone is found,
To mark the Convent's stately port,
The entrance of the western court,
Beneath whose arch have passed the trains
Of Kings succeeding Kings, when strains
From trump and clarion, as from fort,
Have shook the massy walls around,
And startled with the warrior-sound
The penanced monk, in distant cell,
(He had his long beads twice to tell,
Nor knew what form he muttered then,) —
While forth, to meet their Sovereign,

The Abbot and his convent paced,
With time-worn banners, ranged in haste.

XL.

Then from the convent-lrall within
Faint might be heard the joyous din
Of minstrel-harp and choral voice,
That for the royal-guest rejoice;
And then the painted window bright,
Lighting, on high, the murky night,
And showing portraiture of Saint,
Kind signal to the Pilgrim faint;
But to the robber, in his cell
Of giant-oak, it told too well,
That richly-dight and jewelled guest
Would late return to distant rest.
The darkened vale and subject-town
Viewed such bright vision with a frown,
And murmured, that the tyrant knell
Of iron Curfew should compel
Their homes to sink in sudden night,
When e'en the turret, whence it spoke,
Insulting those who owned the yoke,
Lifted it's brow, all ruddy bright,
Flushed from the Abbey-Hall's strong light.

XLI.

But though these lighted halls are gone,
And darkly stands that tower and lone,
The sacred temple still endures;
A truer worship it secures.
And, though the gorgeous shrines are o'er,

And their pale watch-monks now no more;
Though torch nor voice from chantry-tomb,
Break, solemn, through the distant gloom;
Though pilgrim-trains no more ascend
Where far-seen arches dimly bend,
And fix in awe th' admiring eye
Upon the Martyr's crown on high,
And watch upon his funeral-bed;
Nor hundred Monks, by Abbot led,
Through aisle and choir, by tomb and shrine,
Display the long-devolving line,
To notes of solemn minstrelsy,
And hymns, that o'er the vaulting die
Yet, we here feel the inward peace,
That in long-reverenced places dwells;
Our earthly cares here learn to cease;
The Future all the Past expels.
And still, so solemn falls the shade,
Where once the weeping Palmer prayed,
We feel, as o'er the graves we tread,
His thrill of reverential dread.

XLII.

Thou silent Choir, whose only sound
Is whispering step o'er graves around,
Or echo faint from vault, on high,
Of the poor redbreast's minstrelsy,
Who, perched on some carved mask of stone,
By lofty gallery dim and lone,
Sends sweet, short note, but sparely heard,
That sounds e'en like the farewell word
Of some dear friend, whose smile in vain
We seek through tears to view again!
Thou holy shade — unearthly gloom!

That hoverest o’er the Martyr’s tomb;
Ye awful vaults, whose aspect wears
The ghastliness of parted years!
The very look, the steadfast frown,
That ye on ages past sent down,
Strange, solemn, wonderful and dread,
Pageant of living and of dead; —
Thou silent Choir! thou holy shade!
Ye walls, that guard the Martyr’s head,
Meet agents are ye to inspire
The lone enthusiast’s thought of fire;
High ministers of Alban’s fame,
Ye are his tomb, and breathe his name.

XLIII.

And when, enthroned on field of war,
This Abbey’s walls are seen afar,
When it’s old dark-drawn aisles extend
Upon the light; and, bold and broad,
The central tower is seen t’ ascend,
And sternly look their sovereign lord,
We feel again such transports rise,
As fixed that way-worn Palmer’s eyes,
When, gaining first the toilsome brow,
Rose to his sight the Shrine below,
When, as he caught it’s aspect pale,
He shouted “ Alban! Martyr! hail!”
And knelt and wept, and kissed the long-sought

CANTO II .

I

AMIDST these old abodes of peace
Did War his crimson banner rear.
And bid the heavenly anthem cease.
While his stern trumpets rent the air?
Here, in each cloister, hall and walk,
Where sandalled feet unheard went by,
And voices low, in reverend talk,
Feared to disturb it's sanctity,
Did here the Warrior's iron tread
Shake the cold slumber of the dead,
Call murmurs from the vaults below
And the long whispered sigh of woe;
Stalk o'er the helpless and the good,
And print the hermit's vest with blood?
Yes; blood the hallowed pavement stained;
And blood the shrine of peace prophaned!
The ring of mail — the clash of steel
Through choir and cloister sent their peal
To chambers dim, where Silence slept,
And pious men their sabbath kept,
Who, long secure from sense of ill,
And well subdued in mind and will,
Pondered Futurity's high theme
And this world's strange and fleeting dream.

II.

O day of guilt and bleeding woe!
Year after year shall mourn in vain
The countless ills, that from ye flow;
And hardly hope for peace again —

The day, when York and Lancaster
First loosed the tide of civil war;
When hostile brothers of the land
Met face to face, and hand to hand,
And sunk each other's lance beneath,
And breathed each other's dying breath!

III.

The eve before that battle day,
The camp of either army lay
Beyond where now the straining sight
Can reach from Alban's utmost height.
'Twas leaning on this very tower,
That Alban's Monks watched hour by hour.
They, who lie dark in death below
Yon fallen walls, in silent row
Gazed, as you gaze, from this high brow.
The cowl and helmet, side by side,
Watched from this height the bannered pride,
And marked the gathering storm of war
Hang dark o'er all those hills afar;
And, in dread stillness of the soul,
Heard the low, threatening thunder roll,
That soon would, in it's cloudy course,
Burst round their walls with lightning-force.

IV.

Camped o'er those green and northern lands,
There lay Duke Richard's way-worn bands;
The pale rose on their ensigns stood.
Southward, where now the clear sun shines.
Watched Royal Henry's warrior-lines,

Surmounted with the rose of blood.
His vanguard lay beneath these halls,
And round St. Stephen’s neighbouring walls.
To Cashio’s vale his centre spread,
Where the King pressed a thorny bed.
His legions stretched toward Stanmore’s brow
And Harrow’s lofty sanctuary,
Whose spiry top you just may know,
Crowned with many a stately tree,
Where now the gleam falls fleetingly.
The lights and shades of Fortune’s power
Fell not as Nature’s at this hour.
Her storm frowned on the southern scene;
Her smile shone o’er yon flowery green.
Those distant downs, now dim and grey,
Those misty woods received her ray.

V.

While the Monks from this battlement
Their glance o’er the wide prospect sent,
They watched the western sun go down
‘Mid clouds of amber, edged with gold,
That did their splendid wings unfold,
And seemed to wait around his throne.
A monk, who marked them, dared foretell,
That gentle Peace would here still dwell;
But the bold guess and flattering ray
Sunk alike in gloom away.
One crimson streak of parted day
Lingered where HENRY’S army lay;
Till o’er it spread the night’s dark hue,
That veiled awhile each camp from view.

VI.

Then, gradual, through the deepening gloom,
Torch and signal-fires relume
The war-lines on the hills and dells,
Leaving wide shadowy intervals;
Yet marking to the distant eye
How broad and close those camp-lines lie:
Gleaming as does the Ocean's bed,
When sun has set in stormy red,
And surge on surge rolls crested bright,
Beneath the glance of parting light.

VII.

The other camp, of smaller force.
Concealed it's boundary by the course
Of heights, save where one hill retired;
There was the dusk with redness fired
By casual watch-torch through the gloom;
And there lay YORK, like hidden doom,
Waiting to send forth nameless woes.
High o'er that hill the blaze uprose
Upon the darkly-sullen sky,
Here reddening on a livid cloud,
There glancing like the fancied crowd,
That ride the northern lights on high.
Duke Richard watched upon this hill,
While his camp-field was dark and still;
But that a guard-fire, here and there,
Lifted it's lonely fitful glare,
Where steeds and warriors lay around
In harness for the battle-day,
Half-slumbering to the frequent sound
Of steps and weapons on the ground,
Preparing for the morrow's fray.

His scouts near Henry’s army strolled,
And to his gathered Council told
Where lay it’s weakness, where it’s hold.
But HENRY, trusting to his force,
Scorned such dark cares and secret course.

VIII.

So near the outer posts approached,
That each on each at times encroach’d,
And speech of taunt, or civil cheer,
Mixed with the clink of harness-gear,
Was heard; and each might view the flare
From Alban’s topmost round in air,
That made the tower, in lurid gloom,
A more gigantic port assume.
And, silent, on the rocky steep
Their watch o’er hill and valley keep.
Each, too, might see dim forms on high,
Glide, where the beacon touched the sky:
For there it’s flame of sullen red
Flashed on a cowled monk’s sable head,
Glanced on the Abbey-knight beside,
And showed his plumy crest of pride,
On the night-breezes dancing gay,
As though in sun and chivalry.

IX.

That monk and knight, with steady gaze,
Watched where the far-off signals blaze,
O’er many a ridge of wood and down,
From heath and camp, from tower and town
From ancient Hadley’s cresset-flame,

That peered o’er hills, an eastern star,
(The beacon-turret still the same)
Bearing this sign of iron war
To Cashio’s close-surrounded vale
And Gorhambury’s turrets pale,
And nameless lands, in shade unknown.
The nearer scene they looked upon,
Glimmer’d in varying shade and light,
Thrown from the Abbey’s beacon bright.

X.

It gleamed on stately bowers below,
Tinged porch and transept’s dusky brow,
Glared on broad courts and humble cell,
Glanced on the crystal Oriel,
And cast deep shadow on the ground
From gates and turrets ranged around.
There, Abbey Lancemen slowly paced,
Where scarce the portal-arch was traced,
As flashed the blaze along the air,
And quivered on each Warrior’s spear;
Long, shaded walks it showed, that led
Where cloister-plat and gardens spread,
And monks, wrapt close in sable weed,
Passed to and fro, with fearful speed.
The gloomy light was thrown so far,
It reddened dark St. Michael’s brow,
Frowning on Roman foss below,
And tinged the bridge and streams of Ver.

XI.

St. Alban’s town, with wakeful eyes,
Viewed the red beacon sink and rise,
And, sought to spell each signal sent
To good King HENRY’S distant tent.
And, while they gazed, the changing glare.
Broad on each roof and lattice-bar,
Showed every visage watching there
For tiding of the threatened war.
Upon Queen Ellen’s pile of state,
That crowned the town and mourned her fate,
The trembling gleam touched shrine and saint
With light and shade, so finely faint,
The form beneath each canopy
Appeared to lean so patiently,
As if it bent o’er the loved bier,
That, once for short time placed here.
Had made the spot to Edward dear,
And listened, while the Requiem’s flow
Shed stillness o’er the mourner’s woe.

XII.

Patient upon the Abbey-Tower,
From Vesper to the Matin hour,
The knight and monk the first watch kept,
While few beneath their vigil slept.
Later, within the turret-head,
The monk from the chill night-wind fled;
But never from that platform’s height
Strayed the due footstep of the knight.
With patient eye and measured pace,
He turned upon the narrow space.
And listened each imperfect sound,
That rose from camp, or road, around,
Or noise of preparation made

Below in porch and archway shade.
The massy bolts and ponderous bars
Of studded gates, that, in old wars,
Against the rebel townsmen closed,
Had now so long in peace reposed,
So long had been unmoved by hand,
They now the Warder's might withstand.
Often was heard the mingled din
From clink of smith and voice within,
From footsteps heavy with the weight
Of chest, that bore from shrines a freight,
And altar-tombs, to secret hold
Of jewels rich and cups of gold;
Though yet was left some little show
To check, if need, the plunderer's blow.

XIII.

And, when such busy sounds were o'er,
That Abbey-knight might hear once more
From the still street, in echoing swell,
The watchword of each sentinel
Pass on it's far-extending range
From post to post, with ordered change.
Now low, now sullen, and now high,
"Health to the King!" — then "So say I."
And sometimes, too, a distant drum,
With stealthy murmur seemed to come,
Then rolled away, and sunk afar
Where slept the thundercloud of war.
From roads was heard and doubted ground
The watch-cry of patrols around,
Mingled, at times, with one slow note,
Swelled solemn from the cornet's throat,
And answered faint and fainter still,

Like echo from the distant hill.
And, when such solemn sounds were past,
When slumbered e'en the midnight blast,
The due hymn from the choir below
Through the high tower ascended slow,
While round the bands of Havock lay,
Waiting but for the morn of May
To light War, Death, and Treason to their prey

XIV.

The Knight sent frequent message down,
That all was still,
No sign of ill
Drew nearer to St. Alban's town.
The while the Abbot, in debate,
Sat with his officers of State,
And Seneschal, Judge of his Court,
Discussing every new report
And message, sent from scouts afar,
That told the visage of the war.
Vainly for some they waited long,
Perplexed Duke Richard's hosts among;
Others came, horse on horse, so fast,
That every quarter-watch that passed,
Brought rumour fresh and wond'rous tale,
Bidding now hope, now fear, prevail,
And still most wond'rous ever was the last.

XV.

The pious Abbot, Whetehampsted,
Of learned men the learned head,
Closed a late council, and withdrew,

Needful, though short repose to woo;
But still the Prior and Seneschal
Waited the worst, that might befall,
Ready, if enemy approach,
For council at the Abbot’s couch.
He, wakeful long and anxious still,
Lost not in sleep his sense of ill,
For then, in slumbers, touched with sorrow,
He saw dim visions of the morrow,
Saw round those walls the battle bleed;
Heard the fierce trump and neigh of steed;
Saw wounded Henry, in the strife,
Borne down and pleading for his life,
And, starting at the piteous view,
He woke, with chill brow bathed in dew.

XVI.

That night, few monks their pallets pressed,
And scarce an eye was closed in rest;
Most were from slumber held away
By terror of the coming day;
Yet some there were, who, fond of change
And slaves to envy, wished to see
The battle take it’s direst range,
Though round their walls it chanced to be
And some, who, fired with worldly zeal,
Would fain, with casque and sword of steel,
Mingle in royal Henry’s train;
And others Richard’s plea maintain.
But each, by prudent council swayed,
Or policy, their chief obeyed.
The ordered chime was hourly rung;
Each mass was duly said and sung;
And, at each gate, though armed band

Obeyed an Abbey-knight’s command,
And o’er the posterns had control,
Yet, at each station watched a cowl,
And still on tower, half hid in hood,
The pale Monk with the Warrior stood.

XVII.

That Monk had heard the Vesper-bell
Call every brother from his cell;
Had heard the bell of Compline sound,
And followed every service round;
And as he heard each chaunt ascend,
Silent and meek, his head would bend;
Each word th’ accustomed mind supplied,
That distance to his ear denied;
Though absent he, by painful need,
He joined the prayer and dropped the bead.
And oft, in silent orison,
He prayed, that war might spare this town;
That all who dwelt within these walls
Might duly own Religion’s calls
On the unknown tomorrow’s night,
Now trembling on his darkened sight.
He prayed, too, that no blood-stained grave.
Might wait that watching Warrior brave,
Whose spirit frank and free and kind
Had calmed and cheered his boding mind.

XVIII.

Still Jerome leaned on Alban’s tower,
And thoughtful watched the solemn hour;
All things lay wrapt in fearful gloom;

Time passed in silence toward the tomb.
Nor watch-dog’s bark, nor charger’s neigh,
Nor pass-word went the distant way;
Nor swept a breeze upon a bough
Of the high leafy walks below.
The holy hymn had sunk in peace;
Now Nature’s breathings almost cease.
In the deep pause alone might come
The sullen, faltering pant of drum;
So faint th’ uncertain sound in air,
It seemed like pulse within the ear.

XIX.

He viewed the dawn steal o’er the wold,
Paling each beacon-fire afar,
Till, wan and dim as twilight star,
The warning tale no more it told.
On the green woods that dewy light
Shed sleepy hues all chill and white.
That cold fresh light, that tender green,
Dawning through all the lonely scene,
A sweet and quiet sadness wore
To palmer, journeying at such hour
Through the wild path of forest-bower,
Well suiting with his humbled mind,
In holy grief to Heaven resigned.
If it recalled the long-past thought,
It soothed to smile the woe it brought:
Like touch of some fine harmony
To one endued with sympathy.

XX.

With pious thought and tranced eye,
St. Alban’s Monk, from turret high,
Beheld in silent order rise
Tint after tint on th’ eastern skies:
First, cold rays edged the night’s black shroud
Then rose, then amber, changed the hue;
Then slowly purpled the soft cloud,
That stretched along the upper blue;
Where, hanging o’er its shadowy throne,
The star of Morning watched alone;
But soon more gorgeous tints appear,
And tell the mighty Sun is near;
Till he looked joyous o’er yon brow,
While slumbering War lay stretched below,
Whose shrine shall dying thousands stain,
Ere that gay Sun look up again!

XXI.

War’s grisly visage there was seen,
Engarlanded with May’s fair buds;
His couch — her meads of springing green,
His canopy — her fresh-leaved woods!
Her fragrant airs around him breathe,
Her music soothes his dream beneath.
But soon May’s blooms their snows shall yield,
By hostile struggle lowly laid;
And soon her young and lightsome shade
Shall hide the blood-stained casque and shield,
Now thrown in wilder’d flight away:
And many a tortured wretch that day,
‘Scaped from the battle’s mortal strife, -
To scenes of Nature’s peace shall hie;
And, while all round is breathing life,
Sink on some flowery bank and die!

XXII.

The Monk might, at this hour of dawn,
Have traced each army faintly drawn,
Through dewy veil, on hills around;
And viewed St. Alban's glimmering bound
All rich with blooming orchard ground,
Where crowded roofs and turrets lay
Obscurely on the brightening grey.
How dark and still the Martyr's tower
Stood on the reddening dawn on high;
How solemn was the look it wore,
The peace of age and sanctity!
Till each dark line stood sharp and clear,
On gold and crimson streaks of air.
Flowing upon the early breeze,
The Royal banner WARWICK sees
Wave homage to the rising beams!
And, while that banner lightly streams,
With scornful eyes he viewed the town,
"There will I rule ere sun go down!"

XXIII.

The Knight and Monk, who watched on high,
Beheld these rising beams with joy;
And lost, with joy, the beacon's flame,
For now relief of Warder came.
Scarce would the warrior pause to tell,
That all near Alban's wall was well;
Or change a word of what had been
From his high station heard, or seen.
And, with the chilling hour oppressed,
Jerome, too, sought some welcome rest,

And left, exchanged, a monk behind,
To shiver in the breezy wind.

CANTO III .

I.

THE day had risen; the song of Prime
Swelled soft, as ceased the second chime;
When now was heard a distant drum
Through the woodlands high to come;
And, fierce though faint, one trumpet-blast
Hurrying upon the light wind passed.
It was not fancy— ‘twas not fear,
That caused those glittering helms appear,
And triple-glance of marshalled spear,
Upon the high wood’s shadowy side;
‘Tis there the barbed coursers ride;
And, mid the light-leaved shadows go
The battle-axe and lance and bow;
And banners bright and pennons fair
Bicker upon the fretful air.
Now, down St. Stephen’s woody steep,
The warlike bands due order keep,
Winding in glimpses to his eye
Who watched from under hood, on high,
And sadly lost all doubt, in fear;
While now the larum-bell he rung,
And now o’er battlement he hung,
Viewing the lengthened train draw near;
“Ten thousand, — less there could not be;
Ten thousand of the enemy
And thousands yet he might not see!

II.

His glad companion smiling heard
The panic marvels of his word;
But all in vain he promised good,
Though, as they flashed from Julian’s wood,
The knight well knew those armed bands,
And brandished high his gauntlet-hands,
And shouted welcomes on the gale,
Live — live King Henry — Henry hail!”
And waved his banner on the wall,
Urging the loud, rejoicing call,
“Live — live King Henry — Henry hail!”
Till his parched lips and utterance fail.

IN.

And then was heard the various pace
Of young and old, in toilsome race
Up galleried wall and winding flight,
Aiming to reach this topmost height.
But soon th’ embattled roofs below
Proclaim, that few may gain this brow;
For, resting there in sable row,
Many a brother breathless stood
With pointing hand and falling hood,
Gazing upon the vision dread
Of warlike force, that hither sped.

IV.

Now, loud King Henry’s clarions sound,
The many-trampling hoofs rebound,
As, issuing from St. Stephen’s shade
Upon the near and sunny glade,
Blazoned shields and helmets gleam,

While light the red-rose banners stream;
And knights on barbed coursers bear
Their monarch’s standard through the air.
And gentle Henry might you know,
Though harnessed close from top to toe.
Before him, herald-trumpets sound,
Proud chiefs and nobles press the ground;
And, where his ordered thousands throng,
Winding the woods and vale along,
Each bannered knight, as he drew nigh,
Was seen to lead his vassal-band,
With statelier march and aspect high,
Expressive of supreme command,
Though courting kindly gesture from his Sovereign hand.

V.

Loud and more loud the trumpets call,
As they draw nigh St. Alban’s wall;
And other trumpets answer clear,
And “Live King Henry!” rends the air
From every guarded barrier.
Straight, at the sound, in street below,
The thronging shield and helmet go,
While busy knights their men array,
To line their Monarch’s onward way,
The vanguard, that, on yesternight,
Watched here, upon St. Alban’s height.
Above, each roof and lattice showed
A fearful and a curious crowd,
Though forced within their homes to stay,
Hoping for glorious wonders, on that day.

VI.

And now adown the street appear,
With better banners, high on air,
The Martyr’s sons in wondering fear,
With chaunted anthems, grave and sweet,
Pacing their Sovereign lord to meet.
The Abbot is not now arrayed,
As he was wont, to meet his lord;
His brow no jewelled pomp displayed,
Nor from his shoulders now floats broad
The scarlet cope, nor robe of gold,
Nor the rich velvet’s shadowy fold.
But he, enwrapt in woeful weed,
Suiting his habit to the time,
In sorrowing penance seems to plead
Forgiveness for some hidden crime,
That threatened to draw judgment down
Even on St. Alban’s shrine and town.
But pages hold his mourning train,
As when arrayed in robe more vain,
And all his officers of state
In order due around him wait;
While, marching on the crowded way,
His Abbey-knights their band display.

VII.

Far down the steep of Holywell,
The chaunted anthem rose and fell;
Soon as was heard the solemn song,
And seen the dark advancing throng;
That busy street, then closely pressed,
With bow and pike and demi-lance,
Where charger reared, where waved high crest,
Was hushed, at once, as if in trance;

The crowd fell back, in order grave,
Ere Abbot’s guard the signal gave,
And, as the Abbey-Choir went by,
In reverend row you there might see
Each warrior on his bended knee.,
With upward and beseeching eye.
And thus, through files of lance and spear,
The pious fathers, without fear,
On to the southern barrier move
Safe in due reverence and love.

VIII.

And now within the barrier wall
St. Alban’s sons await their King.
And hark! what nearer clarions ring!
What shouts around each turret call
“King Henry live! — King Henry live!
Every Saint a blessing give;
King Henry live! — King Henry live!
Abbot and Prior blessings give.”
Then burst the loud, acclaiming voice
From battlements and towers aloof,
From cottage-thatch and lordly roof,
Of all, who in due rule rejoice.

IX.

Then, first from forth the barrier-arch
Deep and dark, in solemn march,
The Herald-trumpets come;
Their blazoned coats and pageantry
And banners beam upon the eye,
Like sudden blaze of witchery

From depth of midnight gloom.
Behind, a pale and gleaming band,
As if by glance of moonlight shown,
Stalked, in silence, hand by hand,
With threatening crest and visor's frown;
The stately forms of men unknown,
In cold dead steel anatomized,
As in Death's very image 'guised.

X.

Following this heavy march were seen,
On the armed charger's stately sheen,
Many a Baron's youthful son,
By lofty SOMERSET led on.
With stately step his courser trod;
His casque the British lion strode;
The triple plume was nodding by;
Through the barred visor might you spy
The warrior's dark and fiery eye,
Though not the mien his visage bore.
Proud was his air, his stature high.
Above his ringed mail he wore
Coat-armour, blazoned bright with sign
Of princely birth and Henry's line,
And 'broidered with devices fair;
Portcullis-bars in gold were t ere.
Two Squires, beside his stirrups, bear
His shield and axe and new-shod spear.
There marched in stately grace before,
With trumpets that high summons gave,
His Poursuivant, Portcullis grave,
And Henchmen next, some demi-score.
Fearless, he sought the battle-hour;
Here he beheld not castle-tower,

And well he knew the prophecy,
That under castle he must die.

XI.

Behind, as far as eye might go,
Paced barbed steeds and banners slow,
Till Henry’s standard stooped below
The barrier-arch, and borne along
By royal Banner Knights a throng;
So heavy was the ample fold,
That hardly could the knights unfold
The crimson silk and blazoned gold.
Again came Heralds, four abreast,
With blazoned arms and yellow vest,
Sounding their silver trumpets sweet,
While silver drums before them beat.
Followed a gorgeous stately train,
Who scarcely might their coursers rein,
Esquires and Yeomen, two and two,
Accoutred at all points, most true;
Knights of the Body, brave and gay,
Who ushered Henry on his way,
While ‘compassing, on all sides, came
Chiefs and Nobles, high in fame.

XII.

Thronged lofty spears and shields around,
Where the King’s charger trod the ground,
And, deep behind the barrier-arch,
Plume behind plume, in solemn march,
And eyes that seemed to frown with fate,
Upon their monarch’s progress wait.

“Then gentle Henry might you know,
Though harnessed close from head to toe
For, though arrayed for warrior-deed,
He sat not cheerly on his steed;
Though England’s lion on his brow
Claimed homage of a Nation’s bow.

XIII.

Soon as St. Alban’s sons he spied
He drew his rein, and “ Halt!” was cried;
And when the reverend father kneeled,
He pressed his iron beaver down,
And would not let his visor frown,
But all his countenance revealed,
And stretched his gracious hand to raise
The aged man with gentle praise.
And when the blessed anthems pealed,
He would himself have stept to ground,
And with the Abbot, side by side,
Have yielded up all kingly pride,
To pace the Martyr’s tomb around.
But fiery Tudor near him rode.
And instant close beside him strode,
And whisper’d somewhat to his ear;
Which Henry, faltering, seem’d to hear,
And slow and silently obey.
Yet, though his stately seat he kept,
He bade the father lead the way;
And patient, as they stept, he stept,
Listening to their slow chaunted lay,
With due respect and bended head,
While toward the Abbey-gate they led.

XIV.

On as that martial pageant drew,
The Knight on watch would point to view,
Each banner and each chief he knew.
“There rides the high Northumberland,
Leading his hardy northern band,
The son of Hotspur, whose bold hand
So oft the prize of victory won.
There pass the Cliffords, sire and son;
And more of truly noble fire
Ne’er glowed than in the hoary sire!.
There Stafford goes; there Buckingham;
And fiery Tudor, still the same.
Sir John de Grooby you may see,
With new-worn honours vain and brave;
Just knighted by King Henry he,
O may he ‘scape an early grave!
Whate’er his fate, he cares not now;
The plume exults upon his brow.”

XV.

Now Clement flies right speedily,
And, mounting on a turret-way,
Through narrow loop begins to spy,
The varying struggle of that day;
For, figured underneath his eye,
While fearless he of spear and dart,
Lay street and road, as on a chart.
Close looked this Saxon turret down
Upon the four ways of the town,
And on Queen Ellen’s shrine and green,
(The garden-plat alone “between)
And, broad and straight, the way then spread
To old St. Peter’s towered head;

Closing the far perspective there,
His battlements were drawn on air.

XVI.

Below, the roads, and streets, and green,
So crowded were with shield and pike,
That scarcely was there room between
For lance to poise, or sword to strike;
But the chief turmoil of the scene
Was on St. Peter’s spacious way,
Where, in the centre of the green,
King Henry and his knights were seen,
Around his banner floating gay.
‘Twas planted for the battle-hour,
With the full pomp of warlike power;
‘Mid clarion’s and trumpet’s sound,
And shouts, that rent the air far round,
Making old Alban’s shrines to shake,
And tremble deep her crystal lake.
On Peter’s street that standard stood,
Summoning hill and vale and wood.
While the King’s orders went, to keep
The wards and barriers of the place
With strong watch; for, near Alban’s steep,
York now advanced, in quickened pace. —

XVII.

Advanced so fast, that, when the King
One moment at the shrine would spend,
His chiefs arranged themselves in ring
Around, and urged him to suspend
His pious purpose, till that day

Were ended, and that battle-fray.
Meek Henry yielded with a sigh,
And something like a frown
Came darkening o’er his tearful eye;
But soon, with patient look on high,
It died in smile of piety,
Such as blest saint might own.
Then, turned he to the humble door
Of Edmund Westby, th’ Hundredor;
There his headquarters were prepared
By those, who with him more than shared
His power; there he resolved to wait
Whate’er might be the battle’s fate,
Or welcome peace, or lengthened hate.

XVIII.

In terror from the turret-arch,
Was now seen Richard’s rapid march,
And signal given and ‘larum call,
Rang round about the Abbey wall.
Now all are up on gallery-tower,
To scan the enemy’s dread power
O’er the wide fields advancing round
From meadow-slopes, where woods had been,
But now no sign of oak is seen;
Archers and pikemen step the ground;
And down the glade, that spreads below,
Arrayed in many a gleaming row,
They stand beneath St. Alban’s brow.
But chiefly on the eastern side
Key’s Field displayed their bannered pride.
There most St. Alban’s feared their blow;
St. Alban’s — ill prepared for war,
Though thronged with arms and warriors bold

For no broad bulwark seen afar,
Nor stretching rampart, proudly told
Defiance and a mighty hold;
But simple wall and barrier-gate
Warded for old St. Alban’s fate.

XIX.

Wide o’er the northern fields afar
Still marched Duke Richard’s lines of war.
Whose white-rose banners, gathering nigh,
Gave silent signal to the eye
Of more than he had dared to claim —
Richard of York’s yet secret aim.
White blossoms in each cap were seen,
For unblown rose, the sweet may-thorn,
From banks of freshly-blushing green
By gauntlet-fingers rudely torn,
And placed on high, a smiling crest,
O’er brows by iron vizor pressed;
Device, at once, for the PALE ROSE,
And FOR the name that gave HIM sway,
Who gaily on his warrior-brows
Bore the bright bloom PLANT-A-GENET.

XX.

The warders scanned the outspread force
From tower and turret still in vain;
Richard of York, in double course,
To shrouding woods extends his train:
And who may guess what numbers there
In silence wait and watchful care,
Ready the battle to sustain?

To inexperienced eyes, and fear,
His hundreds, thousands thus appear,
Now lost and seen in grove and field;
While Henry’s thousands cooped in street,
Seem but to threaten self-defeat,
Incapable their strength to wield.

XXI.

Morning on day had far advanced,
And not a spear in onset glanced;
But lingering messages were sent
To Lancaster by York, the while,
Who, trusting less in arms than guile,
By aid of gold was still intent
Some captains of his foe to gain;
His numbers might, he judged, be vain,
Though the great Warwick ruled their course
To grapple Henry’s loyal force.

XXII.

Unawed by sense of treachery,
Richard now dared, irreverently,
To call on Alban, as his saint.
To hear him vouch his true intent —
“In verie knowledge of his trothe
To witness to his loyal oath,
To honour Henry as his king,
Should he to instant justice bring
Those false suggesters of his will,
Who wrought his kingdom only ill.”
Yet Henry’s oath he would not take,
That speedy justice should awake;

But, on the moment, made his claim
That every noble he might name
Should to his camp in fetters come,
And there receive their final doom:
This done, he would disperse his men.
And bow to Henry's power again.
But well he guessed such claim would wring
Only defiance from the King.

XXIII.

And this was Lancaster's reply,
That rather than to him betray
His faithful servants, he, this day,
Would for their sakes, fight — live or die!
And, though long pressed by great disease."
And heaviness of heart,
He swore by sainted Edward's peace,
He would not thence depart
Till every traitor of that hour,
Who should persist in strife,
If placed by battle in his power,
Should forfeit there his life.
This while the virtuous Henry said,
A tear of anxious grief he shed.

XXIV.

The morn was gone, noon nearly come,
Yet was not heard the 'larum-drum;
Still Richard held a double course,
And Henry still restrained his force.
Now, while full many a fearful eye
From Alban's tower looked eagerly,

And none knew what delayed the blow,
They marked again, in street below,
A white-rose Herald blindfold led,
Where high, the bannered rose of red
Waved duteous o’er the monarch’s brow.
King Henry, ever duly slow
To draw the desolating sword,
Piteous and mindful of the woe,
That might ensue from slighted word,
Greeted the wily pari once more,
And long the message pondered o’er;
For show of hope and peace it bore.

XXV.

And now a guileful sound of peace
Swells faint to those, who watch on high,
Bidding their care and terror cease.
But wherefore, to their straining eye,
Yon shifting glance of helm and lance?
And why those sudden trumpet-sounds,
Mingled with tremour of the drum,
Gathering in loud and louder rounds,
Like burst of gaunt and ravenous hounds?
‘Twas those without St. Alban’s wall,
Raising the treacherous onset-call,
While yet for peace their Herald treats
And “Peace!” is shouted through the streets.
And now St. Alban’s monks descry
A shower of arrows falling nigh
To Key’s Field, o’er that barrier-lane,
Where the besiegers strive in vain
To burst into the guarded town;
While doubling and redoubling come

The trumpet’s shriek and roll of drum,
And shouts that rage and havock own.

XXVI.

In street below raged to and fro,
In wild disorder, men-at-arms;
And heralds sounding loud alarms;
And knights, close braced from head to toe,
Uncertain where to meet the foe;
Whom, though they heard, they might not see
For houses and for orchard-tree,
Till signal from St. Alban’s tower
Pointed where pressed the threatening power.
Then Somerset, with brief command,
In order ranged each ‘wildered band.
The noblest and the bravest stood
By the East barrier, near the wood,
That led to Sopewell’s Priory,
Where watched, in sad consistory,
That fair and trembling sisterhood;
For thence the loudest turmoil came.
But noble chiefs and knights of fame
Crowded St. Peter’s high broad way,
Where their liege-lord, King Henry, lay.

XXVII.

And soon from other quarters blew
Clarion and trump without the walls;
But even on tower they had scant view
Of those whose ‘larum thus appals.
Those sounds called every foot to climb
To battlement and tower sublime.

Then not a brother stayed below,
Whom age did not forbid to go;
Or who around the shrine kept ward;
Or some sad priest, at Chantry-tomb,
Saying long Obits in the gloom,
Pale with expectance of his doom;
While, listening to dread sounds abroad,
His station in the aisle denied
To view the course of battle-tide:
And oft the blast in turret nigh
Mocked his impatience with it's sigh,
As if some whispering friend drew near
To share with him his half-told fear.

XXVIII.

Fiercer and fiercer rose the bray,
Till, every shrine (save Alban's) left,
The chantry of it's priest bereft,
The silent dead forsaken lay.
Even he, who, worn with last night's watch,
Would fain some little slumber snatch,
Now startled by the trumpet's breath,
Calling as with the voice of death,
Uprose and sought the turret grey,
That eastward o'er the Chancel lay.
The strength of battle pressed that way.
This little watch-nook hung in air
O'er the great window of the Shrine,
Forming a canopy most fair
For the carved cell and image fine,
That knelt with upward aspect there —
St. Clement, in his fretted cove,
The namesake of the Monk above.
This 'battled summit seemed his crown,

Who had for ages knelt thereon,
Seeming to feel with those below,
Whose choral voices, murmuring slow
Round those sad mansions of the dead,
Would strive a saintly peace to shed.

XXIX.

While Clement thus his fears obeyed,
And sought this barbican so high —
This raven's nest so near the sky —
More awful rose the battle cry;
Steel clashed, and trump and clarion brayed.
It seemed as though the deafening sound
Rose straight below on Abbey-ground;
But distant was the place of war,
Beyond the Eastern barrier,
And partial seen, by glimpse aloof,
O'er many a high and crowded roof;
For thwart the Abbey stretched the way
Of Holywell, and screened the fray.
Yet was Duke Richard's farthermost
In spreading shock of battle traced,
By the near, unseen, impulse tossed,
Like circles from a centre chaced.

XXX.

And o'er this swaying of the storm,
Incessant hissed the viewless form
Of arrows, shadowing the air,
Or lightning glance of hurled spear;
While keen, below, the restless rays
Of shield and casque and corslet blaze;

And Key’s Field broad displayed the course
Of Richard’s and of Warwick’s force.
Neville of Salisbury fought near,
Unseen, close at the barrier;
But firm-set pike and arrowy shower
Failed to make passage for his power;
For aged Clifford stemmed his way.
And scattering, as he went, dismay,
Fired young and aged, knight and lord,
And every hand that held a sword.

XXXI.

But whence the shouts so thrilling now?
Why do the townsmen, on each roof,
Rise earnestly, even on the toe,
And rashly hurry to and fro,
As if on level ground they go,
And mount the chimney-tops aloof,
And bend far o’er the depth below?
Those ridgy roofs and chimneys tall,
Crowded with heads, like leaves on tree,
From Clement’s anxious gaze hid all
He climbed this lofty perch to see.
But soon the arrows fell so near,
The gazers shrunk below with fear,
And left each summit-station clear;
He then, in safe and shrouded nook,
Upon the place of war could look.

XXXII.

There yet a narrow Green is shown,
That eastward runs behind the town —

The place where Richard pitched his tent;
Small part of the broad space, that went
By name of Key’s Field; close it bent
To Sopewell lane. The barrier nigh
Did long the enemy defy.
The princely Somerset fought here;
And, had his spirit e’er known fear,
That fear it would not now have owned,
For here no fateful castle frowned;
And well he knew the prophecy,
“That under castle he must die.”
While the stress lay round that barrier,
(Clifford within and York without)
So often swerved th’ assailing rout,
That Richard’s overthrow seemed near;
But who ‘gainst secret aid is sure?
What force ‘gainst treachery may endure?

XXXIII.

O’er beds of peaceful flowers he came,
The Knight who flew to Richard’s need,
With helm and shield on barbed steed;
Onward he pressed, at utmost speed,
Glared on his lance the red war-flame,
Knights and spearmen fast succeed.
On full six hundred helms appeared
His badge in gold or silver wrought —
A rampant bear, with staff uprear’d,
And this the boastful tale it told —
“He wins whom I uphold!”
Fierce was the trumpet’s blast — the war-cry burst;
“A Warwick! a Warwick! Warwick is here!”
In Holywell road he was the first
Where valiant De Clifford kept barrier.

Though grey his locks in his cap of steel,
Yet a hero’s fire glowed in his eye;
His spirit glowed for his country’s weal;
“In Henry’s cause may I live or die!”

XXXIV.

“My Lord De Clifford, Warwick’s foe!
Warwick calls on you now to show,
Why meet’st thou not the RAGGED STAFF?
The Bear would fain thy life-blood quaff.
Hast thou forgot thy daring taunt,
That thou through life my steps would’st haunt?
My Lord De Clifford! here am I,
Avouch thy boast, or it deny!”
Soon as his voice De Clifford heard,
No halt made he for taunting word,
But cheered the knights of his command,
And rushed to meet him hand to hand.
Strong as Disdain his well-nerved arm,
Loyal his heart, all true and warm,
He sprang to meet his mighty foe;
“Who vainly boasts let this day show!”
Where was his son at this dread hour,
When Rage and Hatred o’er him lour?
He fights not in his father’s band;
Afar he holds some high command.
But numbers round De Clifford fought,
Who Danger’s vanmost heroes sought;
Whom zeal and reverence and pride
Held close embattled at his side.

XXXV.

When Clement from his post looked down
Close on this quarter of the town,
And viewed the fateful turmoil there,
Scarce could his mounting spirit bear
To loiter here, secure and free,
While cries for doubtful victory
Pierced to the very vault of air;
But monks below, on battlement,
Who watched how the fierce contest went,
Of these, scarce one but blessed the day
When he to Abbey took his way,
And bound himself to shun all battle-fray.

XXXVI.

Hark! Warwick hath burst the barrier,
And in the surge of combat there,
Which rolled not on, but to and fro,
Alternate swayed for friend and foe.
Each individual form was lost,
So mingled was that mighty host.
No eye might now De Clifford trace,
Nor eager Warwick's lofty grace;
Yet knew where each the conflict held
By fall of horse and crash of shield.
And oh! what mingled sounds arose
Above the trumpet's fiercest call!
The yell of havock — shrieking woes
Of matrons, from the latticed wall,
Watching unseen in houses nigh,
Who view a son, or husband fall,
And under trampling charger lie,
In deep, expiring agony!

XXXVII.

Now arrows thickening in the air,
With hiss incessant, shrill, and near,
Warned from each open battlement
The crowding monks that o’er it bent.
But Clement, in his turret-cell,
From evil hap was sheltered well;
Yet wounded was his sight by flow
Of human blood in streams below.
Not so the raven’s o’er his head,
As mute he watched the slaughtered;
Unseen companion! stern and sly,
Waiting his banquet of the dead,
Impatient while the dying die!

XXXVIII.

And now, behold the barrier-guard
Pressed back into the rising street;
Where houses hide their slow retreat
From Clement’s view, though hitherward
The rage of war came nearer still;
For, on this steeply-mounting hill
The Abbey stood, part screened below
By wall and gate and orchard-bough.
And, while afar bold Warwick’s force
Beyond the barrier he could watch,
Yet might our Clement sparely catch
Glimpse of the nearer battle’s course.
At times o’er wall, or waving branch,
Appeared high plume on helmed brow,
Or iron hand upraised to launch
The battle axe, or sabre blow;
The threatened blow he well might see,
But not it’s fateful certainty;

A falling horseman he might spy,
Or a freed charger passing by,
Or warrior bleeding on the ground,
Even just without the Abbey's round.

XXXIX.

The battle's strength still slowly pressed
Up Holywell, on Warwick's side,
When Clement from his secret nest
Heard 'larums new and shoutings, wide;
And looking northward, whence their course
He marked a troop of Henry's horse
Led on by Percy's self, at speed:
They came at Clifford's utmost need,
With fierce and threatening cries afar,
And checked awhile the tide of war.
'Twas Percy of Northumberland,
Rode vanmost of the gallant band:
And Buckingham and Stafford's earl
Led where the crimson flags unfurl;
And many a knight and baron bold,
In battle and in honours old,
And many a youth, who but that morn
Had first his knightly emblems worn.

XL.

To Clement it was dreadful sight,
This press of noble chief and knight;
For now more deadly raged the fight.
And here the place of war outspread,
Showed him their armour streaming red,
And almost every wound, that bled.

And down the charger’s panting side
He marked the gushing slaughter-tide!
In vain the shaffrone guards his face,
Or neck the mailed mainfaire shields,
Or breastplate fills it’s ample space;
Such garniture poor shelter yields.

XLI.

King Henry’s bravest warriors move,
Great Warwick’s hardiness to prove,
While, closely urged by foeman’s spear,
The wounded coursers plunge and rear,
With outspread nostrils raised in air,
And fiery eyes, that shoot despair;
They trample back the crowd behind,
Who, upward on the steep hill forced,
Press other troops in street confined;
Then chargers fall, and men unhorsed
O’er their own dead and dying go,
Nor horror, nor even pity know,
Conscious of nought but hate and strife,
Reckless of quickly-ebbing life,
Fighting on foot ‘gainst horse and lance,
Meeting in vain their foe’s advance;
Till, on the heaped and nameless dead,
They reach their final gory bed.

XLII.

Now other trumpets, blown with might,
North, East, and West, spoke triple fight;
But loudest strains swelled from the way
Where their liege-lord, King Henry, lay.

There York himself the barrier burst,
And on St. Peter's Green was first.
And now, on summit of the town,
Where stood Queen Ellen's shrine alone,
King Henry's troops make their firm stand;
As if each man thought his sole hand
Fought on that spot for the whole land.
And from that summit of the town,
On the four main-ways looking down,
At every bar, save one, they see
The archers of the enemy;
And crowding helms, and ill-spurred horse,
Trampling o'er the new-fallen corse,
And forcing back each barrier-guard,
Mount where that Shrine had long kept solemn ward.

XLIII.

That Shrine, where Silence wont to dwell,
And listen to the breathing spell
Even the war-horse, when near the dead,
Trembles before the life-stream red;
Bristles his horror-lifted mane;
His tossing nostrils speak his pain.
Still, with distorted side-long leer,
He views the object of his fear;
At last his shuddering feet uprear,
At last the spur assails in vain.
The warrior on his back feels less,
Though better might that warrior know
The signs of suffering and woe,
And his own doubtful fortune guess.
But poor ambition, thoughtless pride,
Bear him, scarce moved, through battle's tide.

XLV.

Then Clement left his raven-nest,
And to a Saxon turret pressed
That o’er the northern transept rose,
Where all around Queen Ellen’s bier
He wide might view, and all might hear,
Even till the battle’s close.
As he approached that turret-stair,
Lone were the Shrines and Chantries near;
No shadowed form on Offa’s aisle
Stole o’er the drear length of the pile,
But all so hushed the scene beneath,
It seemed the hall and throne of Death.

XLVI.

Clement had gained the turret-floor,
And pressed the massy oaken door:
Surprised he found himself among
The Abbot and a younger throng
Of monks, whose sight could pierce afar,
And tell the varying tide of war.
From their full window he withdrew,
And to the sister-turret hied,
That looked on the same northern view,
Commanding o’er it far and wide:
Here — though a crowd of hooded heads
Darkened the double Saxon arch,
Fled from high tower and open leads, —
Here might he watch the battle’s march.

XLVII.

From blessed Peter’s tower on high
To Ellen’s shrine of sanctity,
No thwarting roof-tops then concealed
The broad way of that fateful field.
The long green vista stretched below,
Straight as an arrow from a bow.
There, close around that ancient tower,
Incessant fell the arrowy shower;
O’er graves and charnel vaults it flew,
It cleared the streets in Clement’s view.
Duke Richard’s self, commanding there,
Had forced the northern barrier;
Waged war o’er the long-buried dead
And blood upon their homes had shed.
And many a youthful warrior brave.
In his first armour dressed,
Fought even upon his very grave,
His morrow’s final rest.

XLVIII.

From that dark tower the long broad way
Was thronged with Henry’s bands.
Close pressing where their monarch lay,
And where his banner, floating gay,
Richard’s full force withstands.
Clement could not De Clifford see,
Nor Somerset’s high blazonry;
But Buckingham’s pale plume he knew,
And his white armour’s silvery hue;
And, while he gazed, he saw him bow,
Then rise and totter in his seat,
And rein his charger to retreat.
A shaft has pierced his iron brow;
He sinks to earth; the dark streams flow.

XLIX.

Stafford, his noble son, fought near,
But saw not when his father fell;
And soon the battle’s onward swell
Checked, though not turned, his own career.
For, vain the terrors of his spear,
A fatal dart his gauntlet caught;
‘Twas pain, not danger, as he thought,
And, heedless of that pain, he fought
Till, fainting with the bleeding wound,
He falls on henchmen pressing round,
Who bear him senseless from the ground.
But, yonder, on St. Peter’s way,
With long sweep and resistless sway,
The surge of battle rolls along,
And threatens even the household throng,
Who watch their King, this fateful day.
And now, behold his banner there
Bow low and totter in the air;
And now, from forth his guarded hall,
St. Alban’s lofty Seneschal,
And Henry’s self, appear.
Yet feebly did the King advance,
As bending to some dire mischance,
His vizor close, his sword in hand,
And guarded by a noble band
And crowds of demi-lance.

LI.

He mounted on his battle-horse,
But turned him from the battle’s course,
Or would have turned; the warrior steed

Showed daring high for other deed.
Long did his stubborn neck disdain
To bend him from the trumpet’s strain,
With prancing foot and curvet high,
With spurning heel and arching mane,
He baffled still the guiding rein.
He would have borne his lord away,
And plunged him in the thickest fray,
But that a friend, though loth to yield,
With strong arm bore him from the field.

LII.

Yet hardly through the gory street,
So thick the dead and dying lay.
Could the guard find a safe retreat
For Henry, or pass on their way.
Then Lancaster’s sad heart sunk low,
Ill could he brook such sight of woe;
Shuddering he turned aside his head,
While his steed stepped among the dead;
But still to his averted eyes
Other grim shapes of horror rise,
And “Peace, O! blessed Peace,” he cried
While knights, who warded at his side,
Could scarce restrain their rising pride,
And, when their lord secure might lie,
Swore round his Rose to live, or die.

LIII.

And had our sovereign lady, Dame
Margaret, the Queen, been here,
Her cheek had crimsoned o’er with shame

To view her husband’s fear;
Though sorrow and disease oppressed
The princely spirit in his breast.
Not thus she fled, when second war
Dyed Alban’s field with blood,
But, high on Victory’s iron car,
Rushed through the purple flood.
But pity tempered not her ire;
No tear-drop dewed her eye of fire;
No hallowed fear her conscience held,
Nor piety her proud heart quelled;
These virtues, that ambition thwart,
Drew not upon her course the rein;
Brought not the pause — the second thought,
That passion’s impulse may restrain:
Rapid and fierce she pressed her way,
Though Truth and Mercy bleeding lay.
So, Gloucester, thy red grave might tell,
When mourned for thee St. Alban’s knell.

LIV.

Danger, when braved, like coward flies,
And safety, sought, oft wayward hies;
And this King Henry’s heart was taught,
Even while he humble shelter sought.
For, ere he reached a cottage-wall,
An arrow-wound had made him fall,
But that his band close round him throng,
And bear him on his steed along;
And, wounded, bleeding, fainting, slow,
A thatched roof shrouds a Monarch’s woe.

LV.

Return we now to Ellen’s shrine,
Where, thronging through the four street-ways,
Ensigns and plumes still wave and shine,
And falchions flash and helmets blaze,
And flights of arrows dim the air,
Rattling like hail,
On shield and mail,
In chorus with the war-shouts there.
And still, where blessed Peter’s tower
O’erlooked Plantagenet’s chief power,
Still, in Sir Philip Wentworth’s care,
Proudly the Royal Banner stood.
But now, while onward swept the flood,
That standard trembled in the air,
And foremost fled the traitor-knight,
Sworn to maintain that banner’s right.
He fled, without a single wound,
He fled, and cast it on the ground!
Then, scarce opposed, York’s special guard
Made dreadful havock down the street;
And, though below their way was barred,
‘Twas there their whole force thronged to meet.

LVI.

Long did the noblest of the land
Round Ellen’s mournful bier withstand
The triple-guided force
Of Warwick, York, and Salisbury;
Oh! it was dreadful truth to see
The battle press it’s course
Up every way to that high place,
Where, crushed into a narrow space,
The band of heroes fought
For him, who meekly wore the crown

From sire and grandsire given down,
By his own will unsought.
It was a gallant, mournful sight
To see those warriors few
Die for the cause which they thought right,
— Allegiance they thought due.

LVII.

And now the rumour faintly spread,
That Henry wounded was, and fled;
‘ Nay, lay in humble cottage dead.
Then first his faithful knights knew dread.
But, transient was such sense of woe,
And, “Vengeance! Victory!” they cried;
“His son shall triumph, though he died.”
Richard of York, the while, had sought
Where the King wounded lay,
And soon to his low roof was brought,
And claimed the prize of that fierce day.
Henry, though captive, then might see
His conqueror on bending knee,
With feigned suit and bold pretence,
Protesting truth and reverence.
In wily words, with poor deceit,
York said he never meant him ill;
That he had only armed to meet
Those foes, whose dark, ambitious will
Had ruled his councils and the realm,
And shortly would his throne o’erwhelm.
But now, those enemies o’erthrown,
If Henry would their acts disown,
And rule the English land alone,
His true liege-subject he would prove,
And henceforth only seek his love.

LVIII.

And thus swore all York’s subtle band;
But, adding still a new demand,
They claimed to guard the King from foes.
Lest evil council should dispose
His virtuous will to vengeful deed.,
And, by retaliation, lead
To future discontents and woe.
Now, this urged Richard’s subtle train;
And further “safety to maintain,”
They asked he on the morn would go
To London, in their duteous care,
And choose with them a council fair.

LIX.

And thus, with humble look and word,
The Duke his loftier hope deferred.
Though Victory was on his side,
He secretly might own,
Time had not brought on the spring-tide
Might bear him to the throne.
To win this venturous battle-day,
Such arts had now been tried
As could not claim continued sway,
Nor long his fortune guide.
But, for the moment gratified,
He left to future hour his claim,
That surer he might work his aim;
And therefore did he lowly bow,
Though victor, to his captive now.

LX.

Soon did fair speech King Henry gain,
While his heart, filled with grief
For others' jeopardy and pain,
In words now sought relief.
"Spare, spare my people's blood," he said,
This moment bid the slaughter rest,
My will shall then by your's be led;
My pardon take for all the past.
Lead me within the Abbey walls;
This scene of blood my heart appals!"

LXI.

Straight, Warwick bade the carnage cease,
And bleeding strife was hushed in peace.
That fateful moment who may paint!
Meet instant for the joy of saint!
The sword upraised withheld the blow,
That might have laid a brother low.
Then, sire and son, in armour clasped,
While almost each the other grasped,
And strove against the other's life,
Heard the low strain, that stills the strife.

CANTO IV .

I.

Now to St. Alban’s shrine was led
The captive King with royal guard;
While Richard at his side kept ward,
And Men-at-arms, with stately tread,
Encompassing about him went,
Beneath the Abbey’s battlement.
But, who King Henry’s woes may tell,
As he passed on the blood-stained way,
Where half his gallant nobles fell,
And yet untouched, uncovered lay,
Scarce cold, upon the gory heap,
Fixed in their last, unbreathing sleep! —
The friends, who on this very morn,
Since when but few brief hours had sped,
Had high sway in his council borne;
Who bent with him the thoughtful head!
Whose living eye by his was read! —
Now, ever closed their earthly dream;
All vanished, like a phantom’s gleam;
The veil withdrawn — the vision fled!

II.

The Abbot at the Abbey-gate
The victor and the vanquished met;
And thence, with bands in formal march,
And monks arranged in order long,
Led to the farthest eastern arch,
With mourning chant from the full throng

Where Henry, on St. Alban’s tomb,
Sought to disperse his mental gloom.

III.

Such Vision still is seen to mourn,
When evening-twilight falls,
By him, who on that day’s return
Stands silent by these walls —
The vanquished Sire, the victor Chief,
The mitred Abbot pale in years,
Whose cheek seems furrowed o’er by grief,
And sanctified by Pity’s tears,
The pious fathers, side by side,
And the whole Convent’s choral pride;
Three times beneath the Chancel’s gloom,
They move around St. Alban’s tomb,
Through open arches that appear,
As once they wont above the bier,
But, when the dream has passed away,
Close, and are seen as at this day.

IV.

It is a strange and fearful sight —
The Vision of that dreary night!
— To watch those shadows crowding by,
Each moving in his ordered place,
Like living form, with deathly face,
Distinct, and busy to the eye,
With gesture true of solemn rite,
Yet not a whisper heard, the while,
Of step, or voice, upon the aisle;
— It is a strange and fearful sight!

V.

But other scene, on that midnight,
Has shook the sexton with affright,
While passing o’er the glimmering nave,
By the dim flame his lanthorn gave.
Sudden, on each low tomb around,
A bleeding bier has seemed to rest,
Where stern in death a warrior frowned,
With funeral watch-light o’er his crest.
Where’er the old man turned his view,
Has seemed such face of livid hue.
But feeble age has fancies strange!
Youth may, on that same midnight, range
Through choir and aisle, and nothing see,
Save Norman arch and gallery,
And the brass-bounden grave of him,
Who sang the warrior’s dying hymn.
But, leave we now such idle dream,
To mind the past, yet real theme.

VI.

Low at St. Alban’s tomb they knelt,
The Conqueror and his King,
The Monarch hushed the pang he felt;
Nor did the victor sing
Memorial for the battle won,
But, decent, mourned the slaughter done.
Then solemn, from the Choir below,
The hymn of Vespers rose,
And, while meek Henry’s tears fast flow,
Breathed balm upon his woes;
But, transient was the sad repose: —
It ended with the Vespers’ close!

VII.

Just where the King did lowly bend,
Lay Gloucester in his grave!
His truest counsellor and friend,
Whom yet he failed to save
From Margaret's hate and Beaufort's guile, —
All unsuspicious he, the while,
Of the fell hatred that they bare
His kinsman — and their murderous snare,
And of his own progressive fate.
Had good Duke Humphrey ruled the state,
His truth had been his Sovereign's shield
Gainst treason, open, or concealed.
Good Gloucester slept within this space,
And Henry, sufferer in his place,
Stood o'er his grave, in sanctuary
From his own rebel soldiery!
Oh! who may dare unfold
The darkening thoughts that o'er his spirit rolled,
And from his memory threatened soon to sweep
All paler records of long years, that weep,
While, thus a captive, with his foe he bent
Silent o'er bleeding Gloucester's monument.

VIII.

When service in the Choir was o'er,
The Monarch and his train
Passed onward to the cloister-door,
Led by the Abbot, as before,
With the full chaunted strain,
To rest in royal chambers nigh,

The honoured Abbot’s guarded guest,
Beneath the velvet canopy,
Whose couch he oft in peace had pressed.
How different is his present state
From that he once had known, -
When Westminster proclaimed his fate
Was France and England’s throne;
When, passing from the tapers’ glare,
Just cumbered with his crown of care,
With infant smile he laughed to see
Such crowds and blaze of pageantry!

IX.

Ah! had he dimly then perceived
The secret of the gift received,
Stained with the blood of former times,
And thickly set with deadly crimes,
Gleaming with woes and passions dire
From ‘mid Ambition’s smouldering fire,
How had he shrunk, and wished to lie
“In shades of quiet privacy!”
And, ere he wore it for his own,
Renounced at once his father’s crown.
Now, all it’s terrors blazed, confest,
And peace for ever left his breast.
Yet might he not his path retread,
And give from his anointed head
The diadem his fathers gave,
Which fixed him for a party’s slave.

X.

Hard was the heart, and stern the mind,
And to it's own contentment blind,
That could unloose a kingdom's woes,
Within that painful crown confined,
While firm it circled Henry's brows;
That could a selfish, slumbering right
Rouse from it's lair in Time's dim night;
Cry "Havock!"'and pursue the prey
But for Ambition's holiday!
Hard was the heart, and dark the mind!
Such his, who Henry's path beside
Marched where the convent-train inclined,
Beneath the Transept's vaulted pride.

XI.

And thus was ranged the stately march,
When the King passed the Transept-arch: —
On his right-hand the Abbot walked,
Mitred and in his cope of gold,
The pious monarch's gift of old;
And on his left Duke Richard stalked.
Straight from the place of war came he,
Nor moment spared his casque to free;
Aloft the white plume proudly rose,
But soiled with crimson were it's snows,
And Henry paid a bitter tear
For every gore-drop speaking there.
Beneath, the lion-passant crest
His royal lineage professed;
And vizor up might darkly show
The meaning of his anxious brow;
While Richard's form and stately grace,
His stature high, and martial pace,
Decisive look, and eye of fire,

Steady, though keen, and quick and dire,
Gave contrast to King Henry's air.
Who, wan from wound, from grief and care,
Moved with unequal step and slow,
With wearied countenance of woe,
And weeping, with uplifted eye
Of meekness and of piety.

XII.

The reverend father, by his side,
Though pale and bowed with care and age,
Still showed an aspect dignified,
A look of mildly-tempered pride,
Such as doth love and awe engage.
As some tall arch, in fretted state,
Left lonely 'mid the wrecks of fate,
Though perished be each gorgeous stain
That coloured high the storied pane;
Though broken be the moulded line,
That flowed with grandeur of design;
Though shades of many a hoary year
With lights of silver grey are there;
Th' awakened mind YET MORE supplies
Than Time has stolen from our eyes;
And o'er the ruin's desert space,
That arch throws high and shadowy grace,
Wraps us in pleasures almost holy
Of reverence, love and melancholy.

XIII.

Through the great cloister passed the train,
Where the carved trefoil windows glowed

With many a rich illumined pane,
By living Whetehampstede bestowed.
Large was the verdant plain within,
High the arched walks encompassing.
Now darkened was that long-stretched way
With Alban's hundred monks; though gay
In scarlet copes went Chancellor,
The noble Steward, Seneschal,
And officers in the rich pall
They wore on solemn festival;
In snowy state, each Chorister,
Chaunting before the mournful King,
Till he had reached that guarded door,
Where, tall and light, the arches soar
That lift the Chapter's vaulted ring.

XIV.

Then part the King and priestly band,
Who, in long line, on either hand
Bend lowly, as he moves along,
Smiling upon the cowled throng,
To the last murmur of their song.
Still marched Duke Richard at his side,
And still the Abbot was his guide.
A different train received the guest,
Soon as he moved from his short rest:
Soldiers, with helm and pike arrayed,
Lined the long walk of cloister-shade,
That lay between the abbey aisle
And royal lodge, a stately pile.
A royal homage still they paid
In the meek hymn the trumpets played.
How felt the King, when close he viewed
Hands drenched with his good people's blood,

And looks that said they held in ward,
And still would hold, their sovereign lord!

XV.

In the KING’S PARLOUR waited now
Poor banquet, served in saddest mood,
Where pages round their monarch bow,
And captive knights indignant stood.
To view their injured King bestow
His speech upon his subtle foe,
Who wrought this day of blood and woe.
With starting tear of gratitude
And pity, good King Henry viewed
His faithful servants near him stand,
And here attend — a prisoner-band.
Not Richard’s truth, nor courtesy,
Had placed them here, but policy.
And Henry, though not thus deceived,
Such art instead of truth received.
Fill not for him the wassail-bowl,
Strike not the minstrel-string;
These may not o’er his saddened soul
Their brief delirium fling:
For he has passed among the dead,
And Truth’s great lesson there has read,
As from each face the mask she drew,
And showed what phantoms we pursue!
While to his wandering troubled eye,
Life’s strifeful progress seemed one sigh!

XVI.

But short repose the banquet gave,
Ere Warwick and Earl Salisbury crave
Audience of him they still call King;
And many a wily guest they bring.
Straight from the field they came in haste,
Informed on all points to the last.
Now to the Council-room repaired, ‘
With harassed mind, their wounded Lord,
To sign his pardons, and reward
The traitors, who his life yet spared.
The Abbot to his chamber drew
(His heart to Henry ever true)
To gain a quiet pause, though sad, —
Perchance an unseen tear to shed,
And lift his thoughts where oft they fled.

XVII.

Then order to the Steward went,
That hospitable cheer
Should to the Abbey gates be sent
Of bread and meat and beer;
And to each soldier, friend or foe,
Dole from buttery-hatch should go;
But other store of food was small;
For thousands thronged in Alban’s wall,
And every townsman’s board was spread
For victor, or for conquered.
Now, at each postern and low gate,
The Monks dispense to all, that wait,
What fare they may: but, who can show
The groups that, gathering below,
Now stood beneath the reverend tower,
Emblems of battle’s bleeding hour?
Wan were their features, fierce, though faint

From toil and hunger and dismay,
Just ‘scaped with life the deadly fray;
Their o’erstrained muscles quivered still;
Their eager eyes, suspecting ill,
Were watchful yet of all around,
Even on this consecrated ground.
The broken armour’s crimson sheen
Showed what the owner’s lot had been;
There grimly did the cap of steel
Dint of strong battle-axe reveal,
Or cuirass, bearing sign of spear,
Proved Death had threatened entrance here.
All were so changed with dust and gore,
Their nearest friends had passed them o’er;
And their strange, rude and broken tone,
Not wife, nor courted lass had known.

XVIII.

While thus beneath St. Alban’s shade,
Panting, these bands of Havock stayed,
Round crowded porch and postern nigh,
Some outstretched on the graves are laid,
On lower wall some rest the head,
They ne’er again may hold on high.
And some within the sacred aisle
Lean on an altar-tomb the while,
And, flinging down the bleeding sword,
Instead of offering humbled word,
Greet with an oath the watch-monk there,
Whose low-breathed hymn and pious care,
With kindest awe and gratitude,
In all but basest hearts ill passion had subdued.

XIX.

Some, too, there were, whose evil eye
Scowled on the Monks, as they supply,
With kindness meek, due sustenance,
Sweet'ning the bounty they dispense.
"Well may they give of ample store,
Wrung from the land and famished poor,
To bribe us to forbearance now
From plunder of their shrines, I trow!
Methinks our swords have something won
From lazy Monks, who live i' th' sun
And roll in riches of the land;
While others, by hard toil of hand,
May scantly live from day to day.
Yet, listening to their cunning saye,
Henry and Richard bid us 'Nay.'
Let such folks in a convent stay;
But, by St. Alban's crown of gold,
I would not — I — for them withhold
From treasures now within our reach,
Though Kings command and Abbots preach."
Then, rousing from his sullen mood,
Such soldier snatched his comrade's food;
And so displayed to humblest sense
The motive of his fair pretence.

CANTO V .

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

SCENE — WITHOUT THE WALLS OF ST. ALBAN’S.

I.

IN angry gloom the sun went down
Upon St. Alban’s bleeding town,
While sadly many a Red-rose knight.
Escaping from the ruthless fight,
Traversed the woods and wild hills round;
And ever sought he tangled ground,
Pathless and dim and far away
From peasant-foe, who might convey
Notice to Richard’s scouts and bands,
Prowling for prey o’er Alban’s lands.

II.

Oft would the lonely Warrior start
At glance of arms, shot through the shade,
Where bright the western sunbeam played,
Judging some foeman watched apart;
And strange it was, ‘mid brake and bush,
Where only might he guess to see
Sweet violets sleeping to the hush
Of southern breeze, ‘neath oaken tree, —
Strange there to spy a warrior’s casque,
Or cuirass gleam, or steely mask;
An eyeless horror, stern and still,

Amid the peace of leaf and rill.
It was but harness, thrown aside,
Whose cumbrous weight had stayed the flight
Of some sad comrade of the fight,
In the late scene of evil-tide.
These armour-signs, if spelt aright,
Might tell whose footsteps he might trace
Along the rude and desert place.

III.

Oft would he pause on woody hill,
Listening if all were lone and still.
And oh! how still it seemed and lone
To one escaped from battle-bray,
From raging and from dying moan
To Nature’s grand and peaceful sway!
How calm her breathings, pure and clear,
Among the linden foliage here!
How fresh and gay it’s blossomed spray;
How sweet and good her smiles appear!
Sublime her ordered laws and true
Moved o’er the landscape’s evening-hue,
And solemn in the thunder spoke,
That, far off, on the hill-tops broke.
Sublime her stormy lights and shade,
Which all the stretching view pervade.
Her storms no moral evil show,
To work — like human tempest — woe;
But health and goodness from them flow,
Quickly and sure as tears of Spring
The Summer’s fruit and beauty bring.

IV.

The Red-rose Knight, who from the hill
Yet watched where wood and vale were still,
Had ‘scaped, though wounded, from the strife,
And hardly ‘scaped with limb and life.
He fought, until King Henry’s host,
By treachery foul, not weakness, lost,
Were pressed, at all points, on the town,
Deceived, betrayed, and trampled down.
This loyal Knight of Lancaster,
Though not in Alban’s prison bound,
Was not yet free from anxious fear
For friends, who fought upon that ground
And yet he lingered on the hill
With parting look, and listened still,
As if his eye, or ear, might glean
Tidings of that now distant scene.

V.

He heard, perchance, faint trumpet-strain
Marshal for watch some knightly train;
Or neigh of charger, high and shrill,
And sounds perplexed and dubious thrill;
Or ‘larum-drum and shout afar,
The dying tremour of the war;
Or, deep and full, St. Alban’s bell
Roll on the breeze the warrior’s knell.
And he would gaze, with sad farewell,
Where yet the gliding splendour falls,
Along those ancient towers and walls.

VI.

Throned in the vale and pomp of wood,
The Norman Abbey darkly stood,
And frowned upon that place of blood,
Beneath the lowering western cloud;
Till the sun, from stormy shroud,
Looked out, in fierce, yet sullen ire,
And touched the towering pile with fire.
Below, each battled turret seemed
The Martyr's crown of flame to wear;
While, through the airy arches there,
The sun's red splendour streamed.
But transept-roofs and aisles between
Lay stretched in darker tint and mien,
As if they mourned the slaughtered dead,
Laid out in blood, beneath their shade.
Slowly the vision changed it's hue,
In sullen mists the sun withdrew,
A ball of lurid fire, from view.
Yet curving lines of burnished gold,
(Traced where light clouds their edges fold)
Through the red haze, his station told.
Then Evening fell o'er all the vale,
Faded each tower and turret pale;
Till, shapeless, huge, obscure as doom,
The Abbey stood in steadfast gloom;
Vast, indistinct, and lone,
Like Being from a world unknown!

VII.

While the worn Warrior gazed his last,
The death-bell spoke upon the blast.
And now, while he beheld afar —
Himself secure — that place of war,
And heard again that deep death-bell

Along the evening breezes swell,
Each moment waked a tenderer fear,
Each toll made one dear friend more dear.
He marvelled how he could have fled,
Uncertain of their fate;
And back resolved his steps to tread,
And seek to know their state.
Then, through the gloom he bent his way,
Led by the Abbey's solemn lay.
High music on the soul it played
Of thoughts beyond this earth's low shade.

VIII.

Though on St. Alban's tower and town
The shadows of the tempest frown,
In softened shade, along the vale,
Peace seemed to dwell in twilight pale.
O'er the long, fading forest line,
Village and hamlet, hid beneath,
Sent up on high their silent sign
Of evening cheer, the thin grey wreath;
Village and hamlet, that by day
Veiled in the sleeping shadows lay,
Or, in blue distance, gave faint show
Of roofs and social scenes below.
Ah! treacherous to their own repose!
Such wreath betrays to watchful foes,
Scowering the hills and heath-land nigh,
Where dear, though humble, treasures lie,
And the bright-blazing hearth may share,
Though not the crimes, the woes, of war.
To other eyes such blaze might speak
Of succour, that they vainly seek,
For bleeding wound, for ebbing life,

For fainting nature’s last, last strife.
Vain hope, it fades upon his sight;
The Warrior’s eyes are dim in night!
No arm his sinking head may prop,
No light hand dry the chilly drop;
The damps of death are on his brow,
Oh! for some aid — some comfort now!
That NOW is passed, he breathes no more;
Unseen — unheard — his pangs are o’er!

IX.

Where were his friends when he sunk low
Knew they no strange presaging woe?
Felt they no instinct of that hour.
No touch of sympathy’s deep power,
Run o’er the shuddering nerves, and wake
Tones from the heart, that anguish spake?
Like to that lyre’s prophetic call,
Self-sounding from the lonely wall,
Whose only utterance was a sigh,
To hint when death, or woe, was nigh.
Ah, no! they talked, or laughed, or sang,
Unconscious of his dying pang.
No eye wept o’er his lowly bier,
The dew of heaven his only tear;
And sighs of eve alone were here,
Rustling the light leaves o’er his head,
As if they mourned the Warrior dead;
Making his stillness seem more still;
More sad the shade of grove and hill,

X.

Here shall he rest till distant day,
In the deep forest's untrod way,
Coffined in steely arms alone;
And, for carved sepulchre of stone.
And foliaged vault of choral-aisle,
The living oak, with darker smile,
Shall arch it's broad leaves o'er his form,
Poor shroud and guard from sun and storm!
The woodlark shall his requiem sing,
Perched high upon his branchy tomb;
And every morn, though morn of Spring,
Shall o'er him spread a mournful gloom;
And every eve, at twilight pale,
His chantry-bird shall sweetly wail;
And glowworms, with their watch-torch clear,
Wait mutely round his grassy bier,
Keeping aloof from his dark rest
Reptiles, that haunt the hour, unblest;
Till other Morn her cold tear shed,
And 'balm anew the soldier dead.

XI.

There was, who, from her distant bower,
Watched all that day St. Alban's tower,
As if its visage could have shown
The dreadful tale it looked upon,
And told to her the doubted fate
Of him, on whom her fears await,
Who joined King Henry, on that morn.
Oh! shall he to his shades return,
And through the oak's broad foliage view,
Once more, the vale and mountains blue?
May then their peaceful branches wave
High welcomes o'er his knightly plume,

Or, shedding deep their saddening gloom,
Murmur low dirges o’er his grave?

XII.

Pale with anxiety and fear,
She in her silent bower must wait,
Her playful infants came not there;
Her spirits ill their songs could bear
While doubtful of their father’s fate.
At times came messenger from far,
With various rumours of the war,
“His lord had late been seen in fight!”
So told the fleetest of the flight.
Another had beheld him fall.
When Warwick burst the barrier wall,
A third, report of fell wound brought;
A fourth, that vainly he was sought.
Slight rumours all — yet each some dread of ill
In heart of lovely Florence did instill.

XIII.

In oriel and in alley green
By turns she sat, or walked, unseen.
Th’ unfolding buds of Spring were there,
Breathing delight upon the air.
Health, life, and joy, by song of birds
As well are told, as if by words.
Those opening buds, that breath of joy,
That song of birds did but annoy
Attention, that for faintest sound
Listened from Alban’s fearful ground.
Oft on the calm there seemed to float

Murmur confused — a trumpet's note, —
Dull beatings of a charger's hoof —
The sharper clash of arms aloof —
Tumultuous shout — the onset cry —
Signal of some, that meet and die. —
Whose summons heard she in that call?
Oh! AT THAT moment who might fall!

XIV.

Attention each fine sound pursued,
Till doubt and distance seemed subdued;
She listened then, as if her ear
Could bring each phantom of her fear
In real shape before her sight.
There glowed the terrors of the fight!
She saw her loved lord wounded sink,
And slowly from the battle shrink,
With not a hand his arm to stay,
Or help him, where he bleeding lay.
Farther she dared not — could not, think.

XV.

Aghast and motionless, in trance,
While such terrific visions glance,
She rose up from her pale despair,
His fate to soften, or to share.
And she, who from a summer shower
Would fly to covert of a bower;
Whom thunder tortured with alarm,
Though sheltered in his faithful arm;
Who lived in privacy's safe round,
And joys in cares domestic found

(The cherub-smile of infancy,
The look of love, still watching by);
Whose heart would to best music move —
The music breathed by breath of love,
The music of Affection’s eye —
That varied world of harmony!
Even she renounced all feeble fear,
Pressed by a danger more severe;
And felt the spirit of the brave,
When her mind caught the hope to save.

XVI.

Till near the falling of the sun,
It was not known the fight was done;
And then, that lady’s messenger,.
With face, that spoke before his tongue,
Of horrors, that round Alban throng,
Brought heavy news of Lancaster;
But tiding of her lord came none!
A dreadful silence wrapt his name —
The pause, ere falls the lightning’s flame,
Might be just image of the same.
Without a tear, without a sigh,
She read dismay in every eye.
Unbreathing calmness o’er her face
Now veiled, with melancholy grace,
Her courage, — moral courage, — love,
That soon their truth and strength must prove.

XVII.

One ancient servant, faithful found,
She chose to guide her on her way,

And search with her the blood-stained ground,
Where dead and wounded still might lay.
In vain that humble steward sought
To win her from such daring thought,
And told the dangers that await
Wide round St. Albans bleeding gate;
And she, who ne’er had viewed the face
Of slaughtered man, how might she trace,
How bear to look upon the field,
Where their last breath the vanquished yield!
How search for face of her dear lord,
Or, finding, live and aid afford!

XVIII.

Florence a forceful sigh suppressed,
Haste! not a moment may we rest.
Such aid even now he needs; away!
He bleeds — he dies, while we delay!” —
“How, lady, may you reach the town,
On public road, unseen, unknown;
And seen and known, how, prison-free,
Escape the grasp of enemy?
A shorter path perchance might lead
O’er open ground of heath or mead;
But that was viewed by every eye: — .
While through the forest’s closer way,
The dim paths far and widely stray.
How reach the guarded barrier?
And, lady, how might you endure
The weary path; or how procure
The pass of posted warrior!” —
“My purse such posted guard shall gain,
My palfrey bear me, while he may;

My purpose will my steps sustain;
Away — to horse! away, away!”

XIX.

By sense of duty thus upheld,
By strong affection thus impelled,
Florence must quit her sheltered home,
O’er desolated tracks to roam.
In chamber, gallery, orieled-hall,
Her home was deadly stillness all;
But stillness without peace — more drear
Such stillness, than the War’s career!
It seemed, as through the hall she passed,
Murmured a mourning trumpet-blast.
She turned, as sad it died away,
And, while the slanting western ray
Played through a casement’s ivy wreath,
And touched the armoured shape beneath,
That stood, like guardian of the hall,
By stair, where fearful shadows fall,
She thought the corslet heaved, as life
Was there beneath, with death at strife.
Perhaps, ‘tis glance of ivy-leaves
Trembling in light her eye deceives.

XX.

Short pause she made within the court;
Her steed received her as in sport,
When fresh from cheer of green-wood shade;
Though now no soft caress she laid
Upon his glossy neck, or face,
Nor gave him word of gentle grace.

Yet did he know her, though the ‘guise
Might wrap her from a stranger’s eyes;
And pawed the ground, in mantling joy,
And arched his crest, and turned his eye,
And champed the bit, with nostril wide,
And laid his playful head aside,
As asking welcomes from her hand,
And suing for it’s light command.

XXI.

Old Leonard led through forest-way,
And pointed where St. Alban’s lay,
With look of grave and anxious thought.
The sun those lofty turrets brought
Full on the eye, that, at their sight,
Sickened and darkened, as in night.
Yes, though she felt the western blaze,
Strange gloom, all cheerless, met her gaze.
She saw the sun — she knew his beam,
Yet seemed in dimness of a dream!
With mingled grief and terror filled,
Her spirits scarce their task fulfilled;
Yet did her will it’s purpose hold,
As might the boldest of the bold.
Right onward, as the path might go,
She pressed, to meet the coming woe.
The fanning air her frame sustained,
And firmly still her steed she reined.
Though on the Abbey-tower her eye
Was fixed — that tower would seem to fly;
For, though at utmost speed she went,
More distant seemed it’s battlement;
And, though she knew her palfrey moved,
That he went forward was not proved.

XXII.

Though true and good the long-loved steed,
His weary limbs relaxed their speed.
He marvelled at the pace she hied,
And would resent the whip she plied,
(Unused to feel the goading pain,
And fretting with a high disdain,)
Had other hand but held the rein.
Often would Leonard now implore
That, till the forest-shades were o’er,
His lady, for his master’s sake,
Some caution for herself would take,
Nor tempt St. Alban’s dangerous wall,
Ere deepest gloom of evening fall.
The sun was yet upon the towers,
And lighted yet her roofs and bowers.

XXIII.

Florence once turned her weary sight,
And, in the landscape’s beamy light,
Viewed the peaked roofs and glittering vane,
Where slept, in peace, her infant-train.
A sigh — the first she long had known —
Burst from her breast, and fell a tear;
But ‘twas not grief she felt, nor fear:
‘Twas desolation, hopeless, drear!
She seemed in this vast world alone;
‘Reft of her joy, her guide, her might,
Even life itself was desert night.

XXIV.

St. Alban’s, onward as they drew,
Spoke fearful symptoms of the war;
Tumultuous murmurs, cries afar,
Wild roar, that distance did subdue;
And oft, from path unseen, was heard
Horse-tramp, or shout, or solemn word;
And heavy sounds of woe and pain
Led to the steps of wounded men,
Unhorsed and plundered of their arms,
And jealous still of new alarms.
These Leonard questioned of the fate
Of friends within St. Alban’s gate,
While Florence, with attention dread,
Apart, in silence, bent her head.
Little he learned; for scant they knew,
‘Wildered in tumult of the fight,
Of what had passed beyond their view;
But in one tale they all unite —
The plundering fury of the foe
On those whom they o’ertake in flight,
And their relentless, coward blow;
All urge the strangers to beware,
Nor Alban’s fatal barrier dare.

XXV.

Then ancient Leonard urged anew
The dangers would her course pursue;
And Florence yielded now her ear,
By truth warned, not by idle fear.
He led where steed might hardly go
Under the stretching, beechen bough,
A scene of deep repose and gloom,
Hushed as some lonely aisle, or tomb —
So hushed, that here the bird of May

Amid the leaves began her lay;
Not the known lay of joyous morn,
But midnight hymn, sad, sweet and lorn;
Yet sometimes, as her cadence fell,
Strange mournful murmurs seemed to swell —
Sounds indistinct and dark, to wail,
Or darkly hint, some dreadful tale.

XXVI.

Sudden, where opening branches yield,
Florence beheld the tented field,
Beneath St. Alban’s walls afar,
Spread with the various lines of war.
Broad, moving masses she might view,
And hurrying bands of gleamy hue
Preparing for the coming night;
And trains of horse, whose armour bright
Flashed radiance to the western light;
And trumpet-signals faint were heard
And far — halloo and shouted word.
All that there lived, seemed strong in strife,
But ‘twas for comforts, not for life —
All that there lived! — alas, that thought!
What strife of hope and fear it brought!
While o’er the scene St. Alban’s tower
Looked sternly on the passing hour.

XXVII.

To this wild scene of war’s array, —
Where busy atoms of a day,
Entrusted with brief rule, had proved
By what slight springs their force is moved,

Opposed — great Nature tranquil lay.
Though on the hills, far to the West,
Dark thunder-shadows awful rest,
There power and grandeur seem combined
With stillness, as of brooding mind.
The purple gloom lay deep and wide,
Save where the umbered splendours glide
Broadly and silent o'er the vale,
And touch with life the forests pale.

XXVIII.

While Florence watched, beneath the shade,
The camp in Key's-Field now arrayed,
She shrunk, as danger seemed more near,
Yet found impatience conquering fear;
And, urging on a rapid flight,
Ere hindered by advancing night,
She looked, perchance, upon the way,
Where now her dying husband lay!
Urged by such thought, she paused no more;
And, as the Abbey's guardian roof
Might shield him, should the last be o'er,
There would she seek her first dread proof.

XXIX.

She turned her steed, and gave the rein.
But checked awhile his course again,
As from by-way and near she heard
A slow wheel pressing the green-sward.
It bore, beneath the veiling shade,
Some wounded chieftain lowly laid.
In dread attention Florence sees,

As the light steals through parted trees,
The mute train turn the jutting bank,
(Where the high beech, of silver rind,
Caught the slant sunbeam ere it sank,)
And through the deepening forest wind.
The level radiance, shooting far
Within the shadows, touched that car;
And, glancing o'er a steely crest,
Flushed the wan visage in it pressed.
Too distant fell the slanting light
To bring the features forth to sight;
But played on falchions drawn around,
Guarding their chief o'er dangerous ground
And gleamed upon the silver badge,
Of lofty servitude the pledge.

XXX.

Florence restrained the impulse strong,
That would have forced her to that throng,
And Leonard hastened to explore
Some signal of the Chief they bore,
While she, within the deepest gloom,
Watched, as for sentence of her doom.
She marked, when he o'ertook the chief,
No gesture of surprise, or grief.
Soon, where the broader foliage shed
It's gloom o'er woodbanks high and steep,
Beyond the warriors' way there creep
A sandaled group with hooded head,
Silently from the umbrage deep.
This pilgrim-band might scarce be known,
Clad in their amice grey,
From tint of boughs with moss o'ergrown;
But that some clasp, or chainlet shone,

And ruddy tinge their faces own
Of the full Western ray.

XXXI.

As from the pass that shadowy train
Sought Alban’s sheltering aisles to gain,
Unknowing that the war s sad course
Had thither brought Duke Richard’s force,
Sudden, the wounded Chief they meet,
And, doubting, wondering, pitying, greet.
Leonard, while he drew near, o’erheard
The meeting Pilgrim’s hailing word,
And question, on the spreading war,
And who was borne upon the car?
There lay Earl Stafford, wounded sore,
Whom Buckingham must long deplore:
Then prompt good wishes they exchange,
State of the roads and pass declare,
Give news of war, and counsel fair
How best the Pilgrims may arrange
Their distant way, through secret path,
To gain, ere night, some quiet hearth.

XXXII.

Leonard asked tidings of his lord
From all who, round that bleeding car,
Halted with watchful eye and guard.
And various rumours of the war
They told, of chiefs slain, saved, or fled;
Clifford and Henry too were dead:
Brief and unsure was all they said.
Baron Fitzharding? He was slain —

Some told, and some denied again.
Leonard, on mention of his death,
With eager look and trembling breath,
Straight to the Chief himself addressed
His question; who, howe'er distressed,
Upraised with patient courtesy
His languid head, for brief reply: —
"'Twas said, that, early in the strife,
Fitzharding fell, yielding his life
To Richard's sword; but then such tale
Should not as certainty prevail;
For those engaged in ardent fight
Know not who falls beyond their sight."

XXXIII.

Ere yet the hasty talk had passed,
Swelled on the calm a clarion's blast;
Then sudden and near shout thrilled high,
And pain and terror's mingled cry.
The Earl gave signal to proceed;
And wishes warm the conference close
For life and health and safe repose.
The car then moved with feeble speed.
Fixed in dismay the Pilgrims stood,
Till Leonard, pointing through the wood,
Told where a little dim path wound,
Remote from Alban's fatal ground.
Then bent he with the fearful tale
To Florence. How may he prevail
To lead her home? How soothe her woes,
When his dire news he shall disclose?

XXXIV.

While she had watched his steps with doubt,
She heard the faint pursuing shout,
And marked where trailed the distant rout.
But, even here, where all seemed lone,
The dreariness was not her own;
At times came nearer voice, and yell
Of wandering bands, or bugle's swell
In signal-call, or laughter loud,
Horrid to her, as voice from shroud!
Others there were who shunned the road,
Anxious to reach some safe abode,
Ere yet the brooding tempest fell;
For so the gestures seemed to tell
Of men, who, on the wild heath turned,
And pointing where the red gloom burned,
A moment paused, as if to say
"How dark the storm comes on our way!"

XXXV.

Sudden, while Silence slept around,
Her courser listened, as if sound
Disturbed his watchful ear;
With feet outstretched and rising mane,
Averted head and eyes, that strain,
He gazed, in stiffening fear;
Then reared, and, with a restive bound,
He bore her from that fearful ground,
Ere she had aught perceived for dread,
Or sound had heard, that terror spread.
Vainly she tried to rein her steed;
So docile late, he keeps his speed,
Though now they meet a haggard group,
Who, with fierce gesture and wild whoop,
Would check his rapid flight;

Trying, when near, to snatch the rein;
To chase, when passed; but still in vain;
He bears her from their might.

XXXVI.

Pencil alone may trace such woe
As darkened faithful Leonard's brow,
When he had reached the oak's lone gloom
Where Florence dared to meet her doom,
And found her not! But, while around
He searched the close embowered ground,
A form terrific fixed his eyes.
Sheltered within the thickest shade,
There lay a pale and dying head:
In blood an armoured warrior lies!
It was his lowly, faltering groan!
His casque, where a stray light had shone,
And might give glimpse of ghastly face,
Betrayed him to the startled steed;
Who bore his mistress off at speed,
Ere she his cause of fear could trace.

XXXVII.

Ere Leonard, 'neath the darksome bough,
Might the dead form, or feature, know,
A fearful sound and shrill and high
Upon the rushing breeze went nigh.
A shriek it seemed — again he hears
The voice, that summoned all his fears.
Once more he listened, but the breeze
Rolled lonely o'er the bended trees,
And died, but, as it swelled again,

Brought on it’s tide that note of pain!
Leonard, ere yet the plaint might close,
Turned his good steed the way it rose.

CANTO VI .

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

SCENE — WITHIN THE TOWN AND ABBEY OF ST. ALBAN’S.

I.

THOUGH now, within St. Alban’s wall,
Was hushed the turmoil of the day,
The crash of arms, the Chieftain’s call,
The onset shout, the clarion’s bray.
The stillness there was scarce less dread
Of those, who, looking on the dead,
In voice suppressed and trembling spake,
As if they feared the very sound,
Or, that it might disturb, or wake
The victims stretched around.
Yet, sometimes, ‘mid this calm of fear,
Rose sudden cries of woe most drear
For friend or kinsman found.
But, though the slain filled all the ground,
No brother yet dared brother move,
Or close his eyes with pious love;
And, though amid that ghastly band
Lay chiefs and nobles of the land,
Yet might no man his pity prove;
Nor herald take his fearful course,
To know and name the new-made corpse.

II.

Earl Warwick ruled that woeful hour.
What were compassion ‘gainst his power?
How many, fallen upon that heap.
Warm and alive, but succourless,
Had there unnoticed ‘found the sleep
His will might never more distress!
While he disputed, planned, arranged
Ambition’s little dream of fame,
Or with his peers, or knights, exchanged
Some narrow points of rival claim.
And thus it went till eventide;
And then the mitred fathers’ cry,
That those who had, on each side, died,
Should rest with equal honours here,
Was coldly granted; while a tear
Of saddest pity filled his eye,
Who pleaded for such ministry.
The monks, too, asked an armed band
Might round their Abbey portals stand,
And yet another guard their way,
When they their pious dues should pay,
And step amid th’ unhallowed troop,
Who o’er the dead and dying stoop.

III.

Then went the heralds on their round,
Proclaiming forth the dead;
And, following on that blood-stained ground,
York’s plundering lancemen sped.
And then, sustained by courage high,
Pale brothers of the monastery,
Solemn and still and sad went by;
Nor shrunk they, with an useless fear,
To do their awful office here.

IV.

Then straight were borne to Alban’s aisle,
Rescued by guard from wanton spoil,
Dead chief and prince and noble knight,
High plumed, and harnessed for the fight,
To rest, all in their steely gear,
In consecrated chapel there;
Knights, who that very morning rode
Beneath the Abbey’s tower,
And hardly owned the earth they trod,
Or any earthly power.
So light in hope, so high in pride,
Pranced they to battle, side by side:
Now under Death’s dim flag enrolled,
Their transient story now all told;
Still, comrades, side by side, they go,
And side by side, though shrined in brass,
Must soon into oblivion pass;
Scarce word shall live, nor sign, to show
What spirit’s dust sleeps there below.

V.

‘Twas well Duke Richard granted guard;
Much need had they of warlike ward —
Those hooded monks and lay;
Since armour rich of men they bear
The conquerors might strive to tear
From the dead corpse away.
And hardly did the guardian sword,
Or written sign of Richard’s word,
Deter from bloody fray.
And scarce the palls the Abbot sent

To shade the noble slain,
While through the open street they went,
Could hide bright casque, or chain.
Oft would a sullen murmur run
From lancemen rude the porch beside,
That the rich armour they had won
Should be preserved for chieftain's pride
That they, who braved so much of toil,
Should share not in the hard-earned spoil.
They laughed in scorn, when it was said,
Such spoil would in the grave be laid,
Fit shrouding for a warrior dead.
Forty and nine of dead alone
Then bear they through the gate;
And many wounded men unknown,
Their pious care and pity own,
Too oft in dying state.

VI.

How mournful was the scene and dread
Of monks around those warriors dead.
Laid out in aisle and nave,
When, through the western window's height,
The red sun, ere he sunk in night,
His last sad farewell gave!
His beams a darkened glory threw,
Tinged with that gorgeous window's hue,
On every vault and arch on high;
Glanced on each secret gallery,
And half unveiled it's mystery;
While shrine and bier and form of woe
Lay sunk in shadows deep below.
Grand as the closing battle-hour,
Yet gloomy as it's fateful power,

Hovered that light above the slain,
Last light of their last day, and vain.

VII.

‘Twas at this hour of twilight pale,
When curfew-bell gave heavy wail,
A Pilgrim to the Abbey came
Brief rest and timely aid to claim.
While seated in Refectory
Thus did he to the warders state.
That, trusting to no bravery,
But to his honoured weed, his fate,
He passed alone the tented line
Of Richard’s camp, his outer guard,
And the town barrier’s watch and ward.
Now, when the Abbey-band asked sign,
And answer due to their watchword,
He ne’er before their pass had heard.
Then other means he tried to gain
The warders, and tried not in vain;
His gift bestowed, he pressed his way,
Where dim the convent portal lay.

VIII.

Lofty and dark that porch arose,
By fits the vaulting shown,
When the tossed torch a red flash throws
O’er thick-ribbed arch and crowning rose,
And hooded face of carved stone.
While passed the dead and dying through.
There watched the Pilgrim, hid from view,
Within a turret’s dusky stair,

Whence he might note what corpse they bear
He watched, with fixed and tearless eye,
The warrior’s death-march crowding by.

IX.

Under the gloom of portal door,
On bier and shield while soldiers bore
The hopeless wounded and the dead,
Pale monks with lifted torches led,
And Abbey-knights in silence ward;
Following came lancemen, as rear-guard.
The dying forms, then passing by,
Showed every shade of misery,
Mingling with warlike pageantry.
Some lay in quilted brigandine,
Others in polished armour shine,
And some in surcoat blazoned high.
Some were in ‘bossed and damasked steel,
With threatening crest and plumed head;
These the closed helmet-bars conceal.
On others the raised vizor shed
A shade athwart the eyes more dread
Even than the wounds it might expose.
And some there were, whose shroud-like mail,
Binding the chin and forehead pale,
Would all the dying look disclose!
O! that poor look, that sinking eye,
When glanced a light from torch on high,
Held by some mute o’erbending monk,
Of ghastly air and visage shrunk;
Whose wanness, though of different hue
From his, that lay beneath his view,
Yet, seen beside the living tint
Of men, who bore the corpse away,

Seemed but a fleeting shadowy hint
Of one, who had lived yesterday,
As with still step he passed along
The wounded and the dying throng.

X.

Once, as the grave's dark guests pass by,
The Pilgrim's sad and bursting sigh
Betrayed him in that shaded nook;
And, as the sound fell on the ear
Of monk, attendant on the bier,
He raised his torch around to look.
It showed him but the portal-roof,
The studded gates, long battle-proof,
The low-browed door and turret-stair,
And not the dark weed resting there.
And, had he spied that pilgrim-weed,
The form beneath he might not read,
Nor guess the world there hid, the fears,
The trembling thought, that sees and hears.
In every shape, in every sound,
Image, or hint of grief profound;
The pang, that seeks the worst to know,
Yet shrinks, and shuns the meeting woe,
Affection's pang, o'er-watching care,
And, sickness of the heart! despair.
Yes; it was Florence there who stood,
Watching each passing corpse,
And waiting till a firmer mood
Might bear her on her course.

XI.

And, when the mingled crowd was passed
Of living and of dead,
And the great portal, closed so fast,
Echoed no sound of dread,
On noiseless foot pale Florence paced
The Abbey-court — and cloister traced
And hall and chamber's gloom,
Forsaken gallery, dim stair,
Remote from steps of ceaseless care,
Fast thronging round the tomb.
No voice through stillness stole, no sound
Through all the widely vacant round.
Door after door, in long display,
Still led where distant chambers lay,
Shown by fixed lamp, or taper's ray.

XII.

By such ray, trembling on the gloom,
She passed through many a vaulted room;
In one she paused, flung back her hood,
And, with an eager frenzy, viewed
What, silent, in the centre stood.
The board, that feasted living guest,
Behold! was now the dead man's rest!
For banquet-cloth — a winding sheet!
That, lifted by the face and feet,
Veiled, yet made known, some form of death,
Laid out, unwatched, unwept, beneath!
Honour had watched his living course,
Terror and Pity wound his corpse,
But Sorrow bends not by his bier!
Though now, perchance, her steps are near.

XIII.

A shuddering instinct yet withheld
Florence from seeking, who was veiled;
And even the dread uncertainty
Whose countenance she here might see —
Even this seemed momentary shield
From truth, that might be there revealed.
With eyes fixed on that winding shroud,
Powerless she stood beside the dead;
Came o’er her sight a misty cloud;
Through all her frame a tremour spread;
A stillness of the heart — a trance
Held her, like statue in advance;
One hand just raised to lift the veil,
But checked, as life itself must fail,
If one loved face should there lie pale.
A moment passed — she raised the shroud,
Fell o’er her sight a darker cloud!
No cry she uttered; dropped no tear;
But sunk beside the Warrior’s bier.
There by a lay-monk was she founds
When passing on his wonted round;
There, like a broken lily, laid
Half-hid, within her pilgrim-shade;
And thence, with hopeless care, conveyed.

XIV.

Though closed the Abbey’s outer gate,
Still, through low porch and postern-door,
Pikemen the dead and dying bore
To the near aisles, where monks await,
And watch around th’ expiring chief,
With aiding pity, silent grief;
And every form of horror view,

Yet calm their duteous task pursue.
Clement, the Monk, was, on this night,
Shrine-watcher on the southern aisle,
Pacing o’er brass-bound graves the while,
By the pale, sickly, waning light
Of yellow tapers, ranged in state
O’er tombs of the departed great.
Under the transept’s shrined shade
No victim of the war was laid;
Yet, as with slow and heavy tread
Passed on the bearers of the dead,
Clement a prayer of requiem said.

XV.

From these new relics of War’s rage
Turning, it did his pain assuage
To look on marble sepulchre,
And ponder Latin register
Of those, who ruled here in past age.
He thought of FREDERICK THE BOLD,
Laid out in monumental brass,
Who, casting off his cope of gold,
Armed at all points stood in the pass,
When Norman William came of old;
And, sprung himself from royal race,
(Canute, the Dane, spoke in his vein)
Defied the Conqueror to his face.
Clement now almost saw his form —
That warlike Abbot, rising dim
From the grave’s sleep, as roused by storm
Of battle, then approaching him;
And could have thought his armour’s gleam
Did through the chancel-shadows stream;
Nay that his very shape stood there,

With face all haggard, wan and spare,
And plumage staring o’er his crest,
As if wild horror it expressed.

XVI.

Was this a vision that he viewed,
Wrought by o’er watching of the mind?
It seemed along the shade to wind,
And rest in thoughtful attitude.
All in the aisle was lone and still,
But from the distant nave a thrill,
A murmur deep and stifled broke;
Where monks, as they the dead laid out,
In voice of strange lamenting spoke,
As if half fearing, half devout.
Clement, the way that moaning came,
One moment turned his eye:
What was it shook his lofty frame?
What wrung from him that sigh?
He drew upon his face his hood,
Deep rapt awhile in thoughtful mood; —
When able to lift up his mien,
On the choir-step that vision stood,
That unknown shade, so dimly seen.
So woe-begone and stern it’s look,
The Monk with sudden terror shook.
He signed himself, and passed the way
Where other shrine-watch yet might stay.

XVII.

It waved him back with lofty sign,
Then trod the aisle alone,

In stately step, to Catherine’s shrine,
And spoke in stifled tone.
But Clement, still o’ercome with dread,
Before that warlike image fled.
It was no phantom that stood there,
But a true knight of Lancaster;
Who, ‘mid a crowd of monks, that bore
A warrior through St. Mary’s door.
Had here a dreadful refuge ta’en
Among the dying and the slain.
He craved of Clement secrecy,
That he might here in shelter be,
Having escaped, at midnight hour,
From those, who watched around this tower.

XVIII.

The Monk, well pleased with fear to part,
And aid Lancastrian Knight distressed,
Welcomed the stranger to his heart,
And freely granted all his quest.
He pointed to a little stair
Wound upward o’er the transept there;
He pointed, but they heard, remote,
Dull, measured footsteps fall,
And saw through Mary’s portal float
Slowly, a sable pall.
Distant, upon the aisle it turned,
Where Gloucester’s chantry-tapers burned.
The stranger stood, with brow intent
Upon that mournful vision bent:
So pale and still, though stern, his look,
Image he seemed, forsook of life.
But that his cresting plumage shook,
And told of passion’s strife.

All reckless of himself he stood,
While on the bearers drew,
Till Clement roused him from his mood,
And led him from their view.

XIX.

Within a little secret door
Of this side aisle, they now explore
A stair, that goes within the wall
To galleries on high;
These run behind close arcades small
Along the transept nigh.
The arches round, the pillars short,
(With capitals uncarved and square,)
Changing each single arch to pair,
Seem by rude hand of Saxon wrought,
Or Norman William's earliest train:
So massy is their shape and plain.
Hid in these galleries, unknown,
A stranger long might be,
Yet on the shrines and tombs look down,
And all there passing see.
Such channels run, in double tier,
Through every aisle and transept here;
Yet goes not one, unchecked, the round
And bendings of this mystic ground,
But, broke by window, arch, or pier,
The narrow way is often found.

XX.

Within that little secret door,
A few steps of the Choir before,

Clement the mournful stranger led,
While passed, upon his funeral bed,
Unwept, unknown, that warrior dead.
The pall had shifted from it’s hold,
And showed a casque of steel and gold,
A LION PASSANT CREST;
And, just beneath the vizor raised,
The eyes, for ever fixed and glazed,
A warrior’s death confessed.
Two men-at-arms stepped slowly near
A Poursuivant, before the bier;
And, as they passed, the Knight could hear
The watch-monk, Clement, feebly say,
“Who passes to his grave, I pray.”
The herald deigned not word to give,
Save “ Live King Henry! Henry live!— “
The Knight then, in his secret cell,
No longer might his feelings quell;
But stepped upon the aisle to learn,
What friend or comrade he must mourn.

XXI.

The bier had passed away the while,
The herald at it’s side,
And, as he turned upon the aisle,
Where nave and choir divide,
The stranger did PORTCULLIS know,
And princely Somerset laid low.
With bended head and downward eye,
He mused in grief to see
The Chief so oft of victory,
Whom last he viewed ‘mid banners high
And trumpets’ pride and shout of joy.
While thus the warrior dwelt in thought,

The Monk, respectful of his pain,
No word of consolation sought,
Impertinent and vain;
But watched him, with a low-breathed sigh,
And look of gentle sympathy:
Till the Knight, fearing further stay,
Turned round and signed the Monk away;
And Clement led him up the flight,
That opened on the gallery height.

XXII.

The beams, that rose from shrine and tomb,
Broke on that stair-flight's distant gloom,
As now the Knight and Monk ascend;
And, seen beyond low arches there,
Tall fretted windows rose in air,
And with the transept-shadows blend
Dim form of warrior and of saint,
Traced gloomily by moonbeam faint.
These words the Monk at parting gave,
"Sir Knight, whatever you may see
Within this hidden gallery,
Sir Knight, be watchful, mute, and brave;
The way is little known,
And you are safe from human ill
If you shall secret be and still: —
"I leave you not alone!"
The Stranger yielded to his will,
But answer made he none.
Yet much he mused on the dark word,
That might some inward hint afford
Of those he feared, this night, to see
Changed by Death's awful mystery.

XXIII.

Within the pillared arch, unseen,
He stood and looked beneath;
Transept and aisle lay deep between
This angle and the Nave’s long scene
Of suffering and death.
Obscure in that far distance, lay
This scene of mortal misery;
And, where tall arches rose,
Each arch, discovering the way
To what beyond might passing be,
Did some dread group disclose.
Pale phantoms only seemed to glide
Among the torches there,
And stoop upon the tomb’s low side,
In busy, silent care:
Unseen the deathly form below,
Unseen the pale, reflected woe
On miens, that each woe share;
The sable cowl appeared alone,
Or glimpse of helm, or corslet, shown
By the red torch’s glare.

XXI.

Distinct, no sound arose, nor word
Along the vaults and arches spread,
Save that low murmur, shrill and dread,
Which in the Choir the Warrior heard;
While still the heavy march, afar,
Brought on new victims of the war.
Down the long south aisle swept his eye,
Upon whose verge two hermits lie;
Athwart that aisle, in farthest gloom,

The frequent torch was seen to glide,
Borne by the heralds of the tomb;
And, hurrying to the cloister-side,
Lay-monks oft bore upon the bier,
Into the dormitory near,
Bodies where life might yet abide.
And, ever as the Knight beheld
Those mournful shadows go,
Terror and high impatience swelled,
The fate of friends to know.

XXV.

Then sadly he withdrew his eye
From scene of Death's dark pageantry,
Shaped out in garb so strange,
And bent it on the view below,
The southern transept's gorgeous-show,
In long and ordered range
Of chantry, chapel, and of shrine,
Where lights for ever were to shine,
And priests for ever — ever pray
For soul of those, whose mortal clay
Within the still, cold marble lay.
On high, the broad round arches rose,
That prop the central tower,
Where, north and south, the long roof goes,
That either transept grandly shows
In full perspective power.
Dimly those arches hung in night,
Interminable to the sight.
While rose the massy piers to view,
The distant torch their shadows threw
Broad, dark, and far around.

Like Warders o’er this gloomy ground,
Those Norman pillars stood and frowned.

XXVI.

On either side, in transept-wall,
Where rise four pointed arches small,
Now silent, dark and lone,
Four dedicated chapels lay,
Receding from the open way,
Whence rose due orison.
Tapers beamed on each altar there,
‘Mid image carved and picture fair.
In one the priest sang nightly prayer
For Tynemouth’s Prior, Delamere,
Once ruler of the Abbey here.
Not that within this chapel’s shade,
His coffined bones were ever laid;
But in the chancel, graved on brass,
His stately form, with mitred head,
Still guards his low and silent bed,
Where he such happy hours did pass.
Calm is the countenance and wise,
With lids, that shade the thoughtful eyes.
So exquisite the graven plate,
So fine the form, so old the state,
Oh! may it long be spared the fate
Of other sad memorials near,
Torn ruthlessly from reverend bier
Of abbot, knight, of prince and peer.

XXVII.

As now the Stranger caught some strain,
Memorial of the newly slain,
Or heard the tender notes that plead
For spirit freed from mortal weed,
Pity and grief his eyes oppressed,
And tears fell on his warrior breast;
Such requiem might his father need!
He turned him from the moving strain,
And paced the gallery dim again;
With quick unequal step he paced,
And oft that gallery retraced.
Once, as he reached the farther end,
Another pathway, low and small,
Winding within the eastward wall,
Seemed far away to bend.

CANTO VII .

SCENE IN THE MONASTERY.

I.

THE Warrior stood, and marvelled where
The secret way he spied might go,
Whether to turret high in air,
Or to some penance-cell below;
When, as he looked, a beam of light
Dawned through the gallery’s long night.
He passed upon that silent way,
And came where many a darting ray
Through the broad Saxon mouldings stray
Of a deep, jealous door,
With massy iron studded o’er.
Unclosed it stood, yet nought between
Of cell, or winding stair was seen.

II.

He paused, and anxious bent his head,
For a faint wailing seemed to rise,
Like that of mourner o’er the dead:
He would not mourner’s tears surprise.
But soon the murmur died remote,
Nor any sounds on silence float.
It might have come from hearse of death,
In chancel-aisle, unseen, beneath.
He passed the jealous Saxon door.
And stepped upon a covered floor!
Within appeared a chamber small,

Crowned with a vaulting, rich and tall,
With slender central staff for stay,
Whence the traced branch of leaf and flower
Spread, like a shadowing summer-bower,
Where evening’s slant beams stray.

III.

A velvet-curtain, drawn aside,
Showed bay-recess, of fretwork pride,
Where, on the window’s stately brow,
Vision of angels strove to glow,
As waiting orison below;
For there an altar was arrayed,
And consecrated tapers shone,
That such poor feeble homage paid,
As mortals pay by forms alone.
Beneath that curtain’s sweeping fold
Were ancient reliques, set in gold;
And, open on the altar, see
A missal, gold and velvet bound,
And on the step, just pressed by knee,
A cushion ‘broidered round.
The down had not regained it’s sheen,
Where the low bended knee had been,
Yet there no living step was seen.

IV.

The moon kept her still watch on high,
‘Mid surges of a stormy sky;
And, on the fretted window’s pane,
Illumined the rich pencilled stain
Of groups, that wake and die,

As sweeps the varying shadow by.
‘Now, as those angel-forms appear
And vanish in the shaded air,
Most strangely seemed each transient face
Some guardian spirit of the place.

V.

A moment stood the Knight to gaze
Upon this chapel’s circling bound;
The blazoned walls showed helpful phrase,
And the high scenes of holy ground.
O’er an arched door, that caught his view,
St. Andrew’s shielded sign he knew,
Carved on the stone, and, close beside,
This Abbey’s mitre-crest of pride,
Another shield, with wheat-sheaf, near,
Spelt of the Abbot ruling here,
Wheathampstede of the lengthened days.
A moment stood the Knight, to gaze
Upon the bending form above,
As watchful in its fretted cove,
The sainted bishop — Bishop Blaize.

VI.

Another form, of air serene,
Above the Saxon door was seen:
Saint Dunstan, he, whose harp all lone
Sounded in such celestial tone,
As if from airy choir, at eve,
Whom mortal eyes may not perceive.
With careful pause the Stranger viewed
That Saint’s enraptured attitude.

A crystal lamp, suspended high,
Touched with keen light his upward eye;
As if a beam of heavenly day
Fell, while he watched a seraph's way,
And listened, in mute ecstasy
The slow ascending strains decay.
So fine the passion of his eye,
It seemed to speak both tear and sigh;
And the fallen drop upon his cheek
Spoke more than words themselves may speak.

VII.

He passed the door with cautious tread;
It to a vaulted chamber led,
With storied tapestry dressed around;
A screen of carved oak was it's bound.
In lofty oriel, light and rich,
O'ercanopied, like mural niche,
King Offa, as the moonbeams glide,
Glimmered, in pall of purple pride.
Above, the trefoil-traced pane
Displayed, in bright and varied stain,
Th' allusive arms, or cognizance,
Of Abbots, long departed thence.
This bay looked on the platform green
Of Abbot's cloister, that was seen
In streamy light and slanting shade,
By the tall transept's turret made.
From it's bowed roof a silver light
Hung, and a trembling radiance shed
O'er the worn brow and hoary head
(With snow of seventy winters white)
Of a lone form, that sat beneath
Pallid and still, as shape of death.

The Abbot; in his mitred chair,
Wearied with grief and watch, slept there.
And, from such deep and kind repose,
Such seeming peace of heart as now
Beams blessedness around his brow,
Oh! must he wake to former woes?

VIII.

To the armed Knight who near him stood,
He seemed a Saint in tranced mood,
Or who had breathed his soul away.
And left below the pallid clay
Impressed with sign of heavenly bliss,
Instead of mortal happiness.
On the high desk beside him lay
The blessed Sriptures, shown by light
Of waxen tapers, branching there —
The study, that had closed his day,
And calmed the terrors of the night
With heavenward hope and heart-felt prayer.
His crown of earthly honour stood
Behind him, and a purple hood
Half shrouded, in it’s stead, the snow
That slept, like moonlight, on his brow:
His vest and tunicle of gold,
His ample train of graceful fold,
And all the pomp, that had arrayed
His presence, when the King was by,
Now dropped as cumbrous pageantry;
He wore his robe of evening-shade.

IX.

The Stranger, careful, watched this vest;
Scarce breathed the sigh, that heaved his breast,
Nor even the gauntlet-hands ungrasped,
That, on his first approach, he clasped;
Nor did his lifted step advance,
Lest ANY sound might break the trance,
That spread it's blessing veil of peace
Upon the sorrows of that face.
So rapt the Warrior stood and still,
His very plume obeyed his will,
Nor waved, nor trembled on the air,
But watched, like mourning honours, there,

X.

Changed were sleep's soothing visions now;
A frown shot o'er the father's brow.
He breathed a deep, yet feeble moan,
As if his dreams had sorrow known;
And shuddering with the muttered tone,
The fancied grief, his senses own,
He starts. A knight in armour there!
In silence by his sleeping chair!
How has he passed, unheard, unseen,
By those, who wait without the screen —
The page and chaplain waiting there?
An armed knight before his chair I

XI.

He gazed, with startled, anxious eye,
Yet marked; as soared the plume on high,
The mimic red-rose, blooming by,
And, where the vizor overspread

Eyes, whose keen fire, through Pity's tear,
A softened, trembling lustre shed,
(As stars through fleecy clouds appear.)
By that red-rose and gentle tear
He knew a knight of Lancaster;
And by that glance, those features bold,
That gallant air, that warlike mould,
He knew his race and lineage old;
And, while his knee the Knight had bent,
And reverently, with humble head,
Craved shelter in his Abbey's nave,
Meek from his chair the Father leant,
And, with spread hands, his blessing gave
And words of kindly import said.
"Baron Fitzharding! welcome here.— "
The Abbot paused in generous fear.
"Welcome! alas! that may not be,
In lodgment with your enemy.
Ill-come! I fear, in this sad hour,
Where you may rue Duke Richard's power
For here, this night, his court he keeps,
While royal Henry captive sleeps."

XII.

Now, when he heard his King was there,
Fitzharding all things well could dare,
To see and greet his royal lord.
But soon the Father's solemn word
Assured him the attempt were vain.
Duke Richard's guard and courtier-train
So closely hemmed the conquered King,
That such adventure might even bring
Death on himself, and dread to all
Sheltered within the Abbey wall.

Nay, if the Baron here were seen,
Request and bribe might fail to screen
From Richard’s sudden rage the life,
Sought by him foremost in the strife.

XIII.

Fitzharding felt a flush o’erspread
His cheek — and sternly raised his head,
At mention of request to shield
His life from him he sought in field;
But checked his speech, and quelled his pride,
While he stood by the Abbot’s side.
The Father spoke with pitying sigh,
“In secret cell you safe may lie
Till the dark storm has passed by;
And such a shrouding cell is nigh,
But must be sought without delay,
For even here ‘twere death to stay.”
And, while he spoke, he looked behind
And listened, in his chair reclined —
‘Twas but the hollow moaning wind.
And then he asked by what dark way
The Knight this chamber did essay?

XIV.

Again a sound; and now was heard
A heavy step draw nigh;
He left unsaid the attempted word,
And backward turned his eye,
Where, distant, stretched the oaken screen,
And paler grew his pallid cheek,
While his dim eyes the footsteps seek

Of one without — unseen.
He signed Fitzharding to depart
And wait within, till signal made:
But the firm Warrior's swelling heart,
His lingering footstep stayed.

XV.

From the carved screen and ante-room
A Monk, with countenance of gloom,
Came forth with feeble pace and slow,
With frequent pause and stated bow;
The shaven circlet on his head
No scapulary dark o'erspread,
Nor dimmed the pale lines on his brow.
Or the faint downcast eye below;
Yet, as he came with sullen tread,
No word of fear or hope he said,
Till he had reached the Father's chair,
And bent him low in reverence there.
Then faint he spoke— " Duke Richard sends
He my Lord Abbots will attends."

XVI.

Scarce had he said, when martial stride,
Quick, firm, and true, was heard without
A page the folded door threw wide,
And then arose a distant shout
Of men exulting in their choice
From court beyond; and nearer voice
Affecting to restrain the cheer,
As ill-timed and unseemly here;
Then steps again, and ring of steel

From chainlet and from armed heel.
That voice burst on Fitzharding near,
Like trumpet on the charger’s ear.
And even the Abbot’s warning glance
Might scarce restrain the Knight’s advance;
Till the pale Father waved his hand
With look of absolute command.
And pointed whither he should go;
So panted he to meet the foe.
Who held his royal master low.
No time for speech, or word, of grace;
So near and rapid was the pace,
He scarce might close the Chapel door,
Ere the Duke trod the Abbot’s floor.
Such present haste became him well,
Whose lengthened councils and debate
So long had made the Father wait,
And kept him from his nightly cell
Beyond the hour himself had named,
For urging rights himself had claimed.

XVII.

Now, where small Gothic window drew
It’s open tracery in the wall;
Fitzharding, all unseen, might view
Duke Richard in the Abbot’s hall;
And, with stern interest, survey
How he had borne the battle-day: —
He, whom, last seen in narrow space,
Fitzharding challenged face to face;
And surely had him prisoner made,
But for his henchmen’s sudden aid.
Now by the Abbot’s quiet chair
He sat, with proud yet troubled air;

His plume and casque were laid aside,
For lighter cap, of crimson pride,
Oraced with the budding rose of snow:
Dark was his eye, and flushed his brow:
Ill pleased he seemed, though conqueror,
As if but loftier sufferer;
And weariness his face o'erspread.
Rough was each word, and hoarse, he said;
For loud command, debate and fray
Had worn his voice, through that long day.

XVIII.

He came to claim the Abbot's word,
That he would not in secrecy
Shield a Lancastrian enemy;
And some were even there, he heard, —
Some, he well knew, were in these walls,
Ready anew to stir up brawls:
Each such he claimed for prisoner;
They had provoked the cruel war.
The Abbot, mild, yet Arm, replied, —
The Church must shelter those, who sought
For sanctuary at her side;
Not mock the laws she always taught.
He would not, dared not break her laws,
However high the temporal cause.
If such men were these walls within,
Here must they rest, unsought, unseen.
He craved the Duke would not profane
The rights his duty must maintain.

XIX.

Richard gave prompt and brief reply,
That lightly he would ne’er defy
The Church’s right of sanctuary;
But these were times when such Church law
Would loose the chain, that held in awe
The guilty and the dangerous man.
He would not answer for the end,
How strict soe’er his orders ran,
If his men found an enemy
Were screened in aisle or monastery;
Then must the Church herself defend!
‘Twere better silently to yield,
For once, the sanctuary’s shield,
And point where foes might lie concealed;
Lest blood the Abbey-pavement stain,
And all the Church’s guard were vain.

XX.

He paused — the Father silent sate,
Reluctant to provoke debate,
Though scornful of Duke Richard’s threat;
And, when his look the threatened met,
His trembling limbs confessed his ire,
And, his eyes flashed with transient fire,
That glowed an instant on his cheek,
And thus his thronging thoughts might speak;
“If blood on sacred ground be shed,
The punishment is sure and dread.”

XXI.

The prudent Abbot ceased awhile,
And calmed his eye and smoothed his brow;

For he had seen Duke Richard's smile —
Dark smile of scorn! portending woe.
"I will not vouch my soldiers' grace,
No, not in Alban's chariest place!
His very shrine may be profaned;
His very shroud with gore be stained:
Yield then my enemies in peace,
And then all fear and care may cease."

XXII.

The Father, rising from his chair,
In horror of Duke Richard's speech,
And heedless of such fear or care,
Disdained all words, that would beseech
And thus he said, "An instant doom
Falls on the wretch, if such there be,
Who violates St. Alban's tomb,
Or trespasses on sanctuary!
Of all St. Alban's sons, not one
But would avenge his Saint, or die,
And triumph in such glory won.
And yield his life without a sigh!
And, for the rest, if soldier dare
Rive private door or private stair.
Or climb, in sordid search of prey, —
For the LAST Ban let him prepare,
The Ban I shudder but to say!
Think you, my lord, I will betray
My church, or break her smallest law?
Her thunders still her foes shall awe.
To her high power then, yield the sway,
The power, that even kings obey!
With reverend step tread honoured ground
With proud submission guard her bound."

XIII.

Faintness came o’er the Father’s face;
He paused; then said with milder grace,
“My lord, you granted Abbey-guard;
Give us not mockery for ward. —
Now, spare my age and wearied state;
Spare me yet longer-drawn debate.”

XXIV.

“Lord Abbot! if, within your walls,
By monkish hand one soldier falls,
Blood will o’erflow your aisles, your halls:
Revenge will then be soldiers’ food!”
Here Richard curbed his angry mood;
Then coldly said “he would not keep
The Father from his timely sleep.
Doubtless the guard would still prove good,
While it was viewed with gratitude;
But certain chiefs, whom he would name,
It was his firm resolve to claim:
They were now hid, as he had proof,”
And sheltered ‘neath his Abbey’s roof:
Those dangerous men must be resigned,
As the good monks would favour find.”

XXV.

Fitzharding, in the chapel near,
When he Duke Richard’s lofty word,
Demanding certain chieftains, heard,
Felt shuddering dread for kinsman dear.

Breathless attention now he paid
To hear each claim, that Richard made.
At first, as every name went by,
This was the Father’s prompt reply,
“He knew not that such Chief was here;
He might be — laid upon his bier.”
Duke Richard then Earl D’Arcy named,
And the Knight’s sire for prisoner claimed.
The Abbot paused; then faltering said,
“He lies within the Abbey — dead!”

XXVI.

In sudden shock of grief, the son
Clasped his strong gauntlet hands on high,
And moved with hasty step of one,
Who every fortune would defy.
Duke Richard turned a distant glance;
His looks his true surmise reveal;
“Methought I heard the clash of steel
That voice recalled the Knight to sense;
He checked the footstep in advance.
Ill might his dread the Abbot hide.,
Or the Duke’s searching eye abide,
As sternly from his chair he rose
The lurking danger to expose: —
“I pray — Lord Abbot — pardon me,
If I suspect an enemy.” —
“My Lord, no enemy is near,
Whom you have any cause to fear.
Pass not into my private cell,
Forbear, my Lord! — it were not well.”
The Abbot’s voice with terror shook,
But prudently he ruled his look.

XXVII.

Duke Richard paused, and turned away,
Awed partly by this just reproof;
But he had motives, too, aloof
From such as on the surface lay,
For yielding to the Abbot's sway.
"This sudden crash of hidden arms,"
He said, might justify alarms." —
"No hidden arms are here, my lord;
And trust, I pray, my solemn word
(The Abbot spoke to be o'erheard)
Who first that sacred ground assails,
Be he or enemy or friend,
On him the Ban of Church prevails;
And he beneath that scourge shall bend."

XXVIII.

Slowly the Duke resumed his chair,
"'Tis well!" he said; " so let it fare;
For that same chief, whom last I named,
In this day's fatal business famed —
For him, he rests within your wall,
But not beneath the funeral pall;
He lives within your Abbey gate;
In chamber near, perchance, may wait." —
He viewed the chapel-door, and frowned,
Where the son sheltered in it's bound,
Thrilled by conflicting hopes and fears,
Those words of unmeant comfort hears.

XXIX.

Vainly the Father might deny
Such Chief were here in sanctuary;
As vainly Richard spoke of proof,
That he now lived beneath this roof.
The Abbot told of monks, who viewed
The body stretched upon a bier,
And borne through aisle and chancel near;
Such solemn proof could not delude!
The corpse passed Abbot Hugo's tomb,
At evening-bell, through twilight gloom,
While chantry-priests bewailed his doom!

XXX.

These words o'erheard, swift to the heart
Of the pale son their poison dart.
But Richard's accents, once again,
Assuaged the keenness of his pain:
He almost loved his direst foe,
Who thus threw hope upon his woe:
"How might they view," Duke Richard said,
"The visage of the warrior dead,
If o'er it evening-gloom were spread
The Abbot sadly smiled, and sighed,
And falteringly, again replied:
"The tapers on that chantry-shrine,
As solemn witnesses, did shine
Full on the dead man's brow;
So those who chaunted requiem, know."

XXXI.

Duke Richard said, "That might not be.
He had himself strange certainty —

Strange tale! — he would not farther speak
Of that, which made the bravest weak,
Of Superstition's gloomy spell;
But clear and simple fact would tell."
And then he spoke of "certain men,
Pikemen, on guard within the porch,
(The curfew-bell was sounding then)
Who saw that Knight, in arms all plain,
March by and pass beneath the arch,
Or saw him rather run than march, —
They saw him by their own watch-torch!
He went before a warrior dead,
Yet heard they not his iron tread,
Though clad in arms from heel to head.
It might be that he stepped so light
To 'scape unknown the pikemen's sight.
They did not challenge him, 'twas true;
But he passed clearly to their view.
His vizor up, his beaver down,
Disclosed the fixtness of his frown;
Yet could they not his face have seen,
Like ghastly shade," they said, "between,
(Richard gave smile of satire keen)
But that a warder dropped his pike,
Which he might think just raised to strike,
And, as he turned a sudden glance,
Seeming to couch his demi-lance,
Their torch flashed full upon his brow,
And showed the frowning eye below.
Yet checked they not his path, through dread
Of thwarting spirit of the dead!
But, fixed by terror of his eye,
Watched him in warlike march pass by.
Thus to their Knight they story told
Of spectre of a warrior cold.

Such strange and wayward humours sway
Men, who dread nought, on battle day!”

XXXII.

He ceased, while grave the Abbot sate,
As pondering on some tale of fate;
And on his face an awful thrill
Spoke, more than words, some dread of ill.
Duke Richard felt that thrilling look;
His mind with wondering doubt was shook;
And, though he scorned each monkish spell,
A secret dread he might not quell
Lay on his soul, like sullen gloom
On hills, ere yet the storm is come.
He spoke not; all was still around
In the wide chamber’s dusky bound, —
So still, you might have heard the sound,
Far off and doubtful to the ear,
Of that low, sullen thunder growl,
From clouds, that on th’ horizon scowl —
The herald of the storm’s career! —
So still, you might have heard a cry
Of faint lament from distant aisle;
Or step, in secret gallery,
Stealing upon some deed of guile;
Or whisper in the Chapel nigh
Of the lone Knight’s heavy sigh.

XXXIII.

Still mused the Sire in deepest thought,
His look with fearful meaning fraught.
“‘Twas strange!” (at length he raised his face)

Such warlike port and silent pace!
And strange that soldiers at a glance
Should stand appalled, nor step advance
To thwart a living warrior,
From whom in fight they would not stir.”
He mused again, with brow intent;
While Richard, silent, forward bent.
The Father raised not up his head,
While, pausing oft, he slowly said,
“If such an image they have seen,
I guess it wore not earthly mien.
It might be spirit lingering near
It’s mortal corpse, borne on the bier.
And that same hour of curfew, too,
Tended to make the tale seem true.
That the guard failed to summon, straight,
Some reverend priest to th’ Abbey gate
I marvel much: for such good men
Were gathered round the wounded then,
Whose presence and whose single word
Had stronger proved than pike or sword.”

XXXIV.

Duke Richard checked a scornful smile,
And said, with meaning fraught with guile,
“Earl D’Arcy lives; his son, perchance,
May rest here in some mortal trance,
And, by a strong similitude,
Have caused his semblance to delude.
But, if he live — that younger Knight,
Who sought me in this morning’s fight,
Baron Fitzharding I would claim,
Though fire and sword should thwart my aim.

Nay, wife or kinsman I would take,
Till he surrendered for their sake!”

XXXV.

“It could not be such knight, my Lord— “
The Abbot checked his thoughtless word,
And paused confused; then tried to speak
While sudden crimson flushed his cheek;
And, when again he raised his brow,
He met Duke Richard’s searching glance,
Fixed, watchful, o’er his silent trance,
And reading all his fears might show.
“That knight,” said Richard, “in the fray,
I drove in headlong flight away— “
Guileful he spoke — He fled my blow,
And fell by other hand, *THEY SAY* ”
Again the Duke his dark eye bent
Upon the Abbot’s face, intent.

XXXVI.

But, ere the Father might reply,
The Baron’s step in Chapel nigh
Confirmed his fearful agony.
Not tamely could Fitzharding hear
Richard’s false tales of flight and fear.
His heart and every nerve throbbed high
With indignation and disdain
Of yielding to so foul a stain.
He turned toward the chamber-door
(So, for a moment, did he err)
To dare his artful slanderer,
And grasped his sword — but checked his

For shall the Father’s chilling age
JBe shocked with view of human gore,
Shed — even his feeble sight before?
And — for himself — was this a time
To seek a contest, when no crime
Could seem so great as victory,
Or rouse such fell malignity,
Or place him in such jeopardy?

XXXVII.

But Richard had that footstep heard,
And, while his eye with anger burned,
He sternly to the Abbot turned,
And claimed again his solemn word,
Truly and promptly now to tell
What footstep paced within his cell.
He guessed that place did foe conceal,
For surely it was foot of steel.
He grasped his dagger while he spoke.
So did the thought his rage provoke.
The Father, that the Knight might hear,
Spoke loud— “My Lord, upon this ground
You have not enemy to fear;
No man so desperate may be found
To threaten life, or draw blood here.”
The Duke’s dark aspect proved too well
He read the Abbot’s warning speech.
And that he judged within the cell
An enemy lay in his reach.
He answered, “Ere from hence I go,
You must yourself, Lord Abbot, show
Who clad in arms, what warrior bold,
Makes a monk’s cell his secret hold.
He bears, perchance, some noble name,

And has achieved high deeds of fame;
Yet — him for prisoner I claim!”

XXXVIII.

While to these words his taunting eye
Gave double point and energy,
He rose, and near the Chapel drew;
But with deliberate step he went,
And gesture made, as if to sue
The Abbot for his full consent;
And signed, that he should lead the way,
And from his cell dislodge the prey.
The Father, seeing it were vain
Longer the struggle to maintain,
Sought only to ward off the blow,
And warn the sheltered Knight to go,
Toward the chapel, lingering slow,
He paced, and spoke in lofty tone
Duke Richard’s name, and would alone
Have passed; but this increased distrust.
And Richard, straight, the portal burst!

XXXIX.

All sullenly he gazed around
The pillared Chapel’s lighted bound;
A gloomy fire flashed in his eye,
The lightning of a stormy sky;
Knight, priest, nor warrior, there was found.
But, when he saw St. Dunstan’s door,
He strode athwart the solid floor;
And, with a firm, impatient grasp,
Struggled to force the iron-clasp.

St. Dunstan seemed the pass to guard,
The Saxon door held faithful ward.

XL.

The Abbot, now no more subdued
By terrors for the Knight,
Quickly regained his tranquil mood,
And stood upon his right
Of undisturbed possession there,
Whether of chamber, cell, or stair,
He grieved intrusive step to see,
Profane his private sanctuary.
Duke Richard coldly said, "'Twas plain
His enemies had not been thought
That sanctuary to profane,
Or here they had not refuge sought."

XLI.

He spoke; and pointed to the sword
The Knight had laid, with pious word,
Upon the altar nigh,
When he had there himself resigned,
Where only he could comfort find,
And balm for misery!
Duke Richard held the sword aloof
Before the Abbot, in sure proof
He there had screened some enemy;
That sword the Father might not see
But with a mingled agony
Of gratitude, respect and fear,
For him, who was, alas! too near.

XLII.

With saintly smile the Abbot viewed
This offering of a mind subdued;
Duke Richard, in amazement, frowned,
And every generous thought disowned.
Some way he hoped to find, ere long,
Might reach those hid within these walls,
Whose shelter he thought bitter wrong.
“Lord Abbot! whatsoe’er befalls,
Blame not the deeds may hence ensue;
These deeds have been provoked by you!”

XLIII.

With haughty eye and cheek, that burned,
Straight to the Abbot’s hall he turned,
Bearing the falchion of his foe,
While vengeance dark sat on his brow.
A parting gesture slight he gave;
Stately the Abbot stood and grave,
Nor sought, by look, or argument,
To win his passions to relent.
And, as he drew near to the screen,
The Abbot’s page, “with humble mien,
Brought message brief from Warwick’s lord, —
Required Duke Richard’s present word
On subject high, that might not wait; —
The board were sitting in debate.

XLIV.

Straight, Richard to the council went;
And thus, in mutual discontent,

Parted the victor and the sire —
The victor, with disdainful ire,
The Abbot, with a meek desire
To save Fitzharding’s threatened life,
And keep from sacrilegious strife,
From envious and irreverend search,
His Abbey-precincts and his Church.
He sought the Knight; but still his guard,
The Saxon door, held sturdy ward.
No voice beyond in gallery
Gave to his friendly call reply;
And, with a weary sigh, he sought
His cell, though peopled ‘twas with thought,
With spectre-cares of many a day,
Still thronging where he silent lay:
There he resolved awhile to lie,
Hoping Fitzharding might be nigh.

XLV.

Wearied and worn with grief and fears,
Vainly he mourned, that at his years
He took the burthen up again
Of Abbey-honours he thought vain,
And had resigned, foreseeing crime
And tumult in this fearful time;
But, weary of a long repose,
He, whom, his grateful monks re-chose,
Resumed his honours at life’s close,
To be the lord and slave of men.
And now was come that evil day,
When the land bore divided sway.
Behold him now, in mitred chair
Of rule, of honour and of care;
Behold his trembling age reclined

On thorny pillows, ‘broidered o’er
With pageantries, that ceased to blind
The vanities of years before;
And hear him mourn his comfort lost,
Wisdom, o’ercome by love of power,
The peace of age by worldly passion tossed.

XLVI.

Yet kindly conscious was the thought
That his last toil had not been vain,
To save from rage, or thirst of gain,
His Abbey, nigh to ruin brought.
His care had rescued her from woe,
And bade her former grandeur glow;
Repaired her walls and cloisters grey,
And o’er them thrown the tinted ray
(Through windows traced with legend story *)*
Of tinted lights of Melancholy;
Such as she loves to muse beneath,
Whether with rose, or cypress wreath,
(Rapture and sadness meek, in emblem there)
When the last, western gleam
Shoots a long, trembling beam
O’er the bold Norman arch and walks afar;
And Evening’s choral hymn, the while,
Swells high, and falls along the aisle.

CANTO VIII .

I.

FITZHARDING, when his steps withdrew
(Hard triumph gained!) from Richard’s view,
Resolved, while through the gallery’s shade
Indignantly and sad he strayed,
To learn at once his father’s fate,
Nor the securer hour await;
And o’er the aisle he bent to see
If there the Monk, his guide, might be.

II.

Changed was the solemn scene below,
Where monks with stillness, to and fro,
Had borne the dead to place of rest,
Or shrived the spirit, while possest
(Though with so transient potency)
Of frail home of mortality.
Now from the aisles the crowd was gone:
By the death-torch, the Watch-monk lone
Stood dimly o’er the blood-stained bier,
Seeming some shadowy shape of Fear!
While that torch strange, a grisly hue
O’er the dead warrior’s visage threw.
Now heavy-falling steps around
No more disturbed the distant ground;
The bearers from their toil reposed;
The cloister’s distant door was closed;
From chantry-tomb and chapel nigh
Was sunk the soothing minstrelsy:

All in the aisle was hushed in death,
When Clement ventured from beneath.

III.

He ventured on the secret stair
To warn Fitzharding to beware;
For, ‘mong the bands of Richard’s host,
Who round the Abbey-porches lay,
Short words, o’erheard at whiles and lost,
Proved, that they watched Lancastrian prey.
Their enemies, they said, had found
Refuge within the Abbey-bound.
Church-law with taunt of scorn they named;
Talked of “good sword” and “Churchman tamed.”
Then earnestly he urged the Knight
To rest in gallery that night.

IV.

Fitzharding paused not, ere he said,
Too long had he the torture proved
Of hope and fear for those he loved,
To suffer any weightier dread.
Concealed he would no longer stay,
But search where dead or wounded lay.
Then asked he if the Monk had seen
A lifeless warrior-chief borne by
St. Hugo’s tomb at dusk of e’en,
When priest sung in his chantry nigh.
But Clement at such hour had slept,
Worn out with vigils he had kept.
The chantry-monk, who requiem sung,
Dwelt in St. Julian’s subject-cell;

And there had duly gone, when rung
That cell’s accustomed evening-bell.

V.

Again the Monk Fitzharding warned,
Dangers unseen might not be scorned;
And there were brothers in the aisle
Would willingly his steps beguile,
If a Lancastrian knight they knew;
But, if he still the worst must dare,
A monkish garment he would spare,
Might shade him slightly from their view.
The Baron liked not frock and hood,
As covering for a spirit brave;
But fully spoke his gratitude,
And, farther, did the watchword crave.

VI.

In earnest speech then craved the Knight
The counter-signal for the night.
“‘ Peace be on earth!’ shall be your guide,
And shield you through this Abbey wide;
But if, as knight, you rashly show
Your rank, — though cased from top to toe,
You cannot ‘scape the secret hate,
That dwells in our divided state.
Duke Richard’s soldiers are abroad;
And where, Sir Knight, is your good sword?”

VII.

Fitzharding, as from dream amazed,
On the disarmed scabbard gazed;
And now, of weapon's aid bereft,
(No other means of safety left)
He yielded to a proffered guise;
And o'er his stately harness threw
The Benedictine draperies
Of ample width and sable hue.
He doffed the plumage from his brow,
But kept the casque of steel below;
O'er which a monkish cowl was thrown,
That hid his visage in it's frown.

VIII.

Clement, ere to the aisle he led,
These parting words of warning said: —
"Now mark the way I bid you go,
And step with prudent care and slow,
For warrior's step may ill agree
With cloistered man's tranquillity.
Pass not athwart the nave, I pray,
Though there may lie your shortest way;
For in the cloister-pier, beside,
Darkling, a watch-monk doth abide;
Nor pass the choir before the shrine,
For, there the wonted tapers shine,
And watchers in the gallery wait,
And guard that place, with solemn state;
But by the shrine of Humphrey march,
Then onward, through the eastern arch
That leads behind St. Alban's bier;
Then through our Lady's Porch, and here
Step quietly, like sandalled man,
Or charnel-monk thy gait will scan.

Our Lady’s Shrine go thou not nigh;
The chantry of St. Blaize pass by.
The ALTAR OF FOUR-WAX LIGHTS shun,
And the East turret’s lurking stair;
The Abbey’s northern porch beware.
Without, Duke Richard’s soldiers wait —
Our guard, or — as may be — our fate!”

IX.

“Then turn thee on King Offa’s aisle,
Who, from the roof, shall on thee smile;
Pause not, nor look, till thou hast gained
The Transept at the western end,
Where shrined Amphibalus is laid: —
Then, speed thou to the deeper shade.
But if thy steps are watched, then wend
Where Michael and St. Patern bend,
To guard the northern transept’s bound;
Within a turret-stair is found,
That leads to thin arched wall, on high,
Where thou, as here, secure may’st lie.
So fare thee well! I bless thy way,
And will assist thee as I may.”
Ere hasty thanks the Knight could pay,
Clement upon the aisle looked out;
No shape appeared of priest, or scout.
He signed Fitzharding swift away.

X.

Long watched the Monk, where, on the aisle,
The Warrior trod in his dark weed;
Ill might such stalk his rank beguile,

Or figure be for monk’s received.
He watched him by Duke Humphrey’s tomb,
Where, from the roof’s light filagree,
Blazed tapers through the vaulted gloom,
While voices sung his obsequy.
He watched him through the eastern arch,
Where once St. Catherine’s story shone; —
The Knight has turned on Mary’s Porch, —
The monk is to his pallet gone.

XI.

St. Mary’s Porch the Knight has turned;
‘Twas well the tomb-lights dimly burned;
They showed not even the windows tall,
That graced, in fretted state, the wall;
Nor yet St. Alban’s Chapel there,
His arches pointing fine in air,
Of loftiest grace and beauty rare.
Eastward Fitzharding cast his eye,
Beyond St. Mary’s portal high,
That showed her in her distant shrine
Of lily and of eglantine;
Beneath appeared a dismal sight —
Her altar, hung with sable hue,
Where yellow tapers ranged to view,
Shed forth a melancholy light.
Fitzharding sighed, who, all too well,
The language of those lights could spell;
And that of the faint strain, that rose,
With voice of soul, from chapel nigh —
The SEQUENCE for the LAST repose,
While yet the dead unburied lie!
In silent thought awhile he stood,
With folded arms and shading hood,

And deep moan rent his breast;
Then slowly o’er the gloomy ground
He drew, to catch the nearer sound
Of “Rest — eternal Rest!”

XII.

Sudden, from forth a darkened nook
A dreary voice spoke near, “Beware!”
Then paused, and seemed to say, “Prepare!”
It might have come from grave forsook,
So strange, so thrilling was the tone.
He looked the way that warning came,
Low lying waved a dark red flame;
He saw that dusky torch alone.
Until it’s lengthening gleam made known,
How thick the new-made graves were strewn
Beyond. He trembled at this sight,
Musing for whom these graves might wait;
What gallant comrades of the fight,
What friend, what kinsman, here this night
Might come unto his last estate!
The grave all still and patient lay,
As if it knew, though long their stay,
They might not cheat it of it’s prey.
Sudden, Fitzharding thought, that here
Would rest, perchance, his father’s bier!
With horror struck and deep dismay,
He turned him from this scene away.

XIII.

His step called forth that voice unknown;
It muttered in sepulchral tone,

“Beware! the earth is heaped around;
The graves are opened on this ground!”
Sullen and dim a form appeared,
And the lowlying torch it reared,
Showing a face to him unknown;
It reared the torch, and showed it’s own.
A form so tall, so spare and gaunt
Might have been drawn to image Want;
And well the ghastly face supplied.
The look of one for food had died:
So livid, pale, so grim, so shrunk,
The visage of this charnel-monk!
Ardent and haggard were his eyes,
And full of evil dark surmise;
Yet gleamed, at whiles, all fiery red,
Just where the cowl its darkness shed.
His figure, draped in weed of woe,
Did a bossed symbol grimly show,
Bones and an eyeless head.
This shape of terror, with no name,
(While on their wormy verge he stood)
As home and empire seemed to claim
The graves, o’er porch and chapel strewed.
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XIV.

He held the torch before the Knight;
And, whether glance of helmet bright
From forth his veiling hood might stray,
Or that the cowl so baffling lay,
It seemed suspicion to excite,
He claimed the watchword of the night.
And when Fitzharding said his say,
And from the porch had passed away,

That Monk stood on King Offa’s aisle,
With folded arms and steps astride,
And watched him with a lowering smile,
As though he muttered, “Ill betide!”
The gilded spurs, too sure, I ween,
Beneath the Knight’s dark skirt were seen,

XV.

Now when Fitzharding reached the end,
Where Mercian Offa from the vault
Looked down, and seemed to bid him halt,
He turned a backward glance to send.
The Monk was gone; but, in his stead,
Leaned forward from a pillar’s shade,
A gauntlet hand and helmet head;
Another yet behind stood near,
Who in the gloom might scarce appear,
And cautious gesture made.
Far were they from the guard’s last torch,
Just where the Abbey’s northern porch
And Mary’s Ante-chapel met;
Beyond, Duke Richard’s guard was set.

XVI.

Abrupt, then in the shade they drew,
As if to shun Fitzharding’s view.
The Baron well bethought him then
Of the Monk Clement’s charge: —
“Pause not, nor turn to look again,
Till you have gained the marge,
Where the north aisle and transept join.”
He judged this charge important sign,

And, instant, passed upon the way,
Where the dread nave and transept lay.
As o’er that scene a glance he gave,
Where every tomb and lowly grave
And altar-slab and dim shrine near,
Was now a warrior’s bleeding bier,
He checked his step, lest suddenly
Some face beloved he there might see.

XVII.

He had been in the front of war,
Nor ever feared the deadly scar;
Had seen his comrades fall beside,
And shrunk not from the battle’s tide;
Intent alone the foe to stem,
He felt not for himself nor them;
But now, when zeal, nor passion, bore
Their wonted sway his thronged mind o’er;
When stilly he might see and know
Each written character of woe;
And view, perchance, some wellknown face,
All changed and shrunk from living grace;
Unconquerable dread arose,
To meet what Death might thus disclose!
The animated look — the eye,
That had so oft, all smilingly,
Dwelt on his with a kindly joy, —
How might he view, now stern and dim,
Bend not one beam of soul on him;
Nor turn, at sound of step, or voice,
So oft its signal, to rejoice?

XVIII.

Scarce could Fitzharding’s limbs sustain
The burden of his shuddering pain;
He stood, and on a pillar leaned,
While some brief moments intervened.
Brief must they be; for, even then,
Behold! far off in Offas aisle,
With stealthy step, those armoured men,
Whom he well knew for watchful guile.
Mindful then of the turret near,
Pointed by Clement’s prudent fear,
He through the northern transept stept,
Where St. Amphibalus long slept.
In passing by that gorgeous shrine,
He to the watch-monks gave the sign —
“Peace be on earth!” He spake no more
But sought that little turret’s door
Deep in the angle, where it lay
And shaded from the shrine’s strong ray.

XIX.

He stood, and watched, some little space,
On the sad threshold of the place; —
That circling stair was still in shade,
By thickness of the old wall made.
But, could he gain the gallery,
The shrine-lights through the tracery,
Darting so high a feeble ray,
Would guide him on the narrow way.
Fitzharding sought that narrow stair,
And trod it’s gloomy path with care,
Yet, sometimes, ‘gainst the narrow bound
Struck his steeled foot, with startling sound
His harnessed shoulders broad would graze
The strait walls of these secret ways.

Twice round the newel had he pressed,
When his foot found a level rest.
From high poured forth the midnight air,
Through loop-hole of the turret-stair.
He traced not now the second flight,
For, at short distance on the right,
Faint ray amid the darkness streamed,
And through an arch the gallery gleamed.

XX.

Soon as Fitzharding passed the arch,
He stepped with calm and firmer march,
And backward threw his baffling cowl,
And looked and breathed with freer soul.
But now the narrow gallery
Had nigh his venturous footstep stayed;
The pillars' base so close did lie,
Scarce might he pass behind their shade.
That course of pillars still is seen
Along the massy wall,
With rude, misshapen arch between
Each pillar short and small.
It fronted then the shrine and tomb
Of him, who shared St. Alban's doom.

XXI.

Here might awhile Fitzharding wait
Till Richard's scouts their watch abate;
And, from this transept's southern end,
Above the nave itself might wend
And pass above the western door,
Behind the parapet's high breast;

Thence glance the long, long vista o’er,
To farthest shrine of MARY blessed,
Seen through the pointed arches near,
That rose above St. Alban’s bier.
Thus far the Knight may range, and view
The death-scene many a heart shall rue,
The battle’s prey — the mighty slain
Stretched out, and watched on marble plain.
Whence then that gallery might go
Around on high, or deep below;
Or leading o’er the cloister walk,
Where the unconscious monk may stalk;
Or to the Abbot’s secret room,
Where Richard late decreed his doom;
Or to the inmost cell, wrought there;
Or to deep winding fatal stair —
Few living in the Abbey knew.
For, hidden far from searcher’s view,
Was many a flight and passage dim
To vaulted hall and chamber grim;
To crypt and sepulchre and shrine;
And prison cells, that undermine
The cloister-walk, and seem to spread
Almost to lowly Ver’s old bed.

XXII.

Just where nave, choir, and transept met,
And Death with splendour was beset,
Fitzharding stood and looked below
O’er all the scene of varied woe.
And thus it lay beneath his sight —
The western aisles were stretched in night,
Save the shrined transept’s rays
Threw the full splendour of its blaze

‘Thwart the choir-steps and ‘slant the nave.
There, every altar-tomb and grave,
As that long line of glory fell,
Showed its dead warrior, all too well.
Before those steps three altars stood
Arranged in row — Oswyn’s the good,
St. Thomas, and the sad Marie,
Now ‘reft of pomp and imagery.
There priests kept solemn watch around
Three knights, in bleeding armour bound.

XXIII.

The silver censer, burning near,
Sent incense o’er each marble bier;
And poursuivants, in tabard-pride,
Stood mute those warriors beside.
No ‘scutcheon blazoned high was there;
But tattered banners on the air,
Sad witness of their master’s fate,
Now, as mute mourners, seemed to wait.
Rose not the stately canopy,
With crowded lights, o’er hearse on high;
While troops of mourners, watching round,
Might creep to hear the Requiem sound.
Not such the solemn watch held now,
No lofty hearse — no mourners bow;
Nor blaze of tapers high in air;
Nor likeness of the dead was there.
The dead, each in his arms arrayed,
Exposed to many an eye was laid,
Forsaken save by heralds vain,
Nor mourned, but in the death-priests’ strain.

XXIV.

By presence of the state-watch due,
The Knight his dead commander knew;
But, who are those on either hand,
Censed and laid out on altars high?
Nobles they seem of Henry's band,
Whose poursuivants are watching by.
Vainly Fitzharding might assay
To read each visage where it lay,
Or spell the armour, crest, or shield;
Their glimmer only was revealed
By the long slanting ray.

XXV.

The farthest aisles and westward nave,
Where only gleamed upon a grave
A watch-torch dim and lone,
Gave solemn contrast to the choir,
Which beamed as with celestial lire,
Like to half-clouded sun.
From Alban's glorious shrine that light
Streamed through the chancel's gloomy night;
For, though the Abbot's prudent care
Had moved each jewel rich and rare,
Brought far, as pilgrim-offering,
By noble knight, or prince, or king,
Yet, trusting to the love and dread,
That blessed Alban's shrine o'erspread,
It's pillars, laid with golden plate,
Fixed in the pavement, that sustained
The crystal canopy of state
And golden bier, firm-set remained;
And specious show, with truth that vied,
And blazed amid the taper's beams,

The pendent lamps and torchlight gleams,
Was left to soothe the Victor’s pride.

XXVI.

That rich and lofty canopy,
With ever-burning lights crowned high,
Supported by four golden towers,
Seemed all within as crystal bowers
Branched o’er his coffin laid beneath;
So richly spread each dazzling wreath!
Below the centre arch of three,
That opened to the chapelry,
Were scrolled, in silent eloquence,
Lines from the dread hymn of SEQUENCE,
Where late his golden crown had been;
His priests and monks, in band around.
Watched, patient, o’er the honoured scene,
And Abbey-knights in armour frowned.

XXVII.

St. Cuthbert’s Chapel had not lent
Its wide screen then to veil the choir,
Where now it bounds the nave’s ascent
With the carved niche and Gothic spire:
Nor rose before St. Alban’s shrine,
In lofty state, as now is seen,
The altar’s more elaborate screen;
Of fairy-filagree each line,
Web-work each canopy and cell,
Where many an imaged saint might dwell
Light are the flowery knots, that twine
Round slender columns, clustered fine,

That to the fretwork cornice go,
Where flowers amid the foliage blow.
And wheaten sheafs and roses spread,
Spell of the Abbot and the King
Who raised — to guard St. Alban’s bed —
This rich and glorious offering.

XXVIII.

Not then this beauteous screen appeared
To hide the bier the pilgrim sought,
And cause the object of his thought
To be more tremblingly revered;
But veil of silk, or cloth of gold,
Hung high and broad in sweeping fold,
On days of chief solemnity.
There only this night might you see
A mourning drapery, like a pall,
With ample grace sweep from the wall,
In solemn memory of the dead,
And half conceal the Martyr’s bed;
And seem, like evening-cloud, to throw
Its darkness o’er day’s gorgeous brow.

XXIX.

Westward, the nave, in deeper night,
Brought little certain to the sight.
Yet, where upon its lengthen’d gloom
Was seen to glare a fixed torchlight,
There lay a corpse upon a tomb,
Or on some altar’s marble pride;
And there a monk sat, close beside.
From one the glittering casque was gone,

Whose wounds made known his fate,
And stood, high-plumed, on altar-stone,
Beside the warrior overthrown,
As though it mocked his state.
And many a dead form, from this height,
Seemed semblance but of marble knight
Extended in his sculptured weed,
With ensigns high of daring deed.
Nay, sometimes, side by side were laid
The substance and the mimic shade,
The marble knight and warrior dead:
Now each alike unconscious lay,
And which was corpse ‘twere hard to say!

XXX.

There might be seen, too, side by side,
The slayer and the slain.
Those hostile hands, that shed life’s tide,
Still crimsoned with the stain
Of either combatant’s last blood,
Now powerless lay, as stone, or wood.
Mute now the voice, whose piercing sound
Had sent dismay o’er distant ground,
Whose high command was loved and feared;
Not even its murmur now was heard.

XXXI.

And there, oh, sight of piteous woe!
Lay gallant sire and son below,
Who, hand and heart, for Henry’s right
Did, horse by horse, that morning fight.
And there lay son (oh, thrilling view!)

And father, who each other slew.
Forced by the fate of civil strife,
They struck, unknown, each other's life; —
And, as they sunk, no more to rise,
Each turned on each his dying eyes,
Wailed the sad deed, and mixed their last drawn
sighs.

XXXII.

By the north pillars of the nave,
Four dedicated altars stood;
Each bore a victim for the grave,
And now was stained with noble blood:
They faced those arches, sharp and tali,
Where Offa and his beauteous queen,
And Edward of the saintly mien,
And mitred Lanfranc still are seen,
Bending from carved capital,
As watching o'er this mortal scene.
Now, listen; for 'tis fearful all —
All, that beneath Fitzharding's eye
Lay, as he watched in gallery.
He saw monks to this spot draw nigh,
And o'er a pallid figure bend,
And search again, if living breath
Might linger in such shape of death;
Then, silently, the limbs extend;
And — by the glare the torches threw
On the gashed face beneath his view,
Upon St. Scytha's altar laid —
Saw them the countenance compose,
O'er the glazed eye the eye-lid close
For ever — ever! in Death's shade!
And, while he marked that awful sight,

It seemed, by thrill of sympathy,
As if cold fingers did alight
Upon *HIS* lids, and on them lie.
A horror ran through all his frame;
But this more painful pang o'ercame —
It seemed to him, that his sight now,
While resting on the form below,
Might view his father laid in death!
With frenzied gaze he sought to know
More certainly the face beneath —
In vain! The torch's wavering glare
To gallery high, through depth of air,
Showed but a wan, dead visage there.

XXXIII.

In very ecstasy of dread
He turned away his straining eyes;
When, near him, through the gallery's shade,
Where faint the altar-beams arise,
A face — the phantom of his fear —
It seemed his father's face were here.
A something like a helmet gleamed,
Figure or substance none there seemed
Amid those shadows deep;
Sad was the look, and ashy pale,
As it would speak some dreadful tale,
Yet must dread secret keep.
Was this a face traced on the eye
From the brain's fiery ecstasy?
A vision sent to warn him, now,
That his dead father lay below?
A trace of soul — a look alone —
A likeness, but as wrought in stone —
So fixed, so absent, and so wan,

Was all that met Fitzharding’s sight,
In glimpse, through shadows of the night;
When soft the requiem from afar,
Breathed blessedness upon the air,
And at the sound it seemed to fade,
And vanish in the distant shade.

XXXIV.

Long gazed the Knight where it had been.
Such look of woe he once had seen
Dwelling upon his father’s mien.
Long gazed he on the dusky space;
Then drew the cowl upon his face.,
And closer folded his dark weed,
And strove that phantasie to read.
Then, bending o’er that gallery,
He sought, once more, the face to see,
So wan in death, below
Features came faintly to his eyes;
But memory, more than sight, supplies
His father’s reverend brow.

XXXV.

To end, at once, his torturing dread,
He straight resolved to quit the shade;
When, lo! from forth King Offa’s aisle,
With look and step of cautious guile, ‘
He marked two armoured men draw near,
And rest them by that warrior’s bier.
So frowned the helmets he had seen
From shade of that aisle’s pillar lean;
So bloomed the white-thorn for their crest

So gleamed the badge upon their breast.
He knew them for the enemy,
And guessed they meant him treachery:
But, wherefore by that bier stood they?
Was it a Yorkist there that lay?

XXXVI.

They bent, and gazed some little space
Upon the warrior's deathy face.
Fitzharding watched if they might show
Gesture of triumph, or of woe.
Steadfast they stood with bended head,
Nor speech, nor gesture ventured.
Then did the Baron surely know
The warrior had not been their foe.
A Yorkist thus, it seemed, lay here;
And, losing his most pressing fear,
He judged it prudent now to stay,
Till passed Duke Richard's scouts away.
And oft he marked them watch around,
And draw within the shaded ground.

XXXVII.

In solemn memory of the dead
Now from the choir the low notes spread
Of midnight dirge and requiem;
And to Fitzharding might they seem
As hymn of some angelic band,
Who on those honoured towers might stand
To guide the spirit from below,
And soothe with hope the mourner's woe.
But, hark! a full and deeper sound

Now answers from the cloister’s bound!
Soon as that mournful chaunt was heard,
A gloom o’er all the choir appeared;
While slowly o’er the high shrine fell
The foldings of the funeral veil,
Placed for the warriors’ obsequy,
And dropped, at midnight DIRIGE!

XXXVIII.

Murmuring far, where vaults unclose,
The melancholy strain arose.
The gallery where Fitzharding stood
Fronted that cloister’s northern door:
Not one of heavy carved wood,
With scroll ill-fancied covered o’er;
But that most richly carved and light,
With slender stems and foliage dight,
As ‘broidered with true leaf and flower,
And traced with Gothic pointings tall,
And canopied with fretwork small.
Issuing beneath this mitred-arch,
The fathers held their solemn march;
Where the long vista-walk withdrew,
Their taper lights gave them to view,
And played upon the vaulted roof,
And showed each fretted line aloof;
There stood the tabernacled Saint,
Blessing the porch. Each corbeil quaint
With it’s carved visage, looking down
On all, who passed the arch below,
With smile fantastic, or with frown,
From under helmed, or mitred brow, —
Was graved in light and shade so strong,
Where the gleam waving passed along,

That, as the fleeting shadows roved,
You would have thought the features moved.

XXXIX.

The fathers came with solemn dirge
And midnight chauntings for the dead;
And, as they on the aisle emerge,
Sudden their lifted tapers shed
Long gleams upon each altar-bier,
And showed the warrior resting near.
Each monk, as to the choir he passed,
A glance on the dead soldier cast.
How various was the countenance,
Thus lighted by the taper's glance!
But, oh! that words each line might trace
Of that appealing look of grace,
(But words may not that glimpse define,)
Which beamed from many a passing eye
Of the cowled throng then crowding by —
The look, that would to Heaven resign
Each object of its sympathy!

XL.

While the choir-steps the train ascend,
The silver censers steam on high;
On them with frankincense attend
The Prior and Sub-Prior nigh.
(The aged Abbot stood not by.)
They paused upon the marble bound,
Where now St. Cuthbert's screen is found,
And, ranging in half-circle round,
O'er princely Somerset laid low,

Their hundred lights, raised high, appear
A curve of flame, wide round the bier;
And they, to organ's solemn flow,
Sang DIRIGE and PLACEBO.
Whene'er their mourning voices fell,
Stern spoke above the sudden knell,
And then the farthest choir's reply
Came murmuring, till, with finest swell,
The loud notes filled the vaults on high,
With grand and mournful harmony;
And these the words that hymned by.

XLI.

THE CHOIR.

"IN REGIONS OF ETERNAL LIGHT."

Where Truth and Mercy never cease,
Oh! may each summoned soul delight,
And rest! for ever rest! in peace!
I heard a seraph-voice speak nigh,
And thus, in thrilling sound it said,
'For ever blessed are the dead,
Who faithful and repentant die!'"
After high chorus through the vaulted sphere
Had slowly sunk around the warrior's bier,
This strain from monks in demi-chaunt arose,
With many a solemn pause and touching close.

SUNG ROUND THE BIER.

To THEE I lifted UP mine eyes,
To THEE, upon the mountains throned!
To THEE, WHO spread the boundless skies,
And hung them with THY worlds around.”
The fathers ceased, and, from the choir again
Swelled o’er the organ this resounding strain.

THE CHOIR.

“‘Twas mine to hear a seraph-voice,
And thus in thrilling words it said,
‘Repentance bids the soul rejoice;
Repentance sanctifies the dead.’”
The choral sounds sunk tremulously fine,
As closed those solemn words — in hushing sign
Of tender awe — sorrow by faith subdued —
Stillness of spirit — meekest gratitude.
Then the full grandeur of the organs rolled,
Then soft, as if by pious peace controlled,
Low murmured, while the mingled chorus passed
From choir and bier, and calmer sadness cast.

XLII.

While rose this chorus soft and slow,
The Knight, in trance of deepest woe,
Listened till all was still below.
And long, it seemed, that pious strain
Lingered below each vaulted roof,
And died, in murmurs far aloof,
Lulling the first keen sense of pain.
Silent, the watching Warrior grieved;
Tears dimmed his manly eye,

While the close corslet frequent heaved
With many a deep-drawn sigh.

CANTO IX .

AMONG THE DEAD.

I.

Now when the midnight chaunt was o’er,
And through the cloister’s mitred door
The monks had passed and gone,
Came a pale vision on that way,
Ill suiting with the morn of May,
Ere long about to dawn.
It came not, like the lark’s gay voice,
To waken Nature to rejoice;
It came to mourn her perished bloom,
Untimely gathered for the tomb,
In summer prime, in wintry age,
The ruddy youth, the silvered sage;
It came the bitter tear to pour,
The silent ranks of death t’ explore.

II.

Long had that anxious train, apart,
Watched for this hour with fearful heart;
The hour when plunder’s toil might end,
And trembling relative and friend
By feeble torchlight might discern
The truth they sought, yet feared, to learn.
The hour was come; — and where so late
The trumpet’s thrilling voice spoke fate;
And charger’s tramp o’er barrier-stones,
And rattling arrows and wild groans

Fiercely in dreadful chorus rose: —
These, that had troubled the long day,
This tumult all had died away,
And left the town in deep repose.
For, not the watchword heard afar,
Nor measured step of guard of war,
Humming the tune he might not sing,
While pacing near his captive King,
Nor feeble wail borne on the air.
Through lattice-bar, from widowed fair, —
Not these disturbed the stillness near;
They gave it character more drear.
And sometimes Horror's self would fling
Her death-note from the raven's wing,
When, from his watchtower, perched alone,
With ravening eye and ardent frown,
Downward he flapped where none was by,
To quaff the gory channel nigh.

III.

'Twas at this hour of dreary rest,
Mourners around the Abbey pressed.
Fitzharding viewed those forms of woe
Among the slaughtered warriors go;
And, with dread sympathy, beheld,
Of every age from youth to eld,
Those mourners throw the searching glance
For friends fled from their mortal trance
Of fleeting turmoil here below;
Friends, who had felt what these feel now,
Ere their stilled hearts were cold,
The pang, that friends alone can know,
And never may be told!

IV.

He marked some rush with frenzied haste;
So swift from bier to bier they paced,
It seemed they had not time to know
The wounded form of friend from foe.
Yet, where the lawn lay o’er a face,
Distorted sore by wounds and death,
There would they pause some little space,
And shuddering view what slept beneath.
Others passed on this solemn scene,
With firmer step and calmer mien,
With stern fixed brow, where patience lay,
As if themselves and Misery,
After long strife for mastery,
Were old companions on life’s way.

V.

But, who is he in sable weeds,
Whose heart in deepest sorrow bleeds?
Who o’er yon warrior bends the head,
Now laid upon his marble bed,
Near princely Somerset outspread?
The shading cowl has fallen aside,
And shows the mourner’s martial pride.
He kneels beside a father’s bier;
While the priest brings the censer near,
Takes from his boy in snowy stole
The golden-plated incense bowl,
And on the burning embers throws
Myrrh and nard and eastern rose.
The mourner rises from his knee.
Prepared what most he dreads to see;
He lifts the lawn from off the face;

The cap of steel has left its place.
And shows the honoured looks of age,
Around a visage calm and sage,
Profaned with many a gory trace.

VI.

As bends some sculptured form of woe
Upon the twilight-tomb below,
And may nor sigh nor tear bestow,
Nor any living symptom show, —
So viewed the son his father's bier
Mutely and fixed, without a tear,
While his cheek took the pallid hue
Of the lorn face beneath his view.
That look, reflected on his brain,
Held and possessed him with its pain.
His sinking eyes grew pale and dim,
Yet still they seemed to gaze on him!
Cold dews upon his brow prevail,,
Tremours his every nerve assail;
Till consciousness and sorrow fail;
And stupor dwells on all his soul
With heavy, terrible control.

VII.

Fitzharding watched one mourner long,
From bier to bier among the throng,
Till he paused o'er a warrior dead,
Disguised by wounds, distorted, dread,
And mangled so that none could know.
The helmet was not on his brow,
Nor shield upon his breast was laid;

It rested ‘neath the tomb’s low shade.
But from that guardian shield beneath,
From forth those shadows drear of death,
Mute and forlorn, a dog crept near.
No antics spoke his grateful cheer;
No short quick bark, no stifled cry
Pealed, as when step he loved was nigh;
But by the stranger sad he stood,
And upward looked, in doubting mood.

VIII.

A little spaniel dog was he,
All silver-white his hair,
Save some few spots of red-tawney,
With forehead high and fair.
His lively eyes were hazel bright,
And mild and tender, too,
And full of sympathy’s quick light,
Artless and warm and true.
Full often gaily had he run
In sport o’er field and wood,
With his dear lord, round Alban’s town,
Now — crimsoned with his blood!
And, all for sport, had sought this day
His master’s step afar,
Till, coming where he bleeding lay
Upon his bed of war,
He knew him, through his dead disguise,
And owned him promptly with loud cries
Then, silent, crouched him by his side,
Faithful the utmost to abide.
And when the monks came ‘mong the slain,
He, with quick paws and angry plain,
Half bark, half howl, in efforts vain

Still tried to guard his long-loved friend
From stranger’s foot, from stranger’s hand.
He saw them bring the gory shroud,
And bear that helpless friend away;
Then, fearless, “mid the trampling crowd,
He followed close — lamenting loud;
Nor threat, nor blow, his steps could stay,
Nor fair words his forbearance buy;
And now beneath his bleeding bier,
Though he might shed no mourner’s tear,
He paid him sorrow’s obsequy.

IX.

Now, as the stranger turned his view,
He his lost son’s companion knew,
And then the shield, from which he crept,
Where he for hours mute watch had kept;
Then was the mournful truth made plain;
A father could not doubt again:
He saw his dead son resting here,
And checked no more the bitter tear.
The dog, who late had drooping stood
With fixed and earnest eye,
Soon as the stranger changed his mood
To sorrow’s ecstasy,
Owned his dear master’s sire in grief,
And sprang, as if to give relief
By sad responsive cry;
And even strove those tears to dry,
That now came rolling by.
Stronger no human tongue could speak,
Soothing and comforting,
Than his, who dried the mourner’s cheek,
With tender minist’ring.

The eye, that never tear had shed,
Knew well that sign of woe;
The heart, that never his pang had,
Could sympathy bestow!

X.

Deem it not trivial that so long
Has paused the solemn funeral song
For tale of poor and humble friend,
Where truth and simple goodness blend;
Since gratitude, wherever found,
Fidelity, sagacious love,
In whatsoever shape they move,
Claim praise where griefs abound.
And ‘mid this scene of mortal fate,
Of raging passions, pride and hate,
Oh! soothing, — soothing was the sound
Of artless love and gratitude!
Sweet as, in pause of tempest rude,
The warble of some lonely flute,
That seems its empire to dispute
Awhile — but swells, and dies away
At last, beneath the tempest’s sway!
Thus sweet and sad the memory,
O! poor and faithful friend, of thee!

XI.

Still round the dead the mourners stray,
Pause oft, and stoop upon their way,
Till some known crest, or visage dear
To changeless grief changed hope and fear.
Sunk by degrees the moan of woe,

From those, who claimed the dead below.
Step after step departing fell,
Paused at the porch, in last farewell,
Till all is lone by tomb and bier,
Save that a monk sits shadowy here,
Or man-at-arms, at interval,
Havock's and Death's grim sentinel,
Muttered strange phrase ungenial.
Now rolled the thunder, that had broke
O'er distant hills, since curfew spoke;
Now the forked lightning, passing by,
Awoke the angel-form on high,
Beneath the crystal tracery,
And showed each secret gallery,
Where, starting back into the night,
Many a visage shrunk from sight.

XII.

Fitzharding, by the thunder roused,
Thought of the sufferers still unhoused,
Chased from their ranks to heath and wood,
By civil treachery pursued,
Plundered of arms and harness gear,
And hiding from the murderers near.
Then came the fear, that there might stray
His father on the wild heath-way,
Old and alone, robbed of his arms,
Listening each step to new alarms;
Till, worn by past and present toil,
He sinks upon the bare, damp soil,
And, stretched low on earthy bed,
This tempest mocks his hoary head.
Then came the fear — ah no, the hope
Himself might with such evils cope;

Then filled his mind this chiefest care —
That he his father’s fate might share!

XIII.

These thoughts awoke impatience high;
He turned to leave the gallery,
His father’s fate elsewhere to learn,
Though yet below Duke Richard’s train,
Feigning to guard a warrior slain,
Guileful and still, wait his return.
As his eyes o’er the gallery glance,
Seemed a dim shadow to advance,
Scarce shaped upon the twilight pale,
And faintly bade Fitzharding hail.
‘Twas Clement, who, with ready care,
Came to enjoin him yet beware
Duke Richard’s scouts, on watch below,
Where, he had secret cause to know,
They stood to give a dagger blow
To one, who yet their search had fled —
Lancastrian knight — so was it said.
And Clement pointed where, in guile,
Those men in arms within the gloom,
Who traced the Baron down the aisle,
Still lingered near St. Scytha’s tomb.

XIV.

Since, then, Fitzharding here must rest,
He mournfully the Monk addressed —
Wilt thou, meanwhile, the aisles explore,
And make strict search the corpses o’er?
These are the signs thy search shall lead;

Mark them, and then away, with speed!
Tall is my father’s form, but age
Has bent it with a gentle sway,
Drawn on his visage wrinkles sage,
And strewn his locks with silver-grey.
And this the fashion of the steel,
That may, alas! my sire reveal:
Plain, plaited steel; no inlaid gold
Is graven round each clasping fold;
His helmet, all of iron proof,
Is golden-damasked; and aloof
The leopard for his crest is known.
His visor shows three bars alone;
His gilded spurs have motto bossed —
‘LOYAL THOUGH FIELD AND HOPE BE LOST.’”

XV.

While thus Fitzharding, with a sigh,
Pictured the warrior’s pageantry,
While each remembered sign he drew
Gave his sire’s image to his view,
He paused, o’ercome with sudden dread,
As if he saw his father dead.
The Monk in listening silence stood,
With look that spoke his mournful mood,
And bent his head in meek assent,
And on his solemn errand went.

XVI.

Fitzharding from his station viewed
His friend pass slowly on the aisle,
Whose steps his anxious eyes pursued,

Watched every gesture, attitude,
And pause, however slight, the while.
The ordered biers he moved among,
And o’er each corpse inquiring hung.
As slowly on the forms he dwelt,
Fitzharding dread impatience felt,
Mingled with anger and surprise,
As pauses bade new fears arise.
“Oh! need he doubt? a single glance
Might prove my father’s countenance.
Even now upon his face, perchance,
He looks! Ah! now he seeks the crest,
And now the shield upon his breast,
And now the golden spur he spells,
Still on the motto there he dwells!
Would that my eyes their light could lend
Oh! will these moments never end?”
He passes to a farther tomb;
Fitzharding felt as saved from doom.
That farther bier too distant lay
To give his doubts and terrors sway;
He sought to calm his troubled mind,
And wait the truth, with will resigned.

XVII.

Though now were gone the mourner-train,
One weeping form appeared again.
A figure, wrapt in pilgrim fold,
Passed as with desperation bold;
On as she stept, went close beside,
A Monk, as guardian and as guide.
She glanced on every warrior’s face;
And, though she passed with frantic pace,
Yet was there in her gesture grace,

That gave to sorrow dignity,
And drew and fixed Fitzharding's eye.
He sighed to think, that frame so slight
Must meet affliction's rudest blight;
That sensibility so keen
Had dared to rush upon this scene.
Where nerves, that had sustained the fight,
Shuddered and shrunk, and shunned the sight.
"She seeks, perchance, a husband slain;
If found — how may her heart sustain
The dreadful truth?"'Twas thus he said,
"How may she view her husband dead?"

XVIII.

Struck with a solemn sympathy,
He groaned, and watched what she might see
A softer pity touched his breast
From contrast, as this stranger's woes,
And Florence in her home of rest,
Upon his fancy rose.
He thought what *HER* state might have been,
Had she been doomed to this dread scene,
And blessed her in repose.
Her fears must all aside be cast,
If safe his messenger had passed.

XIX.

Some likeness in their grace and air,
On Florence still detained his thought,
And, as he marked the stranger's care,
A deeper pity for her wrought.
She bent upon St. Scytha's tomb,

That lay beneath Fitzharding’s eye,
Viewed the dead warrior through the gloom,
And, reading respite of her doom,
She looked, in thankfulness, on high: —
And, as the light beamed o’er her face,
The Baron could her features trace.
Upon his mind, like sudden spell,
Terror and consternation dwell!
‘Tis Florence! ‘tis herself! his own
Venturing among the dead alone.

XX.

Short was the spell, that fixed him here:
Forgotten every danger near,
Save those, that might her steps await:
Forgotten even his threatened fate,
He rushes on the aisle below,
And clasps that pilgrim form of woe.
His voice recalls her fleeting sense;
She lifts her eyes, but sight is gone!
Her trembling lips, that would dispense
Affection, comfort, joy alone,
Murmur but with a feeble moan.
Fitzharding called aloud for aid,
And would have borne her from this shade
Through every danger of the way,
Even where the watchful foeman may
Seize on him for his instant prey.

XXI.

The monk attendant, late her guide,
Warned him of ill, that must betide

From Richard’s bands, these walls between,
If there Lancastrian were seen.
Then to the cloister straight he hied,
And soon his ready zeal supplied
Such aid as twice recalled her life,
From joy and sorrow’s various strife.
‘Twas he, who found her senseless laid,
Long since, when she a form surveyed,
And, having raised the veil of death,
Had caught the ghastly glimpse beneath,
Which brought to her half-wildered mind
The very form she feared to find.

XXII.

Grief may be painted; ‘tis of earth:
But joy, which is of heavenly birth,
Of spirit all — celestial fire —
May not be known,
May not be shown,
Saye in the smile its beams inspire.
Such smile spoke thoughts denied to breath;
Such smile on Florence’ lips was seen;
It lightened o’er this world of death,
And with its glory veiled the scene!
She saw alone her husband saved!
Horror and grief had vanished now;
Present and future ill she braved,
Might but her steps with his steps go.
She viewed not shape stand watching by,
With curious and with cruel eye.

XXIII.

How different was Fitzharding’s state!
NO joy beamed on his anxious mind’;
But terrors for his father’s fate,
With fears for Florence now combined.
Even at that moment, suddenly,
Might he his father’s image see
Stretched on some marble near!
Ere Florence might be spared such sight,
Or shrouded from Duke Richard’s might,
How might he seek the bier?

XXIV.

To save her from this scene of dread
And chance of various ill,
The cloister gallery he had fled
Seemed place of refuge still.
But her sole fear on this sad ground,
Was loss of him so lately found.
Prophetic seemed it to her heart —
If now they part — they ever part!
All other danger, light as air,
Claimed not with her a single care.
Sure of his life, her peace was sure;
What need of safe retreat for her?
‘Twas not in shrouding solitude;
Far distant woe might there intrude.
‘Twas even at her husband’s side,
That safety was — whate’er betide;
For, come the worst, they share it all,
Together live — together fall.

XXV.

Fitzharding thought not thus: — He dared
Meet woe alone — not woe thus shared.
But, dreading now again to part,
His judgment yielded to his heart;
He caught the courage of her love;
What she feared not he thought not of.
Then, while he bade, with tender care,
Florence for dismal sights prepare,
Her only answers were a sigh
And smile of sadness soon passed by.
She drew the dark hood o’er her head,
And followed closely where he led.

CANTO X .

AMONG THE DEAD.

I.

WITH even step and shaded eye
Florence the tombs now passes by.
While near the choir Fitzharding drew,
Pausing, he points out to her view
Where the three noble warriors lie,
With high and solemn obsequy
Of torches fixed and priestly ward,
And incense-cloud and herald-guard.

II.

By the first bier he took his stand,
And looked on great Northumberland,
Kinsman of Hotspur — him, who died
Fighting against the new-grown pride
Of Bolingbroke, whose wiles and might
Usurped the second Richard’s right;
Kinsman of him, who blazed the deed
Of Richard’s death in Pomfret tower,
Defying the usurper’s power.
And now had Hotspur’s kinsman died,
Fighting on that usurper’s side;
Yet for a meek and blameless king,
To whom his unsought honours bring
The curse of his progenitor,
Disputed right and civil war.

III.

Dashing aside a soldier’s tear,
Fitzharding reached the centre bier;
Portcullis yet was watchful here.
He looked on his commander’s face.
And thought within how short a space
He had himself obeyed his voice,
Soon as the battle-hour began,
Flattered and honoured, by his choice,
With post of danger in the van.
Then every limb with life was warm;
Now heavy death pressed all his form,
Its sullen gloom hung on his brow,
And tinged the half-closed lid below,
Dwelt in the hollow of his cheek,
And seemed, with breathless sign, to speak
Of more than human tongue may dare —
Of the last pang, that lingered there.

IV.

His dinted casque, that stood beside,
Told whence had rushed the fatal tide;
Its high plume, that had waved so gay
Beneath St. Alban’s tower this day,
Mantling like snowy swan, and danced
To every step his charger pranced;
As jocund at the trumpet’s air,
And proud the pomps of war to share, —
Now broken, stained, and stiff with gore
Fell, as in horrors, bristled o’er.
The golden lions in his shield
Glared on his pulseless breast;
And every sign, that rank revealed

And royal race professed,
Seemed but to mock his rest.
His honours now — the pausing eye,
The people’s tear, the warrior’s sigh;
For these alone his virtues tell: —
Grandson of John o’ Gaunt, farewell!

V.

Fitzharding, with swift step, passed on
To the third bier, which stood alone;
And here — oh here! the pausing eye —
The sudden tear — the bursting sigh,
At once De Clifford own.
Oh loyal heart! oh brave old man!
And hast thou closed thy mortal span,
With youthful fire, exhaustless zeal
For thy good king and country’s weal!
And, scorning age and shadowy days,
Hast, with the eagle’s dauntless gaze,
Still soared in Glory’s keenest blaze,
And won a circlet of her rays! —
Awhile Fitzharding bent his head,
In mindful stillness, o’er the dead —
Then turned upon his dreadful way,
To seek if thus his father lay:
While the deep thunder’s mystic groan
Muttered, it seemed, prophetic moan!

VI.

With eager eye he sought around,
Through the black shades of this drear ground,
And, while the lightning quivering throws

It’s pale glance o’er each warrior’s brows,
Catches each shape and look of death
Extended on the graves beneath.
How sudden rose each livid face
From forth the shadows of the place,
And, sudden sunk, was seen no more —
The vision with the blue glimpse o’er!
And often to his anxious view
Thus rose some form in death be knew:
One who had close beside him fought,
While Richard’s fiercest self he sought;
Some who had near his father been,
When in the throng he last was seen,
And when from battle he in vain
Had sought to join his band again.

VII.

On a low stone, lit up by ray
Of single torch, a body lay
In ringed mail; with umbered gleam
Full on the face red flashes stream.
Fitzharding paused awhile, and groaned,
Again his eye a comrade owned;
For whom high danger he had braved;
Whose life, that day, he once had saved.
His iron van-brace now could show
The very dint of sabre blow,
Aimed at the life he then preserved,
Alas! for speedy fate reserved.

VIII.

Where spread each graven brass, beyond,
Above, below, was death;
Above, scarce cold, a warrior’s hand,
A monk’s lay hid beneath,
That had for ages mouldered there,
Since he had left his cell of care.
Such brass-sealed grave showed sculpture rude
Of monk, in kneeling attitude.
There lay the brave Sir Robert Vere,
Whose words yet smote Fitzharding’s ear,
“Warwick breaks up the Barrier!”
With winged speed he urged his way,
Then plunged in thickest of the fray.

IX.

And here, among the loyal slain,
Behold! Sir Richard Fortescue;
There lay Sir William Chamberlain;
There, Sir Ralph Ferrers, brave and true;
With many a veteran knight and squire, |
Whose breast had flamed with patriot fire;
And humbler men, whose courage high
Had taught them for their prince to die.
Who now shall wait at the King’s gate,
For, here lies faithful Chanselar?
Who urge the steed to utmost speed,
For Henry Hawlin sleepeth here?
Of all the wide lands he has traced
Six feet for him remain;
Of all the minutes of his haste
Not one to tell his pain!
To other tongue he leaves to say
Tiding of Alban’s bloody fray;
To bear unto Queen Margaret’s ears

The crowded tale of woes and fears —
Pressed into hours the fate of years!
His course, his toilful bustle done,
Now lies he here — HIS INN IS WON.

X.

And who shall to the dais bring,
With marshalled state before the King,
And train OF HOUSEHOLD SQUIRES,
And BLAZE OF YEUL-CLOUGH FIRES,
The boar's head, at that merry tide,
When royal halls are opened wide?
Not he so mute on yonder grave;
The King's chief Sewer he; —
Never again his chaunted stave
Shall join the minstrelsy!
Never again his jocund eye
Shall glance where banners wave on high,
And where plumed knight and ladies bright
Are ranged around, in purple dight —
Knights, who no more in gallant state
Shall answer to the minstrel's call;
Ladies, whom war and cruel fate
Have banished from the lighted hall.

XI.

But who is he, within the shade
Of Wulphstan's ancient altar laid?
No funeral torch, with lurid glare,
Burns o'er the iron warrior there;
Nor watch-monk sits in piteous care.
But twilight rays from distant tomb

Just shape his outline through the gloom. —
Whence is the tremour Florence feels?
Why does Fitzharding grasp her arm,
Silent and shaking with alarm? —
He fears dread truth that bier conceals.
In vain he bends upon the face,
Yet seems his father's form to trace.
He signed the monk, attendant still,
To hasten where yon glimmers lead,
For the lone torch, his fate to read.
Yet, while the monk obeyed his will,
He feared lest sudden lightning-glance
Might show his father's countenance
Sunk ghastly in the helm and drear.
He turned him from such awful chance,
And dimly saw, beside the bier,
A form in silence resting near,
In other cares so wrapped was he,
He guessed not now of treachery.

XII.

"Oh! will these moments never fleet?
Yet for this slow monk must I wait?"
He made some hasty steps to meet
His lingering messenger of fate;
And seized the torch, with desperate hand,
And took again his fearful stand.
The flame glanced o'er the golden crest;
And there the leopard stood confessed!
The face! — he turned him from the light,
Veiling his eyes from the dread sight,
To meet that altered look afraid.
Sudden, strong hands the torch invade,
And hold it forth upon the corpse.

He turned to see what stranger’s force
Had seized it. There, with bending head,
A form looked on the warrior dead;
And, as he viewed the corpse below,
The torch flashed full upon his brow,
And showed his quivering lip, his eye,
Fixed as by some dire phantasie.
Then, all his father’s look was known,
Reflecting terrors like his own
While that dead form he gazed upon,
And feared to find his slaughtered son!
The living voice beside him spoke!
The long-fixed spell at once was broke!

XIII.

But who may tell the feelings high
Rising from fear to ecstasy,
While sire and son each other pressed,
And each in other’s grasp was blessed.
Their joy was as the Morning’s smile,
With light of heaven upon its brow,
The sable wreaths of Night, the while,
Frowning upon the world below,
»
Till their dark host, in wide array,
Touched with the rising beams of day,
Rich tints of rose and gold display,
And form, as on the sun they wait.
The pomp and triumph of his state.

XIV.

Short triumph here. In cloud of woe
Faded joy's high reflected glow —
At D'Arcy's Earl was aimed the blow.
Fitzharding, quick as glance of light,
The poniard wrenched, with skilful might,
And laid its ruffian master low.
He, instant, knew the carle he viewed
Was one, who late his steps pursued,
And watched St. Scytha's shrine.
Not with Fitzharding was his strife;
His aim was at Earl D'Arcy's life;
But, led by knightly sign,
He traced the Baron on his way;
The gilded spur upon his heel
Did shrouded warrior reveal,
And marked him forth for prey.
But, when Fitzharding left his shade.
Hastening to render Florence aid,
The cowl fell back, that veiled his face,
And his pursuer stayed his pace,
Till, guided by strange sounds of joy,
He came the father to destroy.

XV.

Short time had Florence to revive
From terror and dismay,
Support from tenderness derive,
Or tender tear repay;
Short time for speech had sire and son,
Ere the good monk, her guide, came on.
He warmly urged their instant flight;
For comrades of the fallen were nigh, —
Monks, too, who shelter would deny
When they might view this dismal sight.

He would a hidden passage show,
To serve as screen from menaced woe;
Till day should send Duke Richard hence,
His march for London to commence,
And all his myrmidons of war,
Guarding their captive King afar.

XVI.

Briefly the Knights their thanks repaid;
And looked on him, who bore their crest,
All lifeless on the marble laid, —
Briefly for him their grief expressed:
“Richard Fitzharding — kinsman dear!
On thee will fall the future tear,
When thought may pause upon thy bier!”
Swift on the southern aisle they went
By many a dim-seen monument;
And reached a little shaded door
That led the great west entrance o’er;
Where gallery, that ran between
The crowning battlement, unseen,
Received them in its silent space.
Well knew the Earl this lonely place,
For, even here, at curfew hour,
He refuge sought from Richard’s power;
And here remained, till he in vain
Searched for his son among the slain.

XVII.

Oh! if by care and grief are told
The unseen steps of Time;
How many hours — nay days — had rolled,

Since, lingering in this secret hold,
He heard that curfew chime!
Since, on the northern gallery
His restless steps had strayed,
Where he had viewed, unconsciously,
His son in monkish shade,
Who there the vision of his face
Amid the shadows seemed to trace.
Now joy told forth the time so fast,
The present moment was the past,
Ere yet he marked it glide along,
Stealing the tale upon his tongue.
Full many an hour had D'Arcy passed,
Since o'er the NORMAN SHADE
He marked the sun its low beam cast,
And glow with angry red;
Since he had heard St. Alban's knell
Sound what had seemed his son's farewell;
Since from safe nook he turned away,
To seek, where death and danger lay.

XVIII.

Ere now withdrew the monk, their guide.
He bade the warriors here abide
Till morning hour, when they might hear
Drums and the neigh of steeds draw near.
Then, soon-as Richard's hosts were gone,
He would return, and lead their way
To chamber, where the Abbot lay.
While grateful words the Knights repay,
Florence could only with a tear
Thank the good priest for service dear.
Time had not yet been lent to tell
The acts, on which she fain would dwell:

The kindness, that restored her life
From grief and horror's mingled strife.
Meekly he bowed his aged head,
And then on soundless foot he sped.
They heard him bar the gallery-door,
And soon, upon the paved floor,
Watched his dark shadow pass away,
Where the high-tombed warriors lay.

XIX.

And now Fitzharding pressed to hear
From Florence all her tale of fear.
She told her sorrows, from the hour
When first she watched St. Alban's tower;
Of her dark path of dread and grief
Through forest shade; of pilgrim train,
And words exchanged; of wounded chief,
She feared had been Fitzharding slain.
Told of her courser's sudden flight
Through ruffian-troops fresh from the fight,
His strength, his courage and his speed,
His dexterous course at utmost need;
Till, at St. Alban's warded gate,
Though courage, skill, nor strength abate,
They seized him as a prize of war,
And Florence for their prisoner.
But, ere they led her to close ward,
Her proffered gold to one on guard
Aided her through the barrier,
(Enfolded in her pilgrim-shroud)
Among an anxious, hurrying crowd,
Seeking their friends within the town.
Words might not tell what she had known,
While, by the dying and the dead,

She passed to gain this Abbey’s shade;
Nor, when she sunk, beside the bier
Of warrior, laid in chamber near.

XX.

‘Twere vain to tell Fitzharding’s pain,
While listening to the fearful strain;
How oft he shuddered, oft reproved,
And blamed her most, when most he loved.
For courage rash, for passage won,
And high exploits for his sake done.
Scarce might the Earl his wonder speak,
That one so gentle and so weak
The meed of heroes thus might claim:
But greater fear the less o’ercame.
Then Sire and Son to other tell
What each in yester fight befell;
Of nobles slain, and friends that failed
At utmost need, though horsed and mailed.
But chief their indignation rose
‘Gainst Wentworth — traitor to his king,
Whose standard basely did he fling
To ground, and fled before his foes!

XXI.

Earl D’Arcy then the story told
Of many a fugitive he met,
Wounded and lorn, both young and old,
Seeking a home ere sun was set.
In a close wood near Alban’s town,
Laid in a wretched cart, alone,
Sore wounded Dorset, he, with pain,

Saw journeying to his domain —
Him must he never see again!
Stafford’s brave Earl on litter borne,
Whose hand by fatal shaft was torn,
Already on his look was laid
Approaching Death’s first warning shade.
His gallant father, too, was near,
Who to his tomb the scar would bear
Received this day for Lancaster;
Through vizor closed the arrow sped,
That sent him from his steed as dead,
And nearly had the life-blood quaffed:
Yet fatal was not deemed the shaft.
Ah! deeply must the shaft of sorrow
Strike to his heart, when, on the morrow,
He o’er his only son shall stand,
And feel the death-dew on his hand!

XXII.

As this sad image rose to view,
Earl D’Arcy, as in sympathy,
Gazed on his son, whose living hue
Awoke his grateful fervency.
A silent tear stood in his eye,
As passed his offered thanks on high.
Well read the son his father’s care;
Rejoiced he in those thanks to share.
But hark! a low and measured chime
Speaks from the tower the WATCH of PRIME,
Sounding due summons to the knights
For some high pomp of funeral rites.
O’er that west gallery might they bend
And trace nave, choir, from end to end.
The lofty vista, crowned with shade,

On pillars vast was reared,
Where pointed arch, in far arcade,
Mixed with rude Saxon was displayed,
And double tiers above arrayed.
By superstition feared.
Broad rose the Norman arch on high,
That propped the central tower,
And forward led the wondering eye
O’er the choir roof’s bright canopy,
To the east window’s bower.

XXIII.

How solemn swept before their sight
This Abbey’s inner gloom,
Thwarted with gleams of streaming light
And shade from pier and tomb,
Flung by lone torch, or by the ray
Of tapers, sickening at the day.
For now, the thunderclouds o’erpast,
May’s crystal morn its dawning cast
On every window’s untraced pane,
And touched it with a cold, blue stain.
How peaceful dawned that living light
O’er eyes for ever set in night!
O’er eyes, that, but on yesterday,
Viewed distant years in long array,
And lovely gleams of shaded joy
Upon their evening landscape lie.

XXIV.

In solemn thought, while Sire and Son
Beheld the fate of friends below,

Their hearts a various feeling own,
That, saved from every mortal blow,
For them another morning rose,
And brought their wearied limbs repose
Then Pity shed a tender tear
For many a warrior sleeping here.
And thus, at the first dawn of day,
Their duteous orisons they pay.
The grateful thoughts ascend on high,
Like May's first offerings, to the sky,
That sweet and still and full arise
'Mid silent dews and peaceful sighs;
Even as the glad lark's soaring trill,
Heard, when the thunder's voice is still,
Rejoicing in the breath of May: —
But, oh! that sweet and jocund lay
Now yields to other sounds, and dread —
To bell that mourns the slaughtered dead!

XXV.

But see! a sudden radiance streams
From Alban's choir and shrined tomb;
The sable veil withdrawn, the beams,
Just kindling, break upon the gloom,
From torch and taper lifted there,
'Mid burnished gold and image fair.
While through the choir the shrine-lights spread,
Gleamed each tall column's branching head,
Circled with golden blazonry —
The shielded arms of abbots dead.
These shields, so small and close, like gems
Enclasped the columns' clustered stems,
That rose in the ribbed arch on high,
And spread, in fan-like tracery,

Upon the choir’s long canopy;
Where visioned angels shed their light
Upon a vault of mimic night.

XXVI.

And now the long perspective line
Extending through those arches three,
Of stately grace, above the shrine,
St. Mary’s Chapel they might see,
Distinct, yet stealing from the sight;
And high, beyond the altar there,
Her image, shrined in flowers fair,
Lessened afar in softer light,
While, miniatured, before it glide
Her priests, who chaunt at morning-tide.
Again that bell, with solemn tongue,
Through vault and aisle and gallery rung
Till distant voices, drawing near,
Fell, deeply murmuring, on the ear.
This was the Requiem-mass of Prime,
The Requiem, sung with honours due,
Of torch and incense, dirge and chime,
When the whole convent, two and two
And the Lord Abbot stately led,
In flowing vest, with mitred head —
‘Twas the full mass for princes said,
When they repose among the dead.

XXVII.

‘Twas then the aged Abbot came,
Obedient to the Monarch’s claim.
Beneath the cloister’s westward arch,

By the great porch, he held his march,
With all the officers of state,
That on the Abbey's greatness wait.
Of humbler servants twenty-one,
Bearing before him each a torch,
Light the high-sweeping Norman porch
With dusky glare, like setting sun,
When yester battle-day was done.
Then paced his monks in double row,
Bearing their hundred tapers, slow,
That beamed upon each bannered saint
And pageant blazoned high and quaint.
The Abbot came with ready zeal,
Though called from short and needful rest,
And with pale age and grief oppressed,
To give the Requiem's solemn seal
And passport to a quiet grave;
And weep the tear due to the brave.

XXVIII.

A tear! does Glory claim a tear?
Weeps he upon a Hero's bier?
The maid, as in the tomb she fades;
The youth, once 'tranced in Fancy's shades
The wedded pair, whose hearts are one,
Who lived each other's world alone;
The infant, that had smiled so fair,
Like cherub, on its mother's care;
The long-loved parent, sinking slow
Beneath the weight of winter's snow —
O'er these, when in the grave they lie,
May fall the tears from Pity's eye;
But o'er the warrior's tomb should glance
The lightning of a poet's trance.

Cold was the reverend Father’s mind,
By wisdom, or by age, refined
To simple truth, that scorns the prize.
For which the bard, the hero, dies —
A shade, a sound, a pageant gay,
A morning cloud of golden May,
Glorious with beams of orient hue,
That, while they flatter — melt it too!
And, for such airy charm, he gives
The real world, in which he lives;
And, gazing on the lofty show,
Sinks in the closing tomb below! —
And therefore fell the Abbot’s tear
O’er Glory and a Hero’s bier.

XXIX.

While these last rites, from Pity due,
The Abbot gave, you still might view
In his raised eye, the noble mind
That suffered much, yet shone resigned
Calm and unbreathing was his look,
As though of all, save soul, forsook;
And all his form and air conveyed
The aspect of some peaceful shade,
Contented tenant of a cell,
Who long had bade the world farewell.
Still, as he moved, the verse was sung
For crowds of dead they passed among;
And still the gliding tapers threw
A fleeting, gloomy, livid hue
On every face, on every grave,
Ranged on each side the long wide nave.
Though slaughtered men his pathway bound,
He shrunk not from this dreadful ground.

XXX.

Now, where around dead Somerset
High pomp of funeral-watch was met,
Where o’er his corpse twelve torches blazed,
Circle of light, by almsmen raised,
And choristers beyond attend;
There, slow the Abbey-train ascend,
And, ranged in triple crescent-rows,
Step above step, the fathers bend,
While requiem and blessed repose
Are sung, with long-resounding breath,
For all in battle slain, beneath.
How high and full the organs swell,
And roll along the distant aisle,
Till, dying on the ear, they fell,
And every earthly thought beguile.
While finely stole the softened strain,
And stately moved the solemn march,
The Knights and Florence view with pain
The scene beneath the Norman arch.
Soon as the chaunted hymn was o’er,
PORTCULLIS, on the steps before,
Cried out with lofty voice of dole,
“Say for the soul — say for the soul
Of Somerset, high duke and prince,
And for each soul departed since
The onset of the battle-fray,
The wonted Requiem — sing and say!”

XXXI.

It was an awful thrilling sight,
Beneath this Abbey’s far-drawn flight,

To view her dark-robed sons arranged,
In memory of those thus changed,
Now seen in death laid out below,
Even while the Requiem's tender woe
Did for each parted spirit flow.
And first was seen a mourner pace,
His mantle borne with stately grace,
His eyes veiled in his hood,
Bearing the princely offering
Of Henry, his sad lord and king,
Where high the Abbot stood —
The sword of Somerset he bore:
A herald stalked, with casque, before.
He stopped below the Abbot's feet,
With low-bowed head and gesture meet.
Each pious gift the Father took
With meekest grace and downward eye
And gave it to his Prior nigh,
Who held it, with a reverend look,
At the bier's head on high.

XXXII.

A second mourner pacing grave,
Attended by a herald-band,
For the mass-penny offering gave
An offering for Northumberland.
No pomp appeared, when he bent down,
Of cushion, or of carpeting;
Such stately signs were given alone
To greet the Sovereign's offering.
Last, for De Clifford offering came;
And when the herald called his name,
The Abbot, gazing on his bier.
Gave bitter offering of a tear!

And dignified the warrior’s grave,
With Virtue’s tribute to the brave!
Nearer the aged Father drew,
Where the chief mourners wait,
And sprinkled there the drops held due
To Somerset’s sad state.
These valued rites alike he paid
To Percy’s and De Clifford’s shade,
And then, with supplicating eye,
Stretched forth his hands upon the air,
As if he would a blessing sigh
On all the dead and living there.

XXXIII.

As sunk the service for the dead,
Deep sighs of grief and mournful dread,
Of pious gratitude and love,
In Florence’ gentle bosom strove;
While on his arm she bowed her head,
For whom her thankful tears were shed.
The Knights had watched the sad array.
Till now the rising beams of May
Paled even the torches’ yellow flame;
And on the vault high overhead,
And on the far perspective, came
A purer light, a softer shade,
Harmonious, and of deep repose,
Sweet as the Requiem’s dying close!
When, sudden, on this calm profound
The war-trump sent its brazen sound.

XXXIV.

Fiercely, though far without the wall,
They heard Duke Richard’s trumpet call
The morning-watch, at rising sun.
Then other startling sounds begun,
Voices and drums and trampling hoofs,
In preparation of their way
To London with the King this day.
And thus, while all beneath these roofs
Were hushed by hopes Religion lent,
The brazen shriek of War’s fell brood
Even to the sepulchre pursued
The victims she had thither sent.

Profaning, with a ruthless tongue,
The holy anthem scarcely sung.

XXXV.

Soon as the Requiem was said,
The Abbot sought the captive King;
To mourn with him his warriors dead,
And his last sorrowing farewell bring.
In contemplation deep, and grief,
Meek Henry watched alone,
Seeking his only sure relief
Before THE HIGHEST THRONE.
Soon as the Sire drew near, and told
Names of th’ unburied dead,
King Henry felt a withering cold
O’er all his senses spread: —
Scarce could he thank him for the rite
He had performed this dreadful night;
For pious courage, that pursued
And that the Victor had subdued,
So far as grant of sepulchre

For those, who thanks could ne’er prefer —
He would have said, — but utterance failed
To speak for those he now bewailed.

XXXVI,

Yet did he praise the fortitude
That Richard’s cruel claims withstood,
And held the rights of sanctuary
For friends o’ercome by misery.
Then for himself he thanked him last,
For hospitable duty past;
For sympathies of look and tone
While he had been a captive guest;
Such as the broken spirits own,
And treasure in the grateful breast.
He willed an Anniversary
Should of the fatal yesterday
Be held within this choir, for those,
Whose bodies here find just repose.
He had no treasures left to prove
How much this place deserved his love;
But with meek look he asked, and voice,
The Abbot would a gift receive,
His only gift — he had no choice —
The offering would his heart relieve —
Certain rich robes which once he wore,
Fit clothing these for him no more!
Haply such robes might now aspire
To Abbey-use; — he would desire
That, for his own sake, there should be
A day of Anniversary,
To mark the memory of a friend —
The day when his poor life should end.

XXXVII.

The Abbot bent; and bowed his head
To hide the tears that dimmed his eye
Faltered the words he would have said —
Of reverence, love, and grief — and fled
In deep convulsive sigh.
Oh! had he viewed in future time
The vision of that ghastly crime
(Pointing the pathway to the tomb)
Which marked the day of Henry's doom,
His aged heart at once had failed,
And he had died, while he bewailed.
Henry one moment o'er him hung,
With look more eloquent than tongue —
Brief moment of emotion sweet!
Ere the King raised him from his feet:
But hark! in Abbey-court there rung
Flourish of trumpets, cheers of crowd,
Shrill steeds and drums all roaring loud.

XXXVIII.

The Abbot rose, but trembled, too;
Yet calm his look of ashy hue.
He sighed, but spoke not. Steps are heard;
A page and knight approach the King;
Message from Richard straight they bring,
That all things wait the royal word
For London; and the morning wore.
Faint smile of scorn the King's face bore
At mockery of his princely will,
While captive he to Richard still.
But the meek Henry was not born
To feel, or give, the sting of scorn;

Soon did that smile in sadness fade.
Tinged soft with resignation’s shade —
The paleness of a weeping moon,
Which clouds and vapours rest upon.

XXXIX.

Again the trumpets bray; again
Ring iron steps, and shouts of men.
In armour cased, Duke Richard came;
Proudly his warlike form he held,
And looked the Spirit of the field,
Yet for King Henry’s royal name
Feigned reverence due. With gentle blame
For lingering thus, he urged him hence,
While mingled o’er his countenance
A milder feeling with his pride —
A pity he had fain denied —
As he that look of goodness viewed,
Beaming in dignity subdued.

XL.

Following his steps came knight and lord,
And filled the royal chamber broad;
Yet came not Warwick in the throng,
Smitten with consciousness of wrong.
There was in Henry’s meekened look
A silent but a deep rebuke,
That smote his heart, and almost drew
His vast ambition from its view.
But, when that look was seen no more,
The pang it caused too soon was o’er,
And rashly his career he held

‘Gainst him in council and in field;
And now was with the vanguard gone
To fix the triumph he had won.

XLI.

By the King’s side, mourning his fate,
The aged Abbot stept.
Through chamber, passage, hall, and gate,
Where steeds and squires and lancemen wait,
The Abbey’s pomp, the Warrior’s
Their full appointment kept.
When the last portal they had gained,
Close marshalled bands without were trained
Within, high state the Church maintained.
The Abbot paused, and from his brow
Dismissed the darker cloud of woe,
To bless his parting Lord;
With arms outstretched, and look serene,
Pity and reverence were seen
A farewell to afford.
And thus the hundred monks around
Bestowed their blessings on his head,
While none of all the crowd was found,
Rude foes, stern soldiers, marshalled,
That did not say, or seem to say,
“Blessings attend thee on thy way!”

XLII.

The farewell Benediction o’er,
Duke Richard willed such scene no more,
And instant signal made to part;
He scorned, yet feared, each trait of heart.

A smile, a tear, in Henry’s eye
Said more than words may e’er supply,
As from the portal slow he past
And turned a long look — and the last.
Loud blew the trumpets, as in scorn
Of those they left behind
Stretched pale upon these aisles forlorn;
Loud blew they in the wind.
The fierce yet melancholy call,
Which died around each sable pall,
Formed but the warrior’s wonted knell —
The solemn and the last farewell!

XLIII.

This fearful summons was the last
That shook the sainted Alban’s shrine;
While now the martial pageant past,
Arrayed in many a glittering line,
From his pale choir and frowning tower,
Sad witness of the battle hour.
And from that broad tower now was seen
Those bands of war, on May’s first green,
In gleaming pomp and long array
Winding by meads and woods away;
While Clement viewed them, who, with DREAD,
Had watched their fires on hill outspread;
Had seen their white tents, dawning slow
On yester-morning’s crimsoned brow;
And thought how soon his shrines might fall
Beneath this poorly-battled wall.
He heard their trumpets in the gale
Sink fainter; as they seemed to wail
That Quiet did o’er War prevail.
He heard the tramp of measured tread,

The clattering hoofs, that forward sped;
The numerous voice in sullen hum;
And, last and lone, the hollow drum,
Till far its deadened beat decayed,
And fell upon the listening ear
Soft as the drop through leafy shade,
Then trembled into very air.
How still the following pause and sweet,
While yet the air-pulse seemed to beat!

XLIV.

Thus passed the warlike vision by;
While Alban's turrets, peering high
Upon the gold and purpled sky,
O'erlooked the way for many a mile,
And, touched with May-beams, seemed to smile,
— Smile on the flight of War's sad care,
That left them to their sleep in air;
And left the monks of gentle deed,
To blessed thanks from those they speed —
Left the poor friend, who watched his lord
Wounded, unwitting of reward,
To see him to his home restored —
The saintly Abbot left to close
His gathered years in due repose —
The dead unto their honoured tombs;
To peace these aisle's and transept's glooms!

XLV.

When Florence to her home returned
The aged servant she had mourned
Received her at her gate;

And, pawing on the ground again,
Behold her steed, who prison-rein
Had snapped, and homeward fled amain,
And here did watchful wait;
And onward to his mistress went,
With playing pace and neck low bent.
Once more beneath her peaceful bower,
Oh! how may words her feelings tell,
While now she viewed St. Alban’s tower,
That, yesterday, even at this hour,
She watched beneath dark Terror’s power?
One other day had broke his spell!

XLVI.

THE END

MISCELLANEOUS POE MS

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SALISBURY PLAINS .

STONEHENGE.

I.

WHOSE were the hands, that upheaved these stones
Standing, like spectres, under the moon,
Steadfast and solemn and strange and alone,
As raised by a Wizard — a king of bones!
And whose was the mind, that willed them reign,
The wonder of ages, simply sublime?
The purpose is lost in the midnight of time;
And shadowy guessings alone remain.

II.

Yet a tale is told of these vast plains,
Which thus the mysterious truth explains:
‘Tis set forth in a secret legend old,
Whose leaves none living did e’er unfold.
Quaint is the measure, and hard to follow,
Yet sometimes it flies, like the circling swallow.

III.

Near onto the western strand,
Lies a tract of sullen land,
Spreading ‘neath the setting light,
Spreading, miles and miles around,
Which for ages still has frowned:
Be the sun all wintry white,

Or glowing in his summer ray,
Comes he with morning smile so bright,
Or sinks in evening peace away,
Yet still that land shows no delight!

IV.

There no forest leaves are seen,
Yellow corn, nor meadow green,
Glancing casement, grey-mossed roof,
Rain and hail and tempest proof;
Nor, peering o’er that dreary ground,
Is spied along the horizon’s bound
The distant vane of village spire,
Nor far-off smoke from lone inn fire,
Where weary traveller might rest
With blazing hearth and brown ale blest,
Potent the long night to beguile,
While loud without raves the bleak wind;
No: his dark way he there must shivering find;
No signs of rest upon the wide waste smile.

V.

But the land lies in grievous sweep
Of hills not lofty, vales not deep.
Or endless plains where the traveller fears
No human voice shall reach his ears;
Where faintest peal of unknown bells
Never along the lone gale swells;
Till, folding his flock, some shepherd appear,
And Salisbury steeple it’s crest uprear;
But that’s o’er miles yet many to tell,
O’er many a hollow, many a swell;

And that shepherd sees it, now here now there,
Like a Will o’-the wisp in the evening air,
As his way winds over each hill and dell,
Where once the ban of the Wizard fell!

VI.

Would you know why this country so desolate lies?
Why no sound but the tempest’s is heard, as it flies,
Or the croak of the raven, or bustard’s cries?
Why the corn does not spring nor a cottage rise?
Why no village-Church is here to raise
The blest hymn of humble heart-felt praise,
Nor ring for the passing soul a knell,
Nor give to the dead a hallowed cell,
Nor in wedlock-bonds unite a pair,
Nor sound one merry peal through the air?
All this and much more would you know? And why,
And how, Salisbury spire was built so high,
As fairies had meant it to prop the sky?
Then listen and watch, and you soon shall hear
What never till now hath met mortal ear!

VII.

It was for, for back in the dusky time,
Before Church-bells had learnt to chime,
That a Sorcerer ruled these gloomy lands
Far as old Ocean’s southern sands.
He lived under oaks of a thousand years,
Where now not the root of an oak appears!
On each high bough a dark fiend dwelt,
Ready to go, when his name was spelt,

Down, down to the caves where the Earthquake slept,
Or up to the clouds, where the whirlwind swept.

VIII.

The Sorcerer never knew joy, or peace.
For still with his power did pride increase.
He could ride on a wolf from the North to South,
With a bridle of serpents held fast by the mouth;
And he minded no more the glare of his eyes,
That flashed about as the lightning flies,
Than the red darting tongue of the snake, that coil'd
Round his bridling hand, and for liberty toil'd.
He could sail on the clouds from East to West,
He rested not, he I nor let others rest;
And evil he wrought, wherever he went,
For, he worked, with Hela's and Loke's consent.
The BRANCH of SPECTRES she gave for his wand,
And nine hundred imps were at his command!
He could call up a storm from the vast sea-wave,
And, when ships were wrecked, not a man would he save!
He could call a thunder-bolt down from a cloud,
And wrap a whole town in a fiery shroud!

IX.

He could chase a ghost down the road of the dead,
Through valleys of darkness, by snakes' eyes shown,
And pass o'er the bridge, that to Hela led,
Where afar off was heard the wolf Fenris' groan,
While it guarded her halls of pain and grief,
Where she nursed her children — Famine and Fear;
He could follow a spectre, even here,
With the dauntless eye of a Wizard-chief.

He could chase a ghost down the road of the dead,
Till it passed the halls of Hela the dread.
He could chase a ghost down the road of the dead,
Till it came where the northern lights flash red.
Then the ghost would vanish amid their glow,
But the Wizard's bold steps could no farther go!
And whether those lights were weal, or woe,
The Sorcerer's self might never know.
All this and more he full often had done,
And changed to an ice-ball the flaming Sun!

X.

Now Odin had watched from his halls of light
This dark Wizard's fell and increasing might;
And clearly he knew, that his craft he drew
From the Witch of Death and the Evil Sprite,
Who, though chain'd in darkness, and far below,
Sent his shadows on earth, to work it woe.
This Wizard had even defied his power,
For once, in the dim and lonely hour,
When Odin had seen him riding the air,
And bid him with his bright glance forbear,
Great Odin's look he would not obey,
But went, on his cloud, his evil way!
He had dared to usurp, when invoking a storm,
The likeness of Odin's shadowy form,
And, when Odin sang his fomed song of Peace,
That hushes and bids the wild winds cease,
While it died the sleepy woods among,
And the moonlight vale had owned the song,
The Wizard called back the stormy gust,
O'er the spell-struck vale, and bade it burst!
The woods their murmuring branches tossed;
And the song — the song of Peace — was lost —

Then Odin heard the groan of thrilling Fear
Ascend from all the region, for and near,
And, as it slowly gained upon the skies,
He heard the solemn call of Pity rise!

XI.

Then Odin swore,
By the hour that is no more!
By the twilight hour to come!
By the darkness of the tomb!
By the flying warrior's doom!
Then Odin swore,
By the storm-light's lurid glare!
By the shape, that watches there!
By the battle's deadly field!
By his terrible sword and snow-white shield,
The Sorcerer's might to his might should yield.

XII.

While Odin spoke, the clouds were furled,
And those beneath, as stories say,
Lost the sight
Of our earthly light,
And caught a glimpse above the world?
But the phantasma did not stay:
It passed in the growing gloom away!
And from that hour these stories date
The fateful strife we now relate.

XIII.

Now, there was a Hermit, an ancient man,
Who oft lay deep in solemn trance,
Watching bright dreams of bliss advance;
And marvellous things of him there ran;
He had lived almost since the world began!
The people feared him, day and night,
And loved him, too, for they knew that he
Abhorred their wizard-enemy,
And wished and hoped to do them right.
He OWNED THE SPELL OF MINSTRELSY!
And in the hour of deepest shade,
When he would seek his forest-glade,

(It was of grey oaks in a gloomy hollow
Where never footsteps dared to follow,)
And called from his harp a certain sound,
Pale shadows would stand in his presence ‘round!
How this could be known, without a spell,
I must briefly own I never could tell.
— But, be that as it may — on that note’s swell,
Whether they sleeping were in halls of light,
Or followed the stars down the deeps of night,
Or watched the wounded Warrior’s mortal sigh,
Or after some ill-doing Sprite did fly,
On that note’s swell they to the Hermit hie;
And heed his questions, wait on his command;
These were the Spirits white of Odin’s band.

XIV.

Odin had marked this renowned old Seer,
And to him, at times, his favour lent;
He was the first of the Druids here;
And did all their laws and rites invent.
Some stories say a Druid never bent

At Odin’s shrine; and others may have told
The self-same tale, that here for truth I hold;
He was the first of all the Druid race:
Owning the spell serene of Minstrelsy!
But though he oft the Runic rhyme did trace,
No wizard he!
No fiend he called, no fiend he served,
And never had from justice swerved.
From mystic learning came his power,
His name was from his oaken-bower,
He was the first of *ALL* the Druid rage!

XV.

And Odin had marked this renowned old Seer,
And, when the solemn call for pity rose,
This goodly man to do his bidding chose,
A sage like whom was found not far or near:
Upon his head the snows of ages lay,
Hung o’er his glowing eyes and waving beard,
Touched every wrinkle with a paler grey,
And made him marvelled at, and shunned, and feared;
Yet, with this awe, love, as I said, appeared.

XVI.

He was gone to his home of oak;
Starlight ‘twas and midnight nigh;
Not one wistful word he spoke,
But his magic harp strung high;
As he touched the calling string,
Hear it through the branches ring,
Till on lower clouds it broke.
Straight in his bower dim shapes were seen

By the fitful light, that rose within,
And reddened the dark boughs above,
And chequered all the shadowy grove,
And tinged his robe and his beard of snow,
And waked in his eyes their early glow!
While, as alternate rose and sunk the gleam,
The tree itself a bower or cave would seem!

XVII.

The Druid, wrapt in silence, lay;
No need of words; his thoughts were known;
“Odin has heard his people’s groan,”
Spoke a loud voice and passed away.
Another rose, of milder tone!
“The mighty task is now thine own,
To free the land from wizard-guile;
If thou hast wisdom to obey,
And courage to fulfil the toil,
Odin, for ages, to thy sway
Gives each long plain and every sloping dell,
Now suffering by the sinful Sorcerer’s spell.”

XVIII.

A third voice spoke, and thus it said —
“Listen and watch! for thou must brave
The wily Wizard’s inmost cave;
And, while he sleeps, around his head
Bind a charm, that shall help thee draw
Each fang from his enormous jaw;
There lies the force of all his spells.
Hundred and forty teeth are there
In triple rows; his art they share.

Hundred and forty thou must draw,
From upper and from under jaw.
Quick must thou be; for, if the charm
Break, and his bond of sleep is o’er,
Ere yet thy task is done, no power
Can save thee from his vengeful arm.
Thence from his cave, at magic’s hour,
Speed thou; and close beneath his bower
Bury the fangs nine fathom deep,
Or ere thine eyelids close in sleep:
With them his guile for ever laid.
Thine is the land, which late he swayed.”

XIX.

The voice is passed, and once more stillness reigns
The Druid’s trance is o’er; yet he retains
A wildered and a haggard look.
As pondering still the urgent word,
And wonderous call he just had heard.
And sure instruction from that call he took!
xx.
And from this hour he was not seen,
Neither on hill, nor yet in dale;
By the brown heath, nor forest green,
Nor by the rills, where waters wail;
By sun-light, nor by moonbeam pale.
But his shape was seen, by starlight sheen;
Or so the carle dreamt, who thus told the tale!

XXI.

For many a night and many a day,
Close within his bower he lay,

For many a day and many a night,
Hid from sight, and hid from light,
Trying the force of his mystic might;
Working the charm should shield him from harm,
When he in the Wizard’s cave should be,
To set the wretched country free.
HE owned the spell of Minstrelsy.

XXII.

It boots not that I here should say
What arts the Druid did essay:
How with the misletoe he wrought,
That twined upon his oldest oak,
How midnight dew he careful caught
From nightshade, nor the words he spoke,
When he mixed the charm with a moonbeam cold,
To form a web, that should fast enfold
The Sorcerer’s eyes — vast Warwolf the bold.
Nor boots it, that I here should say
The dangers and changes, that him befell
On his murky course to War wolfs cell; —
For, circled safe with many a subtle charm,
Was his dark path along the forest-way;
The lamp he bore sent forth its little ray,
And sometimes showed around strange shapes of harm
Gliding beneath the trees, now close beside;
Now distant they would stand, obscurely seen
Among the old oaks’ deep-withdrawing green.

XXIII.

But the calm Druid touched th’ according string
Of the small harp he bore, with skill so true

That straight they left their shape and faithless hue!
Then voices strange would in the tempest sing,
Calling along the wind, now loud, now low,
And now, far off, would into silence go:
Seeming the very fiends of wail and woe!
Again th' enchanting chord the Druid woke,
('Twas as the seraph Peace herself had spoke,)
And hushed to silence every wizard-foe.

XXIV.

The story could unfold much more,
That the daring wanderer bore,
O'er valley and rock and starless wood,
Ere at the Sorcerer's cave he stood.
There come,' he paused; for even he, I ween,
Confessed the secret horrors of the scene.
A place like this in all the spreading bound
Of these low plains can nowhere now be found
And scarcely will it be, I fear, believed
That beetling cliffs did ever rear the head
O'er lands as wavy now as ocean's bed.
Bnt these huge rocks on rocks by might extinct were heaved.

XXV.

It was where the high trees withdrew their boughs,
And let the midnight-moon behold the scene,
That hoary cliffs unlocked their marble jaws,
And showed a melancholy cave between,
With deadly nightshade hung and aconite,
And every plant and shrub, that worketh spite;
Upon their shuddering leaves the moonlight fell
But left no silver tinges there to tell

The winning power of simple Beauty’s spell;
Nor touched the rocks, that hung in air,
With glimpse of lustre, passing fair;
A dull and dismal tinge it shed,
Such as might gleam on buried dead!
And led, as with a harbingering ray,
The Druid’s steps, where the grim Wizard lay.

XXVI.

It led his steps; but he, in silent thought,
Stood long before th’ expected cave;
For he beheld what none could brave,
Who had not yet with magic weapon fought;
He stood, the unknown cave before;
High shot the little flame he bore,
Then sunk as low, then spired again,
And gleamed throughout the Warwolf’s den;
It glanced on the harp at the Druid’s breast;
It brightened the folds of his gathered vest!
And chased the shade, that hung o’er his brow,
Bound with the sacred misletoe;
It silvered the snow of his wavy beard,
It showed the strong lines of age and care,
But the lines of Virtue mingled there,
And wisdom benignant, yet stern, appeared.

XXVII.

Long before that cave he stood,
For, hovering near,
Dark shapes of fear
Among the nightshade seemed to brood,
And watchful eyes, between the leaves

Now here, now there, portentous glare,
Direful to him, who fears and grieves,
As meteors fly
Through a troubled sky,
When the autumn thunder-storm is near.

XXVIII.

And thrice he turned him to the east,
And sprinkled the juice of the misletoe;
And thrice he turned him to the east,
And the flame he bore then changed it’s glow;
And thrice he turned him to the east,
And the flame he bore burned high, burned low.
Then a solemn strain from his harp arose;
‘Mong the leaves the watching eyes ‘gan close;
One by one, they were closed in night,
Till sunk in sleep was the Wizard’s might.
For, by his art, the Druid knew,
That Warwolf, though he lay unseen,
His deepest, darkest cave within,
Closed his eyes, when these eyes closed,
And now in deathlike swoon reposed.
And the Druid knew, that hitherto
The spell of Minstrelsy was true
But the Druid knew, that he must rue,
If the magic sound of his harping ceased
Ere his terrible task was fully done;
For Warwolf would wake, and, from spell released,
Call from their slumber the fiends it had won.

XXIX.

The Druid knew this; and he knew moreo’er,
That, the moment he trod in the Wizard’s den,
Other fiends would spring from their sleep within,
To clamour and curse, with a horrible din,
If he left not his harp at the cave’s door;
If he left it there, and the winds should deign
To call out it’s sweet and magic strain,
The strain of his harp would with theirs contend;
And if theirs were baffled, his toil would end;
If their’s should triumph, his life was o’er.
Yet he left his harp at the cavern door;
But he traced a just circle where it hung,
And high in an oak’s green branches swung.

XXX.

As now the Druid took his way
In the untried cave, where the Wizard lay,
Often he lingered and listened oft,
Still the distant harp was swelling soft;
And he paced up the cave, without dismay,
Under scowling rocks, between shaggy wails,
Where the gleam of his lamp, as it faintly falls.
Shows a frowning face, or a beckoning hand,
Or a gliding foot, or the glance of a wand.
Yet oft at a distance he sweetly hears
The joy of his harp, and he nothing fears,
Till he comes, where a light now flashed and fled,
Which darted, he knew, from the Wizard’s bed.
There opened the wall to a lofty hall,
And he viewed what must mortal heart appal.

XXXI.

Outstretched and grim on his stony bed,
All ghastly-pale, like a giant dead,
With eyes half closed the Wizard lay,
His half-shut mouth his fangs display.
The skin of a dragon unsealed was his shroud;
A rock was his bier; his watcher was Fear,
And the winds were his mourners shrill and loud,
And the caverns groaned their echoes severe.
At his couch's foot lay a wolf at length,
But harmless in sleep was his sinewy strength,
'Twas the wolf he had ridden from north to south;
All uncurled were the serpents, that bridled his mouth,
And the black, clotted stains might yet be seen
Of his yesterday's prey the teeth between.

XXXII.

The Druid approached, with caution and dread;
The Wizard was pale; but, was he dead?
Here waited the Druid his harp's sweet sound.
It's note was now changed; like a deep-drawn sigh,
He heard it's faint swell, and he heard it die;
Then knew he full well, that danger was nigh.
He often and steadfastly looked around:
No spectre appeared in the dim-seen bound!
The Druid approached, with caution and dread;
The Wizard was pale; but, was he dead?
As the Druid bent o'er that giant form,
While his lamp glared pale on the haggard brow,
And showed the huge teeth in a triple row,
He muttered the words, that will still a storm,
That can struggle with Loke and all his swarm.

XXXIII.

The mourning winds o’er vast Warwolf were still;
No breath from the Wizard’s pale lips bodes ill,
Yet could not the Druid those fangs once view,
And know the task he was bidden to do,
Without feeling his very heart-blood chill.
He hung his lamp on a sharp rock near.
He bent again o’er vast Warwolf’s bier,
And he touched one fang, with prudent fear,

XXXIV.

But, why does he start, and why does he stand
As though he saw Hela’s shadowy hand?
He has heard the shriek of his harp afar!
He has felt the glance of his evil star!
And he hastens to fold his charmed band
Round the cold damp brows of his foe.
But not all the strength of his magic might
Gan lift the head from its stony bed,
Or the strong bandage pass below,
To press the Wizard’s forehead tight;
So he laid it loosely on the brow.

XXXV.

Then he took from the rock his faithful lamp,
And sprinkled the flame on the forehead damp.
Straight the head uprose, and the lips unclosed,
And each of the terrible fangs exposed.
And now he hastened to pass the band;
He tied the knot with a shaking hand,
But tied it firm — he tied it fast,
That it might well and sure outlast
The struggle of every mighty pang.

And then he seized one hideous fang,
And threw it on the ground!
No blood escaped the wound.
Hark, to the harp's now rising sound!
He knew the fiends were fighting round it,
But he knew that his charmed circle bound it.

XXXVI.

And when he had seized the second tooth,
He thought that he heard the Wizard sigh!
The third required the strength of youth,
But he won it, and the Wizard unclosed an eye
Senseless and dim, at first, it showed,
But quickly a livid glare outspread,
Which changed to a light of enraged red,
And strongly as a furnace glowed.
But the glow died away in the livid ray;
And, touched by the spell, the eyelid fell,
Like a storm-cloud over the setting day.

XXXVII.

At the ninth drawn fang, the Wizard's hair
Rose up and began to twine and twist,
Like serpents, and like to serpents hissed!
Till it curled all on fire,
In many a spire,
And the bridle-snakes, that lay on the ground,
Began to stir, and to coil them around;
And the wolf reared up his grisly head,
And fiercely bristled his watchful ears;
His foamy jaws grinned close and red,

And a rolling fire in his eye appears,
As he looks back o’er the Wizard’s bed.

XXXVIII.

Is that the harp? or is it the wind,
Murmuring from the cave behind?
It is the wind! ‘tis not the harp!
See! Warwolf’s face grows long and sharp;
About his mouth a grim smile draws,
And the fiends know well his dire applause!
The charmed band can scarcely bear
The struggling of his writhing brow.
Watching that horrid strife, the Druid stood,
His harp’s tones answered to his fearful mood;
Then he thought of the deeds of Balder good;
He muttered the Helper song of Odin;
He faced to the frost, that has fire within;
And thrice he bowed him o’er the bier,
Sprinkling the mystic misletoe.
Now Warwolf’s fiendly smile is gone,
His brow is steadfast and severe;
Slow falls each hair to it’s dark lair,
Quenched are the fire-snakes every one.
The wolf, half-raised on his worn daws,
Stands fixed as stone, with grinning jaws
And upward eyes, as watchful still
To do his Wizard’s vengeful will;
His bridle of serpents, coiled o’er his head,
Remains, and their tongues are yet living-red;
But they dart no death, and no malice they shed;
And their hisses have ceased; for their venom is dead!

XXXIX.

Hark! hark! afar what feeble note
Begins, like dawn of day, to float?
Hark! it is the rejoicing string,
Sounding sweetly along the wind!
Never did mortal music fling
Notes so cheering, notes so kind.
The Druid hoped, yet feared and sighed,
And then again his task he plied.

XL.

Three times nine of the fangs he drew,
And the Wizard did not change his hue!
Three times three and three times nine,
And his lamp more dimly ‘gan to shine.
When he tried the very last fang of all,
Warwolf lifted an arm on high;
And faintly waved the hand,
That held the SPECTRE-WAND,
As though he would some evil Spirit call.
His arm he did but feebly ply,
Like one, who, in an agitating dream,
Mimicks some action of his waking hour,
Pursuing still his often-baffled aim,
And struggling with the wish, without the power
To chase the phantoms, that all living seem!

XLI.

The SPECTRE-WAND had lurked within
The dragon’s many-folded skin,
That was the Wizard’s shroud.
Now, firmly grasping that dread wand,
Which ne’er disowned its master’s hand,

He called on Hela loud! —
But he called Hela! once alone.
Low sunk the muttered spell;
No fiends th’ imperfect summons own,
His lifted arm down fell.
Now tried the Seer, but tried in vain,
The hateful SPECTRE-WAND to gain;
Which still vast Warwolf s fingers grasped,
As though his only hope they clasped, ‘
Till every tendon seemed to strain.

XLII.

The Druid tried to break the wand,
But, by its forceful charm secured,
And held, as if by iron hand,
The mighty struggle it endured.

In the long strife the Druid turned,
And spoke again dread Hela’s name;
The Druid’s lamp then faintly burned,
Quivered again the failing flame.
He, by the signal undismayed,
Another daring effort made:
He tried again the last strong fang:
The Wizard started at the pang,
But, though his lips moved at his will,
His wish they could not now fulfill.
The wolf, though standing fixed as stone.
Uttered one long and yelling groan;
And his kindling eyes began to stream;
Then sunk the Druid’s lamp’s last gleam!

XLIII.

Oh! what is become of the harp’s far sound?
Sadder it mourns, and yet more weak;
I hear it but faintly, faintly speak;
And I see the Druid upon the ground
In speechless alarm,
Despairing his charm; —
The last of his spells had the fiends now found?

XLIV.

Whence is the light, that ‘gins to wave?
Tis not his lamp, it’s beams are shorn.
Nor fire, nor flame, through all the cave
The Druid sees, aghast, forlorn.
But look not on the Wizard’s bier.
For, the red light is streaming there,
That threatens unknown ill;
Both, both his glaring eyes unclose!
The-hall with lurid lightning glows;
As if at Warwolf s will.
The harp, the harp! where is it’s note?
I hear no distant music float!
He tried to lift his head
From off his rocky bed,
But the charmed band was true and strong;
Vast Warwolf’s groans were loud and long,
And every mighty limb convulsive heaved.
Could I have told the horrors of his face,
The tale, too fearful, would not be believed.
Th’ astonished Druid stood some little space;
So hideous and so ghastly was the sight,
That e’en his firmness viewed it with affright;
What then he thought may ne’er be told;
But what his fate this story may unfold.

XLV.

Then lifting his eyes from off the bier,
A pallid shade confronts him near.
It surely is the form of Fear!
It has her wild red look, her spectre-eye,
Her attitude, as in the act to fly;
Her backward glance, her face of livid hue,
Her quivering lip, dropping with coldest dew;
Her breathless pause, as waiting to descry
The nameless, shapeless, harm, that must be nigh!
He waved the BRANCH of SPECTRES o'er the bier;
'Twas Hela's self — the mother of wan Fear!
The Druid knew her by that dreadful wand
And by the glimpses of her flitting band.
When he saw the berried misletoe,
Profaned to conjure deeds of woe,
Fear was subdued, indignant ire arose,
The Druid-soul, disdainful of repose,
Knew not to tamper with his Order's foes.

XLVI.

She waved it o'er the half-gone Wizard's head;
A tremour crept upon his bloodless cheek;
And see! he turns upon his rocky bed,
He moves his lips, that have not strength to speak.
She spoke: " Wake, Warwolf, from thy trance;
The phantoms of thy fate advance;
Or wake not; th' abject plain shall tell
The change, that still awaits thy spell.
The sun shall set, the moon shall rise;
Four Mid twenty hours shall go;
The sun shall set, the moon shall rise;

Then each oak of the forest dies!
For thy bones shall have rule below,”

XLVII.

With shaded eyes the Druid stood,
Wrapt in dismay and fearful thought;
But now, awaking from his mood,
The last of all his spells he wrought.
Three bands he tore from his night-woven vest,
And sprinkled the oil of his failing lamp.
The Wizard sunk on his bed in rest!
Thrice on the ground did the Prophetess stamp,
And shook her streaming hair
In dæmon-like despair,
And stretched athwart the bier her withering hand,
And, shrieking, waved three times the SPECTRE WAND.

XLVIII.

At the first shriek, dark spreading mists appear;
And, in the midst, a Spectre, trembling Fear;
A wreath of aspin quivered round her hair.
More grisly pale than the Prophetess she;
More wild and haggard face could never be.
At the next shriek, distorted Pain,
With rolling eyes, that seemed to strain,
Started along th’ affrighted ground,
With dreadful yell and fitful bound;
Even dark Hela shuddered, as he rose,
For Hela could not grant him short repose.
To the third shriek the SPECTRE-BRANOH waved high.
A dim Shape came more dread than Pain or Fear;
Fell woe was in her eye, but not one tear!

A poniard in her breast, but not one sigh!
All ghastly was her face, and yet a smile
Was wandering on, but owned no thought, the while;
Unnoticed blood distilled from her loose hair!
She spoke not, wept not, looked not— ‘twas Despair!

XLIX.

Hela, as touched by her cold hand,
Stood, when she saw these shadows rise
To the false summons of her wand,
Stood, like a wretch, who guilty dies.
“Ye come uncalled. Why are ye here?”
“We wait around vast War wolf’s bier.”
“Ye come unwelcomed. Hence, away!”
But Hela saw, with dire dismay,
Her children would no more obey.
They gathered round the Wizard’s bed,
Despair drooped mutely o’er his head,
And Hela sunk, in mist, down to the dead!

L.

Then the flame of the Druid’s lamp returned,
And as clear as the morning-light it burned,
And the harp’s triumphant sound
Lightly danced the cavern round,
And filled the vaulted roof, on high,
With the loud song of truth and joy;
Through every hollow rock it rung;
The Echoes tell not all the notes,
For ne’er before had they heard sung
Such song as now around them floats.

LI.

At the first note, round Warwolf’s bier,
The ghastly shadows disappear,
And a dark cloud began to rise,
That wrapt him from the Druid’s eyes,
Who gathered and counted the conquered fangs;
Then, thankful, from the cave he hies,
To seek the lorn place, where the cymbal clangs
Of the Wizard’s imp, as it watches his bower;
There to bury the teeth, at the magic hour.

LII.

From the mouth of the cave his harp he took,
And hung it near his grateful heart;
The wires with answering rapture shook,
And hope and courage did impart.
But its cautious master, true
To the whole task he had to do,
Bent, with tempered mind, his way,
Whither the Sorcerer’s bower lay.
Through the forest he heard afar
The cymbal’s hoarsely-clanging jar,
Till he came to a widely-spreading plain,
Then ceased the Wizard’s threatening strain;
All was still as yon setting star.
But, for the bower he looked around in vain,
Unless that giant-tree be his strange bower,
A ruin now like him, and ‘reft of power.

LIII.

In the centre it stood — a withered oak;
It’s shadow was gone, and it’s branches broke;
It’s mighty trunk, knotted all round and round.
And gnarled roots, o’erspreading the ground,
Were proofs of summers that on it had shone,
And honours of old from the tempests won,
In generations all past and gone.
And a scant foliage yet was seen,
Wreathing it’s hoary brows with green;
Like to a crown of victory,
On some old Warrior’s forehead grey.
So reverend was it’s look, it seemed to speak
Of times long buried, that had passed it by
And left it there thus desolate to sigh
To the wild winter-winds, in murmurs weak;
A spectre of the woods, shadeless and pale,
A form of vanished ages, whose dark tale
It once beheld, and seemed by fits to wail.

LIV.

Here came the Druid, with firm, silent tread,
To bury deep the fangs of Warwolf dread.
Now, by the waning Moon’s red, slanting ray,
By her long, gloomy shadows on the way,
Two circles round about the oak he traced,
And, as with measured step and slow he paced,
And Runic words of secret import drew,
The mighty lines wider and wider grew,
As watery circles o’er a lake increase;
At length they rested, where he bade them cease.
Watching the minutes of the downward moon,
He walked th’ enchanted Celtic circles duly o’er;
Dropping, at every bidden step, a fang.
One fang to every step he gave, no more,

Meanwhile his harp, unsmote, with strange notes rang!
The vast circumference he paced not soon;
One hundred and forty minute-steps past,
Ere was paced the widest circle and last;
And the pale moon, behind the forest-shade,
Sunk with a small and smaller curve of light;
O’er the wood-tops he watched her last glow fade,
Till every lingering ray was lost in night.
The hour is won! — the spell is done!
The Druid to rest in his bower is gone!

LV.

Now LISTEN AND WATCH, and you shall see
What passed around that old oak-tree.
The marvellous story must now be told
Of the ban’s last force of Warwolf bold.
When next the midnight-moon was seen,
The Druid returned to the forest green;
That forest green on yesternight,
Now mourned in all its leaves a blight!
And now were its branches shattered and bare;
Nor tree, nor bough, did the Sorcerer spare,
Dire was the hour when he waked from his swoon!
O’er all the region, far and nigh,
Far as the Druid cast his eye,
(Under the glimpses of the low-hung moon)
The lands all black and desolate lie!
But whither the Wizard his-self was fled,
And whether still living in trance, or dead,
Or what was become of his horrid den,
Were matters not readied by the Druid’s ken.
Nor cliff, nor rock, was e’er seen from that hour,
On wilds, that had owned the Sorcerer’s power;

Not an oak, or green bank, on hill or dale,
That once waved in Summer’s and Winter’s gale.

LVI.

The Druid pressed on through the lifeless wood,
Till he reached the plain, where the old oak stood.
Now listen and watch, and you shall see
What was done around that warrior tree.
Scarce could the Druid now believe,
That phantoms did not his eyes deceive,
As he looked o’er this desert land,
Far as his vision could command.
Is it the light, that mocks his sight?
Or shadows, that now the low moon throws?
What dark and mighty shapes are those,
Standing like dæmons of the night?
Nearer and nearer the Seer now goes,
Taller and taller the figures arose!
Astonished he saw, on the plain around,
In the circles he traced on the teeth-sown ground,
A hundred and forty figures stand,
A lofty and motionless giant-band!
He paused in the midst, and calmly viewed
Their strange array and their sullen mood.
High wonder filled his mind, as this he saw.
And wander still and reverential awe,
From age to age, have filled the gazer’s mind,
With sweet yet melancholy dread combined.
Stonehenge is the name of the place this day,
But what more it means no man may say.

LVII.

Who, that beholds these solid masses rude,
Could guess they ever were with life endued?
And yet, receive the marvel that I tell,
These mighty masses held the Wizard's spell!
They were his buried fangs, and upward sprung
By nerve of magic, which they yet retained,
Dilating to enormous size and shape,
While from their prison-grave they strove t' escape.
But here their effort ceased, and, wildly flung,
They in their mighty shapes have since remained.
Their effort, but not yet their power, has ceased,
Far, as the ages of the world increased,
Still with the charm of wonder they have bound
Whoever stepped in their enchanted ring,
And when the learned held the truth was found,
The daily and the nightly thought,
So long pursued, so closely caught,
Has proved a feather dropped from Fancy's wing!
And thus have two thousand ages rolled,
But the truth till now was never told!
Unsuspected it lay,
Closely hid from the day,
Till some smatterer bold
Should the secrets of Druid lore unfold.

LVIII.

The Hermit, by the wondrous vision won,
Felt not the shuddering earth, nor heard the gale
O'er the far wilderness come sweeping on,
With gathering strength and wildly sweeping yell,
Till, like some fiendly voice it burst around,
And gradual died along the hollow ground.
Then he knew it the Wizard's blast;
It was his fiercest and his last,

And came for vengeance on the Druid's head;
But with his fangs his evil power was fled.
And, when rung out the harp's rejoicing swell,
The Druid knew that all was once more well.
Then to his bowery home his steps he turned,
And slept the sleep by conscious virtue earned.
His fortitude the Wizard's spell had braved;
His patient wisdom a wide land had saved!

LIX.

From forth that day began the Druid sway
O'er all this widely stretching plain,
And hamlets few that on their border lay.
Still did the Druids long remain
In the lone desert, far from vulgar eye,
'Wrapt in high thought and solemn mystery.
The circle of the Wizard's fangs, 'tis said,
Was their great temple, where, on certain days,
In triumph for the tyrant-daemon fled,
They gathered from the country far around,
And sang, with nameless rites, their mystic lays,
Here on this rescued memorable ground.

LX.

And thus they ruled, for age succeeding age.
There is one later record; which doth spell,
But in what scroll, or rhyme, or numbered page,
Or letter black, or white, I cannot tell —
There is one record, could it now be found,
Doth spell the words which, spoken on that ground,
By the wan light of the setting moon,
When night is far past her highest noon —

Words, that make sight so strong and fine,
As will the Druids' shadowy figures show,
When in their long and stately march they go,
Around and round that mighty line,
Where yet the Wizard's fangs uprear
Their monstrous shapes upon the air.
And, as they glide those shapes between,
A beam-touched harp does sometimes shine,
Or golden fillet's glance is seen;
While long devolving robes of snow,
Wave on the wind, and round their footsteps flow.
And then are heard the wild, fantastic strains,
Which Druid-charm has left to dignify these plains.

LXI.

Such was the scene, and such are the sounds,
Linked with the history of these grounds!
Nay, 'tis said that, at this very hour,
Without aid from any words of power,
If mortal has courage to go alone
To that remote circle and count each stone,
When the midnight-moon doth silently reign
Over the pathless and desolate plain,
Gliding forms may ev'n yet be viewed,
Of lofty port and solemn mood,
Performing rites ill understood
By people of this latter day!
How this-may be I cannot say;
For nobody of these days can be found
To venture alone to that distant ground,
When the midnight moon walks over the land,
With slow, soundless step and beckoning wand,
And cold shadows following her command.

LXII.

But, not for kindly sprites alone,
Is now that haunted region known,
Since the antique Seers are gone.
‘Tis said that, sometimes, even there
Fiendish sprites will ride on the air!
To lone shepherd their forms appear.
Their forms in the tempest’s first gloom he finds;
And this is the cause that the hurrying winds
Sweep so swiftly, and moan so loud,
As o’er those haunted downs they crowd.
On the waste’s edge they gather and brood;
Then, meeting the wild fiend’s fiercest mood,
They scud o’er the desert, through clouds, through rain,
Like ship, with her storm-sail set, on the main.
While the Druids lived, these evil bands
Kept far aloof from the guarded lands.
But, when the last died, the Sorcerer’s ban
Gained part of the force, with which it began.

LXIII.

And this is the cause why corn will not spring,
Nor a bird of summer will rest his wing,
Nor will the cottager here build his home,
Nor hospitable mansion spread its dome;
Why the plain never hears merry peal,
Announcing benefactor’s weal,
Nor e’en lone bell in village tower
Knells the irrevocable hour;
Why the dead find not here a hallowed grave,
Why the bush will not bud, nor tall tree wave.
And why Salisbury steeple was built so high
As though fairies had reared it to prop the sky!

For the mischievous sprites they once came so nigh,
They threatened all the country round,
Castles and woods, and meadow-ground,
That kindly peer o’er the edge of the plain,
Like a sunny shore o’er a stormy main;
Nay, they came so near to Salisbury town,
The people within feared the walls would down.

LXIV.

Then they built a tower, as by charmed hands,
So grand, yet so simple, its airy form!
To guard the good town from all fiendish bands,
And avert the dreaded pitiless storm.
And they fenced the tower with pinnacles light,
And they traced fine openwork all around;
It is, at this day, a beautiful sight!
And they piled on the tower a spire so high,
That it looked o’er all the Sorcerer’s ground,
And almost it vanished into the sky.
So lofty a steeple the world cannot show;
Nor, drawn on the air with the truth of a line,
A form so majestic, so gracefully fine;
Nor a tower more richly adorned below,
Where fretted pinnacles attend,
The spire’s first ascent to defend,
And catch the bright purple of evening’s glow,
While, sinking in shadows, the long roofs go.
This spire, viewed by the dawn’s blue light,
Or rising darkly on the night,
As with tall black line to measure the sphere,
While stars beside it more glorious appear,
Has so holy a look, not of earth it seems,
But some vision unknown save in Fancy’s dreams

LXV.

Now this good spire thus high they made,
All the land to watch and ward,
That the ill sprites, whene’er they strayed,
To their confines might be awed.
It could see on the wide horizon’s bound
Each shade, good or bad, as it walked its round,
Whether a fairy or fiend,
Whether a foe or a friend.
It could see the procession move along
With glittering harps, in robes of white;
It could hear the responsive far-borne song
Faintly swell o’er the wide-stretched plain,
Then sink, till all was still again,
And sleeping in the dear moonlight.
So this beautiful spire did watch and wake,
And guarded the land for Innocence* sake.

LXVI.

And, at this very day,
Let but the feeblest ray,
Or gleam, of moonshine chance to fall
Over this steeple so slenderly tall,
Or but glimmer upon the trembling vane;
Though the lighted traveller on the plain,
While he perceives it faintly shine,
Peering over upland downs afar, —
Though he hails it for the morning-star,
Yet all too well the warning sign
Know the bands of the Wizard’s line!
Soon as they spy its watching eye,
Whether by moonlight, or by morn,
Sullen they sigh, and shrink and fly,

Where sun, or moonbeam, never warn.
So this beautiful spire does watch and wake,
And still guards the land for Innocence’ sake.

SHAKSPEARE’S CLIFF .

HERE, all along the high sea cliff,
Oh, how sweet it is to go!
When Summer lures the light-winged skift
Over the calm expanse below, —

And tints, with shades of sleepy blue,
Misty ocean’s curving shores;
And with a bright and gleaming hue,
Dover’s high embattled towers.

How sweet to watch the blue haze steal
Over the whiteness of yon sail;
O’er yon fair cliffs, and now conceal
Boulogne’s walls and turrets pale!
Oh! go not near that dizzy brink,
Where the mossed hawthorn hangs its root.
To look how low the sharp crags sink,
Before the tide they overshoot.

Nor listen for their hollow sound —
Thou canst not hear the surges mourn,
Nor see how high the billows bound
Among the caves their rage has worn.

Yet, yet forbear! thou canst not spring,
Like fay, from off this summit high,
And perch upon the outstretched wing
Of the sea-mew passing by,

And safely with her skirt the clouds;
Or, sweeping downward to the tide,
Frolic amid the seaman’s shrouds,
Or on a bounding billow ride.

Ah! no; all this I cannot do;
Yet I will dare the mountain’s height,
Seas and shores and skies to view,
And cease but with the dim daylight.

For fearful-sweet it is to stand
On some tall point ‘tween earth and heaven,
And view, far round, the two worlds blend,
And the vast deep by wild winds riven.

And fearful-sweet it is to peep
Upon the yellow strands below,
When on their oars the fishers sleep,
And calmer seas their limits know.

And bending o’er this jutting ridge,
To look adown the steep rock’s sides,
From crag to crag, from ledge to ledge,
Down which the samphire-gatherer glides.

Perhaps the blue-bell nods its head,
Or poppy trembles o’er the brink,
Or there the wild-briar roses shed
Their tender leaves of fading pink.
Oh fearful-sweet it is, through air
To watch their scattered leaves descend,
Or mark some pensile sea-weed dare
Over the perilous top to bend,

And, joyous in its liberty,
Wave all its playful tresses wide,
Mocking the death, that waits for me,
If I but step one foot aside.

Yet I can hear the solemn surge
Sounding long murmurs on the coast;
And the hoarse waves each other urge,
And voices mingling now, then lost.

The children of the cliffs I hear,
Free as the waves, as daring too;
They climb the rocky ledges there,
To pluck sea-flowers of humble hue.

Their calling voices seem to chime;
Their choral laughs rise far beneath;
While, who the dizziest point can climb,
Throws gaily down the gathered wreath.

I see their little upward hands,
Outspread to catch the falling flowers,
While, watching these, the little bands
Sing welcomes to the painted showers.

And others scramble up the rocks,
To share the pride of him, who, throned
On jutting crag, at danger mocks,
King of the cliffs and regions round.

Clinging with hands and feet and knee,
How few that envied height attain!
Not halfway up those urchins, see,
Yet ply their perilous toil in vain.

Fearless their hero sports in air,
A rival almost of the crows,
And weaves fresh-gathered blossoms there,
To bind upon his victor-brows.

The broad sea-myrtle glossy bright,
Mixed with the poppy's scarlet bell,
And wall-flowers, dipt in golden light,
Twine in his sea-cliff coronal.

The breeze has stolen his pageant-crown;
He leans to mark how low it falls;
Oh, bend not thou! lest, headlong down,
Thou paint'st with death these fair sea-walls!

Now, o'er the sky's concave I glance,
Now o'er the azure deep below,
Now on the long-drawn shores of France,
And now on England's coast I go,

To where old Beachy's beaked head,
High peering in the utmost West,
Bids the observant seaman dread,
Lest he approach his guarded rest.

What fairy hand hangs loose that sail
In graceful fold of sunny light?
Beneath what tiny figures move,
Traced darkly on the wave's blue light?

It is the patient fisher's sloop,
Watching upon the azure calm;

They are his wet sea-boys, that stoop,
And haul the net with bending arm.

But on this southern coast is seen,
From Purbeck hills to Dover piers,
No foam-tipt wave so clearly green,
No rock so dark as Hastings rears.

How grand is that indented bay,
That sweeps to Romney's sea-beat wall,
Whose marshes slowly stretch away,
And slope into some green hill small.

Now North and East I bend my sight
To where the flats of Flanders spread;
And now where Calais cliffs are bright,
Made brighter by the sunset red.
Shows not this towering point so high
To him, who in mid-channel sails;
For the slant light from western sky
Ne'er on its awful front prevails.

But mark! on *this* cliff Shakspeare stood,
And waved around him Prospers wand,
When straight from forth the mighty flood
The Tempest "rose, at his command!"

THE FISHERS .

STEEPHILL.

BEHOLD this rocky bay! On either hand
Cliffs dark and frantic rise and stretch away
To yon bold promontories, East and West,
Hanging amid the clouds; that shut out all,
Save seas and skies and sails dim-moving on
Th’ horizon’s edge, and the rough boat, that skirts,
With slow and wary course, this ruinous strand.
Far ‘mong the waves, are shown gigantic limbs
Of these stem shores, whose outpost Terror is,
Whose eyes look down on desolation, pain,
Shipwreck and death. Yet, half way up the rocks,
And scarce beyond the salt spray’s reach, when storms
Of winter beat, perched where the sea-mew rests
In sunbeam, a low fisher’s cabin peeps
From its green sheltering nook. Wild mountainous shrubs
Hang beetling o’er it, and such flowers as grow
On rocky ledges, brought by the unseen
Air, messengers from *off* some fertile hill
Or dale, or haply from far forest’s side;
The scarlet poppy and the blue corn-flower,
The wild rose and the purple bells, that chime
In th’ evening breeze to the poor woodlark’s notes.
Full to the South, the fisher’s cottage peeps,
And overlooks how many lonely leagues
Of ocean, sleeping in its summer haze
Of downy blue, or green, or purple, shades,
Charming the heart to musing and sweet peace!
How solemn, when our autumn’s moon goes down,
And walks in silence on the farthest waves,
(Then sinks, leaving brief radiance in the air,)

To measure out a few short moments here,
By the sad, dying glow!

But sweet, O then, most sweet I when the clear dawn
Of Jane breaks on, and blesses the horizon.
In Holy stillness it dispels the shades
Of night, appearing like the work sublime
Of Goodness, — a meek emblem of the JUST
And LIVING GOD! Bending our heads with awe
And grateful adoration, we exclaim —
“FATHER OF LIGHT! Thou art *our* Father too;
We are Thy creatures; and these glorious beams
Attest, that in THY GOODNESS we are made
For bliss eternal.”

There stands the fisher’s hut, and close beside,
A mountain-stream winds round the mossed platform,
Singing wild lullaby to the wailing surge,
As ‘mid resisting brakes and massy crags,
It seeks a passage to the shore below.
There, hauled above the reach of flowing tides
And the high-abounding spray, the seaboat rèsts,
Huge, sturdy, heavy, almost round, and formed
For labour and hard strife with the rough sea;
About the fisher’s cot, from crag to crag,
His nets hang round in many a graceful sweep,
‘Midst his long lines and treacherous baits and hooks.
Beside his door, the aged fisher weaves
New meshes for his sons, and sends, at times,
A look far o’er the ocean, where the beam
O’ the west falls brightest, for the adventurers,
Who yester-mom went forth, and all night long
Watched patient on the waters, and all day
Have hauled the net, or laboured at the oar.
More fearful roves his eye, as sinks the sun,

While sad he marks September’s stormy cloud
Fire all the West, and tip with crimson hues,
Though less resplendent, ev’n the nearer waves
While the broad flush tinges his silver locks
And his brown visage and his garments blue.
Anxious, he throws aside th’ unfinished web,
And climbs the higher crag, and thence afar,
Turning the western cape, he sees the glance
Of oars withdrawing, and the square sail set
And swelling to the breeze. With struggling toil
The poor bark seeks its home, ere night and tempest
Meet on the billows. While she thus, scarce known,
Alternate rides the ridge and then is lost
Below the shelving wave, widely they steer
Athwart the dangerous surge, though not that, way
Lies their dear home; but well they know where lurk
The rocks unseen, and where the currents flow.
Suddenly drops the sail, and now again
This way they bend, while, as they ply once more
The oars, just heard, and turn, with scrupulous eyes,
To view their narrow course, a faint ray shows
Their sun-burnt features and their ragged locks,
Beneath the sea-worn hat. Nearer sow they move.
And now scarce lift the oar, so cautiously
They creep along the strand, and wind their way
Among its half-seen rocks.

Stays the old fisher on the high crag now?
No; yonder down the steep path slow he steps,
And his wave-faring children hails afar.
Meanwhile upon the beach, patient And cold,
Stands the poor horse, with drooping head and eyes
Half-shut, and panniers all too wide and deep,
Waiting the cargo, that his master, tired
And sauntering on the water’s edge, shall bring;

Then must he bear it up high cliffs and hills,
To the for vale, where lies some peopled town.
Now slowly grounds the skiff, and the glad fishers,
Mounting the beach, the bended grapple cast.
“What luck? what luck? my boys!”
“Good luck, my father!”
And forth they pour the treasure of the main,
With many a scaly form unshapely, strange!
The dog-fish monstrous, with his high, round back,
And look voracious. Oh! ill-named is he,
After man’s careful, tender, faithful friend!
The spotted Seston, dragon-like, with wings
And jaws terrific; and the giant skate.
Then dark-mailed forms, that die in torture wild,
Unfitted, therefore, for the feast of man,
To whom abundant *guiltless* food is given.
And last, a shape, the fairy of the wave,
Clad in transparent tints of silver comes.
But see where the last gleam of the day’s sun,
Far from behind that western promontory,
Slants ‘thwart the deep curve of this shaded bay,
Tinges yon headland of the eastern shore,
And goes in stillness down on the fair waves,
Seeming to say, “Children of Time, farewell Î
Your course draws nearer to Eternity;
Even thus must fade your glory in this world
But sure as dark shades of the night lead on
To morning, the sun-set of earthly life
Leads to the dawn of an eternal day: —
Think of THAT DAWN!”

Now doth the aged fisher mutely watch,
While his stout sons fling o’er their shoulders broad
Deep osier baskets hung with pebbles round;
Then, wrapt in his blue mantle, stalks away,

Beneath the dark cliffs beetling o’er the sea,
To those low rocks, that stretch, point after point,
Far out amid the tide, crowned with black moss.
There, in the waves, safe from rapacious force,
And from the eye of plunderer close concealed,
He leaves his treasure, for tomorrow’s care;
Then hies he homeward. There, amidst the friends
He loves, reposes. All last night, he watched
Upon the rocking main; the arching sky
His sole, cold roof; the stars his only guides
Through the vast shadow of the lonely deep!
This night, how calm his dream, how sweet his sleep,
In the safe shelter of his cabin small,
With his glad family round him hush’d in peace!

IN THE NEW FOREST .

WANDERER! if thy path bend o’er these lawns
And forest-lands, stay thy rejoicing steps —
Though they would fain bound with yon fawns and hinds
Down the green slope, and skim the level turf
To other slopes, and other pluming groves, —
Stay thy intemperate spirit, and mark well
Each beauty of the scene, and the strong lights
And stormy sunshine, that fall o’er these shades!
Pause thou awhile, that, in some future hour,
When the long sunless storm of winter broods,
And thou sitt’st lonely by thy evening hearth,
In melancholy twilight, listening
The far-off tempest, — then sweet Memory
May come, and with her mirror cheer thy mind,
On whose bright surface lovelier scenes shall live
Than any shrined within Italian climes;
And every graceful form and shaded hue,
As now it lives, again shall smile before thee:
For England, beauteous England, scarce can boast,
Through her green vales and plains and wavy hills,
Another landscape of such sylvan grace.

‘Twas surely here, that Shakspeare dreamt of fays,
And in these shades Titania held her court.
And bade her tiny bands in starlight revel.
Those tufts of oak, that crown the swelling lawn,
Those were her shady halls at high moon-tide;
And yon light ash her summer-night pavilion,
Lighted by dewdrops and the flickering blaze,
That glances from the high electric north.
Where’er the groves retire and meadows rise,
There were her carpets spread, of various tints

From turf and amorous lichen, all combined
With soft flowers and transparent azure-bells,
On whose pure skin their purple veins appear.
And over all these hues a veil is thrown
Of silvery dew, oft lighted by the moon.
Temper thy joyous spirit, wanderer!
And ‘gainst the wintry hour, when thorns alone
Hold forth their berries, cull sweet summer-buds.
Then shall the deep gloom vanish, the storm sink!
The balmy air of woods shall soothe thy sense,
And their broad leaves thy landscape canopy,
E’en in December’s melancholy day!

And now bound with those fawns down the green slope,
Skim the smooth turf to other hills and groves,
In the full joy of sunshine and new hopes.

ON A FIRST VIEW OF THE GROUP CALLED THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN S

IN THE APPROACH TO COLOGNE FROM XANTEN.

WHEN first I saw ye, Mountains, the broad sun
In cloudy grandeur sunk, and showed, far off,
A solemn vision of imperfect shapes
Crowding the southward sky and stalking on
And pointing us “the way that we should go.”
Dark thunder-mists dwelt on ye; and your forms,
Obscurely towering, stood before the eye,
Like some strange thing portentous and unknown.
I watched the coming storm. The sulphurous gloom
Clung sullenly round me, and a dull tinge
Began to redden through these mournful shades.
A low imperfect murmur o’er ye rolled.
Doubtful, I listened. On the breathless calm
Again I heard it — then, ye Mountains vast,
Amid the tenfold darkness ye withdrew,
And vanished quite, save that your high tops smoked,
And from your clouds the arrowy lightnings burst,
While peals resistless shook the trembling world! —

A SECOND VIEW OF THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS .

MOUNTAINS! when next I saw ye it was Noon,
And Summer o’er your distant steeps had flung
Her veil of misty light: your rock-woods hung
Just green and budding, though in pride of June,

And pale your many-spiring tops appeared,
While, here and there, soft tints of silver grey
Marked where some jutting cliff received the ray;
Or long-lived precipice its brow upreared.

Beyond your tapering pinnacles, a show
Of other giant-forms more dimly frowned,
Hinting the wonders of that unknown ground,
And of deep wizard-vales, unseen below.
Thus, o’er the long and level plains ye rose
Abrupt and awful, when my raptured eye
Beheld ye. Mute I gazed! ‘Twas then a sigh
Alone could speak the soul’s most full repose;

For of a grander world ye seemed the dawn,
Rising beyond where Time’s tired wing can go,
As, bending o’er the green Rhine’s liquid lawn,
Ye watched the ages of the world below.

ON ASCENDING A HILL CROWNED WITH A CONVENT, NEAR BONN .

UP the mossed steeps of this round hill we climbed,
Tracking amid close woods our doubtful way;
When, high above, the lonely vesper chimed
On the still hour of the declining day.
We paused to listen, and to taste awhile
The pure air scented with the bruised herb;
And catch the distant landscape’s parting smile,
Ere the light breeze the shadowy boughs disturbed.
“Oh verdant foliage! in your dancing play,
Hide not those soft blue lines, that northward swell,
And of far mountain-regions faintly tell!
Wrap not in your high shades those turrets grey,
That rear themselves above the Rhine’s broad flood,
Where the slow bark, with wide, outstretched wings,
Her lengthening shadow o’er the waters flings.”
Onward we pass amid the closing wood,
Till, once again emerging from the night,
O’er a near ridge of darkest pine we spy
The peaks of eastward mountains, peering high;
Touched with gay colours and with sunshine bright,
They draw clear lines on the transparent sky,
And lift their many-tinctured forms of light!

With weary step a convent’s porch we found.
What music met us on that holy ground,
Swelling the song of peace and praise to HIM,
Who clad with glory all the prospect round!
Our full hearts echoed back the grateful hymn.
A turret’s utmost height at length we gain,
And stand as on a point above the world,

Viewing the heaven’s vast canopy unfurled,
And the great circle’s widely-spreading line
Sink low, and softly into light decline.
There, in far distance, on the western plain,
Thy spires, Cologne, gleamed to the setting ray:
Thy useless ramparts and thy turrets grey
Hinted where still the cowled city lay.
Oh melancholy walls! unlike the view,
That the sweet poet of Vauclusa drew,
When, wreathed with flowers, thy maidens fair advance,
With choral songs and steps of airy dance,
And to the Rhine’s fleet wave, on summer’s eve,
Their blooming garlands and their sorrows give.

How changed the scene! Now paler forms appear.
Wrapt in black garments and with brow severe;
And, as with shaded eyes they stalk along,
Receive poor homage from the passing throng.
Oh melancholy walls! always, as now,
Be seen at distance on the landscape’s brow!

That stretching landscape various shades o’erspread,
Of yellow corn and bowery vineyards green;
There the brown orchard reared its tufted head,
And there the Rhine’s long-winding light was seen,
With castles crowned was its rocky shore,
And famed for dismal tales in early lore.
Northward, the for Westphalian lands withdrew,
Line above line, in level tints of blue;
While to the West, where forest hills extend,
The long perspective lifts a pomp of shade,
Mellowed with evening lights, where sweetly blend
Convents and spires, as if for peace-marks made.
Such were the scenes, that from the falling sun,
(When he his bright and blessed course had run)

Threw their long shadows, mourners of past day,
And then in stillness slept beneath his ray.
But other scenes a holier homage paid,
Where, eastward, pointing up the heavenly way,
Above the thunder's cloud and cloud of Time,
Those everlasting mountains stand sublime,
And to the sun's CREATOR lift the head!
Steadfast upon the Rhine's tumultuous shore,
Ye listened, Mountains, to the distant roar,
The battle-shout of nations now no more.
Ye viewed the suns of centuries go down,
And smiled, as now, beneath their farewell beam;
Ye saw the thunder-storms of ages gleam,
The elemental and the human frown,
And heard afar the mingled strife pass by
Into the silence of Eternity!
Unchanged amid the ever-changing scene,
A» in the world's first dawn, ye still appear,
With beauty bright, majestic, young, serene,
Clothed in the colours of the various year.
While rainbow-colours indistinctly lay
On the lone summits, till, in slow decay,
They seemed like far-hung clouds on Evening's pall,
Just purpled with a melancholy ray;
While dark we saw the mountain-shadows fall,
And steal the valleys and the woods away!
Then all in paleness came the twilight-star,
And, pensive, seemed to bend upon the West;
As though she watched th' expiring sun afar,
And bade, with tearful smile, his spirit rest!
Oh! then how sweetly and how solemn rose
The requiem-strains, that, in the parting hour,
Beneath the sacred roof responses pour;
While all without was hushed in deep repose.
The air's soft breathings scarce were heard to die,
Save when among the braided vines it crept,

And waked the quivering tendril with its sigh.
Thus earth and air their hour of slumber kept!
All but the stars! Slumbering too long in light,
They now through shade their opening eyes reveal,
In trembling glances, to their empress — Night,
Keeping high watch till forth the Morning steal,
From adverse darkness. Self-supported, great,
Ye, tranquil ‘mid the louring storms of fate,
Rise, like the honest mind, in the dread hour,
When stern Adversity tries Virtue’s power: —
Thus ye, distinguished through the fearful gloom,
A steadfast strength and brighter mien assume.
Thus, ‘mid the changing lights, that life pervade,
May we, like you, assailing clouds dispel —
Grateful in sunshine — steadfast in the shade!
Farewell! ye awful monitors, farewell!

THE SNOW-FIEND .

HARK! to the Snow-Fiend’s voice afar
That shrieks upon the troubled air!
Him by that shrilly call I know —
Though yet unseen, unfelt below —
And by the mist of livid grey,
That steals upon his onward way.
He from the ice-peaks of the North
In sounding majesty comes forth;
Dark amidst the wondrous light,
That streams o’er all the northern night.
A wan rime through the airy waste
Marks where unseen his car has past;
And veils the spectre-shapes, his train,
That wait upon his vengeful reign.
Disease and Want and shuddering Fear
Danger and Woe and Death are there.
Around his head for ever raves
A whirlwind cold of misty waves. —
But oft, the parting surge between,
His visage, keen and white, is seen;
His savage eye and paly glare.
Beneath a helm of ice appear;
A snowy plume waves o’er the crest,
And wings of snow his form invest.
Aloft he bears a frozen wand;
The ice-bolt trembles in his hand;
And ever, when on sea he rides,
An iceberg for his throne provides.
As, fierce, he drives his distant way,
Agents remote his call obey,
From half-known Greenland’s snow-piled shore
To Newfoundland and Labrador;

O’er solid seas, where nought is scanned
To mark a difference from land,
And sound itself does but explain
The desolation of his reign;
The moaning querulous and deep,
And the wild howl’s infuriate sweep
Where’er he mores, some note of woe
Proclaims the presence of the foe;
While he, relentless, round him flings
The white shower from his flaky wings.
Hark! ‘tis his voice: — I shun his call,
And shuddering seek the blaring hall.
O ! speak of mirth; O! raise the song!
Hear not the fiends, that round him throng!
Of curtained rooms and firesides tell,
Bid Fancy work her genial spell,
That wraps in marvel and delight
December’s long tempestuous night;
Makes courtly groups in summer bowers
Dance through pale Winter’s midnight hours
And July’s eve its rich glow shed
On the hoar wreath, that binds his head;
Or knights on strange adventure bent,
Or ladies into thraldom sent;
Whatever gaiety ideal
Can substitute for troubles real.
Then let the storms of Winter sing,
And his sad veil the Snow-Fiend fling,
Though wailing lays are in the wind,
They reach not then the ‘tranced mind;
Nor murky form, nor dismal sound
May pass the high, enchanted bound!

AN ANCIENT BEECH-TREE. IN THE PARK AT KNOLE.

THE WOODLAND NYMPH.

DOWN in yon glade, that points to the red West,
O’erhung with ancient groves, whose shadows fall
So darkly on the ground, that the green moss
Is hardly known beneath them in yon glade,
Just where the trees irregularly part
In long perspective, and an evening scene
Of sylvan grandeur glimmers, stands a beech,
Like some gigantic sentinel, advanced
On watch to guard the pass to sacred haunts.
Approach, and let thy nobler mind prevail;
And, as thine eye measures its form, its large
Grey limbs upstretching in the air, among
The pendent, rich, luxuriant foliage,
Over the silvery rind, moss-mottled, showing
Like gleams of light ‘mid their green shadows; if
Grace and grandeur ever touched thine heart, adore
And weep — weep tears of deep delight, and tears
Of gratitude, that thou canst weep such tears!

If thou would’st see in full magnificence
This canopy, most surely the domain
Of some lone Dryad, — come when Evening casts
Her yellow light, and gives its lower shades
Their most luxuriant tinge; speak not, but watch
And thou ‘lt see haply at this dewy hour
The Nymph of this deep shade ‘rise from her sleep.
The scared hind, bounding athwart the glades,
Springs not so lightly, nor so graceful turns,

When, listening to the step, that startles her,
She bends her slender neck and branched head
And shows her dark eyes, bright and innocent.

Oh, Nymph of graces, playful as these boughs,
When gentle airs play o'er them, thee I know,
And have, at eve, beheld thy dance of joy
In the proud shade, that shields thee from the storm,
And guards thy slumbers from the summer rain.
Thy noontide slumbers, top, I have beheld,
And the high canopy of boughs bespread,
When, laid in peace upon the twilight moss,
Where the green shadows deep and coolest fall,
Thy fairy court watched round thee — court of Elves,
That dwell upseen within the hollow leaves
Or inmost foliage, rocked by summer sighs.
These have I seen around thy mossy couch,
Fanning thy slumber with long leaves of lilies,
Scattering the white bells in thy twisted hair,
And binding each dark lock with wreaths of flowers.
Thy footsteps trod the tender hyacinth,
Blue and transparent as the light of Morn,
The dark-eyed violet, that weeps perfume,
The wild-rose tinted with the Dawn's first blush,
And sparkling with the tears and smiles she shed,
When, scattered from her hand, it fell to earth.

This ancient beech, this sylvan wonder, triumphs
Over the oak, whose spreading pomp has crowned him
King o' the woods; but his magnificence
Is rude and heavy, — while this lonely beech,
With all its wealth of green, transparent shadows,
(A graceful hill of leaves in the blue air,)
Still must be hailed the hero of the forest!

SEA-VIEWS .

MIDNIGHT.

CAROLLING sweetly to the midnight gale
Above the strife of waves, his voice is heard —
The sea-boy’s voice, who, on some top-sail yard,
Bows with the mast, and hangs amid the clouds,
Or sweeps the salt foam from the billow’s ridge,
And mocks its fury. Far around he sees,
Beneath the night-gloom, ocean’s wondrous fires
Flashing from surge to surge — a “boding light,
That seems the spirit of the troubled realm.
Palely it gleams, though bright, now near, now distant,
Shapeless, though visible — though threatening, mute:
Still, sweet he carols on the dizzy cap.
Anon, he hears the storm-bird’s slender cry,
And scarcely marks her flitting round and round
And sheltering in the shrouds. Oh, fearful bird!
Herald of warring winds! *he heeds thee not;*
Nor yet those hollow sounds from strand unseen;
Nor e’en those sullen lights among the clouds.
Whose hue they show more livid; for, behold!
Like to a star, which in th’ horizon dawns,
There gleam those guiding, ever watchful fires,
Placed on some low peninsula’s long line,
Or on some promontory’s pointed horn,
And spied far on the solitary waves
By the poor mariner, who, rocked upon
His dark and billowy cradle, thinks of home,
His little cabin, sheltered by the cliff,
His blazing hearth, bright through the casement seen,
And all the dear-loved faces shining round;
And knows the smiles of welcome ambushed there.

Still cheerly sings the watch-boy; down he goes
Through gasping seas; now driving down the gulph,
Now rising light in air; while nearer roll
The thunders of the shore, reverbed from cates
Surge-worn, and cliffs high arching o'er the tide.
But now the plunging lead is heard, and now
The sullen voice of one below calls out
The sounded fathoms; then the master bids
His last sail furl; for wellknown sands are nigh,
And louder sweeps the gale. At last, he *nears*
Those friendly beacon fires, the level line
Of distance changes for the rugged shores,
Whose tops the horizontal twilight mark;
Soon they rise up more bold, solemn, distinct;
And wide unfolds the hospitable bay,
On whose deep margin spreads the wished-for port,
With many dim lamps quivering in the blast.
No joyful shout hails th' approaching crew;
For Sleep has waved his potent wand on high!
The lonely pier receives them; on they steer
For quiet depth, and gradually steal
Into the silent harbour — silent save
The drowsy rippling of the faint sea-tide,
Or when the watch-dog, on some neighbouring deck,
His honest vigil barks, as strangers pass.
And now each heart beats joyfully, as drops
The ready anchor; busy footsteps sound;
Loud swells the mingled voice; the narrow plank
Is hoisted and extends a tottering bridge,
That bears them to the quay; there, bounding light
Once more they press the firm earth, and once more
Each to his long-left home in safety goes.
Dark is the way and silent; yet awhile

And an awakening voice shall call up hope,
And all the poor man’s wealth, the wealth of heart!

TO THE SWALLOW .

O HAPPY bird! thy gay return I hail;
For now I see young Spring, with all her train
Of sports and joys, borne on the western gale,
And hear afar her sweetly warbling strain.

Once more the opening clouds shall now disclose
The heaven's blue vault — the sun's all-cheering ray;
The vales, once more, in tender green repose,
The violet wake beneath the breath of May.

O happy bird! how playful and how light
Thy circling pinions skim the upward air;
Exulting, gay and playful in thy flight,
Companion of the Summer season fair!
Yet? while I welcome thee, and wish thee long,
I sigh to think that ere the Autumn fade
Thou 'It seek, in other climes, a vernal song,
More gentle gales and renovated shade.

Ev'n now I see thee on the light clouds soar,
And melt in distant aether from my view;
As laughing Summer, to the western shore,
Over the seas Biscayan you pursue.
Thy policy to us, ah! dost thou lend?
Flies thus, with gay prosperity — the friend?

FOREST LAWNS .

OH, forest lawns! — Oh, lawns of tender green,
That spread in sunshine, crowned with copsy groves,
Or, winding in deep glades, retire among
The shades of ages, my glad steps receive!
Oh! let me, with your fawns, bound o’er these slopes,
Fresh with the dew, that melts apace before
The morning ray, leaving long level lines
Of hoary silver, ‘mid the various hues
Of lichen, turf and mead-flower. Let me seek,
With tempered pace and reverential thought,
Your far seen solitudes and deepest gloom,
And often note the monarch of the woods
In pious wonder. Oh, ye stem-browed oaks,
That raise your giant arms on all the scene,
How like your parent Druids ye appear!
Lonely, severe and in your grandeur dark,
Your fearful shades, like superstitious night,
Fall on the awe-struck spirit! —— —
Steadfast ye stand, and ever silent, save
Unto the potent, unknown winds, that shake
Your grey tops, when a voice of plaint is heard.
The traveller, listening this, at eventide,
Thinks ‘tis the voice of one departed hence,
Prophet of evil, warning him of death!
Then to his fancy lours, with deeper gloom,
The cloud, which sheds a pale and ghastly light
Upon the woods. He pauses oft, and back
Through the long forest-glades marks the last gleam
The sun has left, for in the lonely West;
While shapes uncertain seem to glide athwart
The twilight vista, and approach his path;

The hollow murmur swells upon his ear!
And, shuddering then, he takes his onward way.

How oft, ye Druid oaks! —
Your voice has sounded, in a distant age,
To him, who hears no more; and now it speaks
In the same tone to him, who then was not —
The passing traveller of the living hour!
Thus, ever and anon, it sounds the knell
Of fleeting, swift mortality!

ON THE RONDEA U

“JUST LIKE LOVE IS YONDER ROSE.”

No, ah! no; not jnst like love,
Is you gay and conscious rose;
‘ All its flaunting leaves disclose
Sunshine joy — and fearless prove;
Not like love!

But yonder little violet-flower,
That, folded in its purple veil,
And trembling to the lightest gale,
Weeps beneath that shadowing bower,
Is just like love!

Though filled with dew its closing eyes,
Though bends its slender stem in air,
It breathes perfume and blossoms fair,
It feeds on tears, and lives on sighs,
Just like love!
And should a sunbeam kiss its leaf,
How bright the dewdrops would appear!
Like beams of hope upon a tear,
Like light of smiles through parting grief!
And just like love

DECEMBER’S EVE,

ABROAD.

AWFUL is Winter’s setting sun,
When, from beneath a sullen cloud,
He eyes his dreary course now run,
And shrinks within his lurid shroud —

Leaving to Twilight’s cold, grey sky
Yon Minster’s dark and lonely tower,
That seems to shun the searching eye,
And vanish with the parting hour.

Dim is the long roofs sloping line,
Whose airy pinnacles I trace,
Point over point, and o’er the shrine
And eastern window’s gothic grace.
While load the winds, in chorus clear,
Swell, or in sinking murmurs grieve,
The Ministers of Night I hear
In requiem o’er December’s Eve.

Wide o’er the plains and distant wolds
I see her pall of darkness flow;
And all around, in mighty folds,
Her winding sheet of new-fallen snow.

Farewell December’s dismal night I
Appalled I hear thy shrieking breath;
And view, aghast by glimmering light,

Thy visage, terrible in death!
Farewell December’s dismal night!

DECEMBER’S EVE,

AT HOME.

WELCOME December’s cheerful night,
When the taper-lights appear;
When the piled hearth blazes bright,
And those we love are circled there!

And, on the soft rug basking lies,
‘Outstretched at ease, the spotted friend,
With glowing coat and half-shut eyes,
Where watchfulness and slumber blend.

Welcome December’s cheerful hour,
When books, with converse sweet combined,
And music’s many-gifted power
Exalt, or soothe th’ awakened mind.
Then, let the snow-wind shriek aloud,
And menace oft the guarded sash,
And all his diapason crowd,
As o’er the frame his white wings dash.

He sings of darkness and of storm,
Of icy cold, and lonely ways;
But, gay the room, the hearth more warm,
And brighter is the taper’s blaze.

Then, let the merry tale go round,
And airy songs the hours deceive;
And let our heart-felt laughs resound,
In welcome to December’s Eve!

A SEA-VIEW .

A BREEZE is springing up. Mark yon grey cloud,
That from th* horizon piles it’s Alpy steeps
Upon the sky; there the fierce tempest rides.
Our vessel owns the gale, and all her sails
Are full; the broad and slanted deck cuts with i edge
The foaming waves, that roll almost within it,
And often bow their curling tops, as if
In homage. Not so the onward billows;
For while, with steady force, the vexing prow
Flings wide the groaning waters, high rise they,
Darting their dragon-headed vengeance: now
Baffled they burst on either side with rage,
And dash their spray in the hard seaman’s face.
The gale is rising: and the roughening waves
Show darker shades of green, with, here and there,
Far out, white foamy tops, that rise and fell
Incessant. Storm-lights, issuing from the clouds,
Mark distances upon the mighty deep;
There, in one gleam, a white sail scuds along —
Farther, those vessels seem to hang in shade;
And, farther still, on the last edge of ocean,
Where fells a paler, mistier sun-light,
See where some port-town peeps above the tide,
With its long, level ramparts, turret-crowned;
There a broad tower and there a slender spire
Stand high upon the light, while all between,
Of intermingled roofs, embattled gates,
Quays, ancient halls and smoking chimneys, — sunk
Low, and all blended in one common mass,
Are undiscerned so far. There, all is calm;
The waters slumber; the anchored keels repose;
And not a top-mast trembles; —

While here the chafing billows mount the deck
Dash through the sturdy shrouds, and with their foam
Buffet the braced sail. Toward that port
Our vessel steers, which from the seas and winds
May soon receive us. —— —
But ah! while yet we gaze, the vision fades!
The high-piled ramparts, overtopped with turrets,
Vanish in shade before the searching eye,
Which nought but waves and sky can trace o'er all
The lone horizon! So on Calabria's shore,
Where the old Reggio spreads its walls
Beside the sea, the fairy's wand, at eve,
Is lifted — and behold! far on the waters,
Another landscape rise! Wood-mantled steeps
And shadowy mountains soar, and turrets from
Some promontory's point hang o'er the vale,
Where sleeps among its palms the hamlet low,
Hid from the bustling, ostentatious world,
Deep in the bosom of this silent scene.

Ah! beauteous work of Fairie! that can paint

Unreal visions to th' admiring eye,
Charming it with distinct, though faithless forms.
The magic sceptre dropt, behold, they vanish!
A desert world of water's only there!

*

And thus th' enchantress on the daily path
Of Youth attends, known only by her power
Unseen, and conjures up Hope, Joy and Bliss,
To dance in the fresh bowers of fadeless spring.
At Reason's touch the airy dream dissolves;

We gaze, and wonder at such wild delusion,
Yet weep its loss, and court its forms again.
Hail, beauteous scenes of Fairie, Fancy’s world!
Where Truth, so cold and colourless, comes not,
Or far away in lonely grandeur stands,
Like the great snowy Alps, whose cloudy shapes
And aspect stem (deforming the horizon),
Make the still landscape, spread below, appear
More green, more gay, more cheering to our view.
Hail, beauteous scenes of Fairie, Fancy’s world!
And now, as if the spell had worked again,
The stormy shade far distant floats away.
Again the spired city shines in light,
Peering beyond the waves, here shadowed yet
By the lingering storm. The pier outstretches
Its arm to meet us, and the lighthouse shows
Its column, and we see the lanthorn high,
Suspended o’er the margin of the tidé,
The star of the night-wandering mariner.
Hail, cheering port, first vision of the land,
Vision, but not illusion, hail again!

HAYLEY’S LIFE OF COWPER .

OH speak no more of Fiction’s painted woes!
Her laboured scenes are colourless and cold;
Her high-wrought sorrows are but dull repose,
Beside the tale that simple Truth has told.

O’er the sad Poet dead shall Pity weep,
Weep tears of anguish, such as mothers shed
O’er the poor infant, when its paling lip
Moves with a last faint smile; when droops the head,

And the imploring eyes look up once more
To her, whose fondness can no aid dispense!
‘Tis well there is a Higher World, where soar
The accepted hopes of suffering Innocence!

WRITTEN IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT .

OH! for a cottage on the shady brow
Of this green Island, where the Channel flows
With less tumultuous wave, and sends abroad
The many sails of England to the world,
And beareth to his home the mariner,
Who shouts to view the light blue hills, that dawn
O'er Wight's gay plains; and soon he spies the woods,
That shade its shores, and brighter tints of corn
And pastoral slopes and all their "green delights."
Advancing gently, 'mid the sleepy tide,
Soon he marks some long-left object clear,
A lofty watchtower, or some village church,
Or the white parsonage peeping through the trees,
To which, when last beheld, he sighed farewell
With throbbing grief. — These now he hails with joy,
As he steers onward to the wellknown shore.

Oh! for a cottage on the breezy cliff,
That points the crescent of thy harbour, Cowes!
And bears the raptured glance o'er seas and shores —
A boundless prospect, tinted all around
With summer shades of soft ethereal blue! —
O'er the wide waters rise the far-famed downs
Of Sussex; while thy forests, Hampshire, vast,
Spread their dark line, for many a winding mile,
By the blue waves, till, failing, the sight rests
Where yon dim hill-tops overlook the main.
There Purbeck's summits rise, while broader hills,
Marking their grey lines on the forest shade,
Lead back the eye to where Southampton's vale
Pours forth th' abundant wave, and spreads its
lawns,

Its jutting slopes, with villas gaily crowned,
Its sheltered cots, the rough wood's shade, whence peers
The village fane 'mid the high foliage: —
Southampton's vale, where lurks the twilight glade.
Whose ancient oaks their branches stretch austere,
And half conceal that Abbey's fretted arch,
As if to guard from eye and hand profane
The mouldering stones, whose pious founder once
Dropped them, green acorns, in this hallowed ground,
To shelter and adorn the sainted walls,
Whose long-forgotten sons mused 'neath their shade,
Blest thoughts of sure Eternity; and now
Leave here all that was mortal of themselves.
Oh! reverence this ground; for it is holy,
Sacred to pious thought; for worldly grace
By the high-gifted poet often praised.
Here winged steps have passed, and brightest thoughts,
Creative as the sunbeam, have up-flown.
Here pensive Gray some sad sweet moments passed,
And breathed a spell that saved these falling walls;
There walks that solemn vision, telling his beads;
Where 'neath the leafy gloom, the Poet's glance
Espied him! Still athwart yon vista dark
Shoots the white sail; still in the sun the waves
Glitter, as when Gray's musing abbot viewed them,
Measuring the moments with his pangs. Oh! pause
Awhile, and shed a melancholy tear
To the departed shade of him, who sung
"The paths of glory lead but to the grave
Weep o'er the memory of that wondrous Bard,
That master of the song, whose full-toned harp
Called round him loftiest themes of Fantasy,
Whose voice, rolling on the midnight thunder,
Waked sublimest awe; or played in cadence,
While the Graces danced; or, still oftener, mourned
O'er mortal doom and life's brief vanities,

While early youth and all the train of joy
Would leave their sports, listening the strain that bade
Them woo the languishments of Melancholy.
Farewell! thou mighty master, who, with high
Disdain of vulgar fame, “knew thine own worth
And reverenced the lyre,” and kept thy still
Footstep far away from the thronged path and
Vanity’s dull round. Farewell! thou doff’st
Thy mortal weeds, and the same strain sublime,
That moralized th’ unstoried lives and deaths
Of villagers, is oft repeated o’er thy grave,
With faltering voice, by those, who walk thy path
From Eton’s shades to Stoke, and view the scene
That filled thy youthful eye and charmed thy mind —
Where, years ago, thy “careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain.” —— —

Now let us leave the vale, thus dedicate
To memory, sweet and melancholy,
And trace the landscape o’er yon chalky ridge
To Portsdown, shielding in its concave all
That tract of greyer land, that banks the sea.
On the low point extends the busy port,
Its forts and ramparts rising o’er the main,
And wide o’erlooking all its anchored fleets.
Oh! for the magic pencil of Lorraine!
To give the soft perspective, where the wares
Fade to thin air in tints of mildest bine,
And the dark masts and cobweb-shrouds and lines
Of spiry shipping trace themselves in light.

Midway the sails of tarions vessels swell,
Gliding their silent course; here the swift-winged
Slant cutter skims the sea; and there the skiff,
Low on the mighty waters, shows a speck,

Invisible, but that its tiny sail
Catches the sunbeam, and, wondrous! tells that
Human life dwells in the moving atom
Amidst the waters. While we gaze, each wave
Threatens to whelm it; and the shores appear
Too distant for its small and feeble wing;
Yet on it goes in safety, and displays
Regular purpose, well-considered rules,
And skill, which guides its weakness through the strength
Of waves, o'er pathless distance, to the sheltering port.
Oh! that the old Spirit of Song
Would sound his harp from this high aery brow,
And bid its sweet tones languish, till the Nymphs,
That dwell beneath its waves, wake at the strain,
And send up answering music, now scarce heard,
Now lost, now heard again with wondering doubt,
Till, rising slow, a clearer chorus swells
In the soft gale, and makes its voice its own:
Then, the full sounds float over woods and rocks;
And then, descending on the wave, retire,
Die with the 'plaining of the distant tide,
And leave a blessed peace o'er all the soul.

Raise such a strain, O Nymphs! whose spell may spread
A sweeter grace on all the eye beholds,
That the fine vision of these seas and shores
May paint their living colours on the mind,
With charm so forceful, as Time cannot fade.
Then Memory with their own truth shall give
The blue shades of the main, under these dark
And waving boughs upon the steep; the mast
Now seen, or lost, in the smooth bay, as choose
The dancing leaves; the grey fort on the strand,
Its low, round tower o'ercanopied with elms,
The pacing sentinel, beneath their gloom,

Safe *horn* the noonday sun. Then would she paint
The slopes, that swell beside thy harbour, Cowes,
With pasture gay and oft with groves embrowned,
That amid veiling leaves, half show the villa,
Gray mimic of a cottage, or the trim crest
Of some proud castle, falsely old. Thy town
Would still be seen to climb the craggy bank;
Thy vale, withdrawing from the sunny bay,
Would wind beneath these green hills' shade, where droops
The sail becalmed, that on Medina's tide
Bears the full freight to Newport. Memory then
Would give these nearer scenes of gentle beauty,
Those spreading waters and the dim-seen coast,
Fading into the sky. Then, gentle Nymphs,
Borne far upon the winds, my song might tell
Of your sweet haunts, perchance in Indian seas —
Of them, who dance before the rising sun,
With songs of joyance breathing spicy gales.
Methinks, I hear their far-off notes complain:
"Oh! ne'er yet tripp'd we on the yellow sands,
That Fame says base the cliffs of English land;
Never yet danced we on those heights, that send
Airs from their mantling woods; never yet trod
The ridges of her stormy waves, nor watched
The tender azure melt into the green,
Then deepen to the purple's changing shades,
Beneath the sleepy indolence of noon.
For such delights we 'll leave our splendid clime,
Our groves of cassia and our coral bowers,
Our diamond-beaming caves and golden beds,
'Broidered with rubies, with transparent pearl,
And emeralds, that steal the sea-wave's hue,
And shells of rainbow-tint, fairy pavilions:
All but our tortoise cars; they shall bear us
O'er many a curling surge and chasm deep,
Farther than where the blended sea and sky

Hide from our sight the cooler, better oceans.
That way seek we those temperate islands, now
Wearing green Neptune’s livery, crowned with oak,
And terraced with bright cliffs; such Oberon,
The fairy, told of, to win our music.
‘Twas a charmful moon-time, and he perched him
In a purple shell, he called his mantle,
And basked him in the pure light, and then asked
A lullaby to soothe his care, for he
Was sad and weary, and had, all the day,
Toiled on a north-beam; and now Titania,
For whom he sought, had left the spicy steeps
Of India, on a bat’s wing, at twilight.
We asked a story of the northern clime
To pay our melody, and I remember
It told of castles moving on the waves,
Of a soft emerald throne upon an isle,
Beyond the falling sun, and other wonders,
That we, all night, could well have listened him,
But that he craved our pity and our song.
On that we breathed a soul into our shells,
And charmed him into slumber!”

SONNET TO THE LARK .

SWEET lark! I hear thy thrilling note on high,
Thé note of rapture, that thy bosom pours
To Spring’s fresh gales, green plains and azure sky,
As o’er the mountains steal Morn’s blushing hours.
With silent step they come and meekened grace,
In twilight’s veil half-hid from mortal view,
Wafting rich fragrance through the crystal space,
O’er groves and valleys shedding April dew.
Gay bird! now all the woods in silence sleep,
How sweet thy music comes upon the air,
And dies at distance, as, up heaven’s blue steep,
Thou, lessening, soar’st to meet Aurora’s star!
Oh! bird of hope and joy, thou point’st the way
That I would go — high o’er life’s cloudy day!

ON READING THE FOLLOWING BEAUTIFUL LINE S

WRITTEN BY THE LATE LADY ELIZABETH LEE, SISTER OF EARL HARCOURT, IN A BOWER CALLED BY HER NAME, AT ST. LEONARD'S HILL, THE SEAT OF THE EARL, IN WINDSOR FOREST; A SEAT WHICH STRANGERS ARE SOMETIMES PERMITTED TO VIEW.

"This peaceful shade — this green-roofed bower,
GREAT MAKER! all are full of Thee;
Thine is the bloom, that decks the flower,
And Thine the fruit, that bends the tree.

As much Creative Goodness charms
In these low shrubs, that humbly creep,
As in the oak, whose giant-arms
Wave o'er the high romantic steep.

The bower, the shade, retired, serene,
The grateful heart may most affect;
Here, GOD in every leaf is seen,
And man has leisure to reflect!

AND! TOO WAS ONCE OF ARCADIA .

FROM this high lawn, beneath the varied green
Of grove and bower, dark oak and blossomed shade,
How brightly spreads the vale! how grand the scene
Of forest woods and towers, that lift the head
Majestic from the strife of ages past!
And seem to view, with melancholy smile,
The gloom of thought by solemn Pity cast
On the world, fleeting to its rest; — the while

The fleeting world, all varions and gay,
Sports in those villas and those hamlets free,
Where stretching tints of ripened harvest play
Among dark woods and meads of Arcady.

There Spires of Peace arise, and straw-roofed farm
By village green, from ‘mid it’s antient grove
Sends the high curling smoke, renowned charm
Of those, who watch how lights and shadows rove.

Embattled Windsor, throned upon the vale,
Beneath these boughs displays its bannered state;
And learned Eton, o’er its willows pale,
Looks stem and sad, as mourning Henry’s fate.

On this high lawn, where Nature’s wealth we view,
All is instinct with life and fine delight!
Trees of all shades, the flowers of every hue,
Shrubs breathing joy and blooming on the sight.

Here bliss may dwell, and never, never die!
Vain thought! in that low bower there seems a voice,
Breathed, soft as summer winds o’er waters sigh,
“I once, like you, could in this scene rejoice.

This was my bower of bliss! Approach and read!”
It sunk, that solemn sound, and died on ait.
Within the cell I passed with reverend dread,
And found the angel-spirit still was there.

Still in “that green-roofed bower,” that “peaceful shade,”
Whose changeful prospect seems for ever new,
The pomp of forests stretching till they fade,
And sleep in softness on the distant blue. —
Still in that fine repose — that once-loved bower,
Breathe thoughts of heavenly mind, that speak of GOD!
And tell a heart, which, grateful, owned His power
In every leaf, that paints the humble sod.

Fast fell my tears, as flowed with her’s my thought,
The living feeling with the voice of Death!
The glowing joy by Nature’s beauty wrought
With proof how transient is even rapture’s breath.

Here in this shade she sat! fast fell my tears;
When my sad mind a hushing music won;
Again mild accents seemed to soothe my fears,
And murmur, “Grieve not that her race is run!

The pious heart, the comprehensive mind,
These were of Heaven, and are to Heaven -returned!”
It was a seraph’s voice upon the wind;
I heard her song of joy; I heard! nor longer mourned.

TO THE RIVER DOVE .

OH! stream beloved by those,
With Fancy who repose,
And court her dreams *mid scenes sublimely wild,
Lulled by the summer-breeze,
Among the drowsy trees
Of thy high steeps, and by thy murmurs mild,

My lonely footsteps guide,
Where thy blue waters glide,
Fringed with the Alpine shrub and willow light;
‘Mid rocks and mountains rude,
Here hung with shaggy wood,
And there upreared in points of frantic height.
Beneath their awful gloom,
Oh! blue-eyed Nymph, resume
The mystic spell, that wakes the poet’s soul!
While all thy caves around
In lonely murmur sound,
And feeble thunders o’er these summits roll.

O shift the wizard scene
To banks of pastoral green
When mellow sun-set lights up all thy vales;
And shows each turf-born flower,
That, sparkling from the shower,
Its recent fragrance on the air exhales.

When Evening’s distant hues
Their silent grace diffuse
In sleepy azure o’er the mountain’s head;
Or dawn in purple faint,

As nearer cliffs they paint,
Then lead me ‘mid thy slopes and woodland shade.

Nor would I wander far,
When Twilight lends her star,
And o’er thy scenes her doubtful shades repose;
Nor when the Moon’s first light
Steals on each bowery height,
Like the winged music o’er the folded rose.

Then, on thy winding shore,
The fays and elves, once more,
Trip in gay ringlets to the reed’s light note;
Some launch the acorn’s *ring*,
Their sail — Papilio’s wing,
Thus shipped, in chace of moonbeams, gay they float.

But, at the midnight hour,
I woo thy thrilling power,
While silent moves the glowworm’s light along,
And o’er the dim hill-tops
The gloomy red moon drops,
And in the grave of darkness leaves thee long.

Even then thy waves I hear,
And own a nameless fear,
As, ‘mid the stillness, the night winds do swell,
Or (faint from distance) hark
To the lone watch-dog’s bark!
Answering a melancholy far sheep bell.

O! Nymph fain would I trace
Thy sweet awakening grace,
When summer dawn first breaks upon thy stream;

And see thee braid thy hair;
And keep thee ever there,
Like thought recovered from an antique dream!

THE SEA-MEW .

FORTH from her cliffs sublime the sea-mew goes
To meet the storm, rejoicing! To the woods
She gives herself; and, borne above the peaks
Of highest headlands, wheels among the clouds,
And hears Death’s voice in thunder roll around,
While the waves far below, driven on the shore,
Foaming with pride and rage, make hollow moan.
Now, tossed along the gale from cloud to cloud,
She turns her silver wings touched by the beam,
That through a night of vapours darts its long,
Level line; and, vanishing ‘mid the gloom,
Enters the secret region of the storm;
But soon again appearing, forth she moves
Out from the mount’nous shapes of other clouds,
And, sweeping down them, hastens to new joys.
It was the wailing of the deep she heard!
No fears repel her: when the tumult swells,
Ev’n as the spirit-stirring trumpet glads
The neighing war-horse, is the sound to her.
O’er the waves hovering, while they lash the rocks,
And lift, as though to reach her, their chafed tops,
Dashing the salt foam o’er her downy wings,
Higher she mounts, and from her feathers shakes
The shower, triumphant. As they sink, she sinks,
And with her long plumes sweeps them in their fall,
As if in mockery; then, as they retreat,
She dances o’er them, and with her shrill note
Dares them, as in scorn.

It is not thus she meets their summer smiles;
Then, skimming low along the level tide,
She dips the last point of her crescent wings,

At measured intervals, with playful grace,
And rises, as retreating to her home
High on yon ‘pending rock, but poised awhile
In air, as though enamoured of the scene,
She drops, at once, and settles on the sea.
On the green waves, transparent then she rides.
And breathes their freshness, trims her plumage white,
And, listening to the murmur of the surge,
Doth let them bear her wheresoe’er they will.

Oh! bird beloved of him? who, absent long
From his dear native land, espies thee ere
The mountain tops o’er the far waters rise,
And hails thee as the harbinger of home!
Thou bear’st to him a welcome on thy wings;
His white sail o’er th’ horizon thou hast seen
And hailed it, with thy oft-repeated cry,
Announcing England. “England is near!” he cries,
And every seaman’s heart an echo beats,
And “England — England!” sounds along the deck,
Mounts to the shrouds, and finds an answering voice,
Ev’n at the top-mast bead, where, posted long.
The “look out” sailor clings, and “with keen eye,
By long experience finely judging made,
Reads the dim characters of air-veiled shores.
O happy bird! whom Nature’s changing: scenes
Can ever please; who mount’st upon the wind
Of Winter and amid the grandeur soar’st
Of tempests, or sinkest to the peaceful deep,
And float’st with sunshine on the summer calm!
O happy bird! lend me thy pinions now.
Thy joys are mine, and I, like thee, would skim
Along the pleasant curve of the salt bays,
Where the blue seas do now serenely sleep;
Or, when they waken to the Evening breeze,

And every crisping wave reflects her tints
Of rose and amber, — like thee, too, would I
Over the mouths of the sea-rivers float,
Or watch, majestic, on the tranquil tide,
The proud ships follow one another down,
And spread themselves upon the mighty main,
Freighted for shores that shall not dawn’on sight,
Till a new sky uplift its burning arch,
And half the globe be traversed. Then to him,
The home-bound seaman, should my’ joyous flight
Once more the rounding river point, — to him
Who comes, perchance, from coasts of darkness, where
Grim Ruin, from his throne of hideous rocks,
O’ercanopied with pine, or giant larch,
Scowls on the mariner, and Terror wild
Looks through the parting gloom with ghastly eye,
Listens to woods, that groan beneath the storm,
And starts to see the river-cedar fall.

How sweet to him, who from such strands returns,
How sweet to glide along his homeward stream
By wellknown meads and woods and village cots,
That lie in peace around the ivied spire
And ancient parsonage, where the small, fresh stream
Gives a safe haven to the humbler barks
At anchor, just as last he viewed the scene.
And soft as then upon the surface lies
The sunshine, and as sweet the landscape
Smiles, as on that day he sadly bade farewell
To those he loved. Just so it smiles, and yet
How many other days and months have fled,
What shores remote his steps have wandered o’er,
What scenes of various life unfolded strange,
Since that dim yesterday! The present scene
Unchanged, though fresh, appears the only truth,

And all the interval a dream! May those
He loves still live, as lives the landscape now;
And may tomorrow’s sun light the thin clouds
Of doubt with rainbow-hues of hope and joy!

Bird! I would hover with thee o’er the deck,
Till a new tide with thronging ships should tremble;
Then, frightened at their strife, with thee I’d fly
To the free waters and the boundless skies,
And drink the light of heaven and living airs;
Then with thee haunt the seas and sounding shores,
And dwell upon the mountain’s beaked top,
Where nought should come but thou and the wild winds.
There would I listen, sheltered in our cell,
The tempest’s voice, while midnight wraps the world.
But, if a moonbeam pierced the clouds, and shed
Its sudden gleam upon the foaming waves,
Touchinng with pale light each sharp line of cliff,
Whose head towered darkly, which no eye could trace, —
Then downward I would wheel amid the storm,
And watch, with untired gaze, the embattled surges
Pouring in deep array, line after line,
And hear their measured war-note sound along
The groaning coast, whereat the winds above
Answer the summons, and each secret cave,
Untrod by footsteps, and each precipice,
That oft had ou the unconscious fisher frowned,
And every hollow bay and utmost cape
Sighs forth a fear for the poor mariner.
He, meanwhile, hears, the sound o’er waters wide;
Lashed to the mast, he hears, and thinks of home.

O bird! lend me thy wings,
That swifter than the blast I may out-fly
Danger, and from yon port the life-boat call.

And see! e’en now the guardian bark rides o’er
The mountain-billows, and descends through chasms
Where lurks Destruction eager for his prey,
With eyes of flashing fire and foamy jaws.
He, by -strange storm lights shown, uplifts his;head,
And, from the summit of each rising wave,
Darts a grim glance upon the daring crew,
And sinks the way their little boat must go!
But she, with blessings armed, best shield! as if
Immortal, surmounts the abyss, and rides
The watery ridge upon her pliant oars,
Which conquer the wild, raging element
And that dark demon, with angelic power.
Wave after wave, he sullenly retreats,
With oft repeated menace, and beholds
The poor fisherman, with all his fellows,
Borne from his grasp in triumph to the shore —
There Hope stands watchful, and her call is heard
Wafted on wishes of the crowd. Hark! hark!
Is that her voice rejoicing. ‘Tis her song
Swells high upon the gale, and ‘tis her smile,
That gladdens the thick darkness. They are saved.

Bird of the winds and waves and lonely shores,
Of loftiest promontories — and clouds,
And tempests — Bird of the sunbeam, that seeks
Thee through the storm, and glitters on thy wings
Bird of the sunbeam and the azure calm,
Of the green cliff, hung with gay summer plants,
Who lov’st to sit in stillness on the bough,
That leans far o’er the sea, and hear est there
The chasing surges and the hushing sounds,
That float around thee, when tall shadows tremble,
And the rock-weeds stream lightly on the breeze.
O bird of joy! what wanderer of air

Can vie with thee in grandeur of delights,
Whose home is on the precipice, whose sport
Is on the waves? O happy, happy bird!
Lend me thy wings, and let thy joys be mine!

TO THE WIND S

SPIRIT! who dwellest in the secret clouds.
Unseen, unknown, yet heard o’er all the world!
Who reign’st in storms and darkness half the year,
Yet sometimes lov’st, in Summer’s season bright,
To breathe soft music through her azure dome;
Oft heard art thou amongst the high tree-tops,
In mournful and so sweet a melody,
As though some Angel, touched with human grief,
Soothed the sad mind. Oh, viewless, viewless wind!
I love thy potent voice, whether in storms
It gives to thunder clouds their impulse dread,
Swells the Spring airs, or sighs in Autumn’s groves,
Mourning the dying leaf. Whatever the note,
Thy power entrances, wins me from low cares,
And bears me towards GOD, who bids you breathe,
And bids the morning of a higher world
Dawn on my hopes.

MOONLIGHT .

A SCENE.

On the bright margin of Italia’s shore,
Beneath the glance of summer-noon we stray,
And, indolently happy, ask no more
Than cooling airs, that o’er the ocean play;

And watch the bark, that, on the busy strand,
Washed by the sparkling tide, awaits the gale,
Till, high among the shrouds, the sailor-band
Gallantly shout, and raise the swelling sail.

On the broad deck a various group recline,
Touched with the moonlight, yet half-hid in shade,
Who, silent, watch the bark the coast resign,
The Pharos lessen, and the mountains fade.

We, indolently happy, ask alone
The wandering airs, which o’er the ocean stray,
To bring some sad Venetian sonnet’s tone,
From that lone vessel floating far away!

SMILES .

It was a smile — a fleeting smile,
Like a faint gleam through Autumn’s shade,
That softly, sweetly, did beguile,
As it around her dimples played.

What are smiles, and whence their sway?
Smiles that, o’er the features stealing,
To the gazer’s heart convey
All the varied world of feeling,
What are smiles?

Do they dwell in Beauty’s eye?
No! nor on her playing cheek.
Nor on her wavy lip — though nigh
Seems the glancing charm they seek.
Where do they dwell
Where? — Their home is in the mind;
Smiles are light — the light of soul!
Light of many tints combined.
And of strong and sure control.
Smiles are light.

There’s a smile — the smile of Joy,
Bright as glance of May’s fresh morn;
And one, that gleam? but to destroy, —
Tis the lightning smile of Scorn.

There is a smile of glowworm hue,
That glimmers not near scenes of Folly,
Pale and strange and transient too, —
The smile of awful Melancholy.

Like to the sad and silvery showers,
Falling in an April sun,
Is the smile, that Pity pour?
O’er the deed, that Fate has done.

Dear is Friendship’s meeting look,
As moonlight on a sleeping vale,
Soothing those the sun forsook —
So does that o’er Care prevail.

But who the first pure tint has seen,
That trembles on the edge of Morning,
When summer’s veil is so serene,
Hiding half and half adorning?

They, who this have seen, may know,
What the smile that’s here intended;
They, who do to Laura go,
See that smile with beauty blended.

THE REED OF POESY .

OH! sweet reed, come hither!
Never from thee will I part;
For oft, like sunshine weather,
Thy music has cheered my heart:
Oh! sweet reed, come hither.

Many a forest-green mountain
In leafless November I ‘ve seen;
Many a daisy-rimmed fountain
In frozen December has been;

Many an April bower,
And many a valley of May
Bright with sunbeam and flower,
I ‘ve seen on a Winter’s day.
Oft, in the depth of December,
When the night-blast shrieked aloud,
And sadly bade me remember,
That Death was abroad in his shroud

Thy welcomest note light sounding
Has flattered my fears to rest;
My lone, lone hearth surrounding
With many a fairy guest.

And many a scene of wonder,
Rising from forth the dark night,
In veil thrown but half asunder,
Has thrilled me with dread delight.

How oft, in some measureless chamber,
I have seen the traveller wait,
Through the dull night of December,
All fearful of some sad fate.

And I’ve heard that voice so hollow
Break once on his startled ear;
And seen him how sadly follow,
And dimly disappear.

And, when the grey doubtful morning
Has gleamed pale over the waste,
I’ve viewed him all safe returning,
And smiling at danger past.

So come, sweet reed, come hither!
I never from thee will part;
For oft, like sunshine weather,
Thy music has cheered my heart.
Oh! sweet reed, come hither!

EDWY .

A POEM, IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

THE HAZEL TREE.

A SUMMER SONG OF FAIRIE.

LIGHTLY green with springing buds,
The hazel twines her fairy bowers,
In yon dell o’erhung with woods,
Where the brook its music pours.

O’er the margin of the stream
Peeps the yellow marygold,
And lilies, where the waters gleam,
Bend their heads so fair and cold.
Know ye why the Elfin-band
Watch beneath the kazel-bough?
‘Tis to guard its MAGIC WAND
And its blossoms, as they blow.

THESE, gathered at the mid-day hour,
To mortal eyes their haunts betray;
That has the strange enchanting power
To call up a prophetic Fay.

Be she down among the rills,
In some wild-wood dingle hid;

Or dancing on the moonlight hills —
She must speed, as she is bid.

Or sleep she on the mossy bed,
Under the blossom-breathing lime,
That sheds sweet freshness over head —
The freshness of the morning prime;

Or stray she with old Thames serene
Through osier-tufts and lofty groves,
By royal towers, or cottaged green,
Still must she leave what best she loves —

Leave the thatched cot, where finest spreads
The turf, ‘mid every choicest flower,
And the far-branching chestnut sheds
Over the wave its greenest shower.

Where, silver-streak’d, that polished wave
Glides by with lingering, sweet farewell,
While stately swans their proud necks lave,
And seem to feel some fairy spell.

Then marvel not that Elfins fair
Guard the thin wand and hazel bloom;
Since these can all their haunts lay bare,
By hidden stream, or forest gloom.

— Near Windsor’s shades there dwelt a youth,
Who fast was bound in Cupid’s chain;
But how to try his lady’s truth
By mortal means he sought in vain.

He to a chamber dim withdrew,
Where serpent’s skin arid head of toad
Hinted of themed he must pursue,
Ere secret would to him be showed.

It was a chamber magical,
Where light in partial gleams appeared,
And showed strange shades upon the wall,
By his own mystic learning reared.

Thence to the hazel-copse he went,
When the sun was flaming high;
And there the twining branches rent;
For then no Fay was watching nigh.

Fast asleep in closed flowers,
And all unheard, and all unseen,
Who, that walked these noontide bowers,
Could guess that any Elves had been? —
Next, to the forest-hills he hied,
To pull the wild thyme’s budding bloom;
Fresh from some haunted dingle’s side;
For, it must blow where Fairies

Just such a dingle still is seen,.
Hanging upon the Park’s high brow,
Deep buried in the shadowy green,
Where tall o’erarching beeches grow

Here oft the Fairies revel keep,
To bless the Castle’s moonlight hours,
And peep, as winds these branches sweep,
At Windsor-diadem’d with towers.

Grass, that crowns a Fairie’s throne,
Mary golds — her canopy,
Lilies, for her cradle known,
These he gathered, three and three.

Well prepared with hazel-leaves,
Thus the wondrous charm distill,
Which, laid on an eye, that grieves,
Shows each sprite of grove, or rill.

“Three hazel-wands peel smooth and white,
Just a twelvemonth old — no more:
Thrice on each wand the full name write
Of the Fay you would implore.

“Then in earth these wands consign;
In earth, that elfin footsteps tread,
Extract them with well-muttered line,
Unheard of man — by man unread.

“Next, to the North your visage turn,
Invoke her name, with thrice told three,
Be she by forest, mead, or bourne,
Her on your magic glass you ‘ll see.”

With shaking hand he peeled the wand;
Then would he trace her name, I wot;
Edwy the Love-Fay would command;
But Edwy had her name forgot.
Full of great flaws to aught but love
Is the memory of a lover;
Now he must watch where Fairies rove,
Or this name he ‘ll ne’er recover.

Back o’er the sunny hills he goes
To his green home in Windsor shades,
To draw the charm, that shall expose
The Elfin-Court, when daylight fades.

Down by good Clewer’s winding mead,
And where the silver currents glide,
A plume of elms lifts high it’s head,
And casts it’s shadow on the tide.

All dark and still the feathery grove
Sleeps in the streamy light below;
The streamy light with placid love
And hushing murmur seems to flow.

There Elves, ‘twas said, in ringlets went,
When chimes sang midnight to the land,
If then, on Windsor’s battlement,
Tip-toe the full-orbed Moon should stand.

Duly distilled the flowery charm,
Thither Edway must repair,
And, that no check the spell might harm,
Ere the sun-set he was there.

The golden tints of Evening lie
Upon the smoothly-flowing stream,
Tint the old walls and turrets high,
And lower on the wood-tops gleam.

And, slanting o’er the willowed vale,
The blessed Henry’s fane enshrined,
It’s fretted windows, turrets pale,
And pinnacles far: ranged behind.

And now the soothing hour is come,
The starlight hour, when all is still,
Save the far-distant village hum,
And the lone watch-bark from the hill;
And wheels which, far-off travelling,
Pass unseen in bowery lane,
Like to the sea-tide murmuring,
Now loud and lost, then loud again.

He laid the charm upon his eyes,
And looked with desperate courage round
Alas! no tripping phantoms rise
On the shadowy, Fairie ground.

Patience is a lover’s duty!
Here, counting every distant chime,
He exalts his lady’s beauty,
In quaint, or pity-moving rhime.

Till, in the East, a shadowy light,
Rising behind the Castle-walls,
Gives the dim turrets to his sight,
And in mute watch his spirit thralls.

As slow the unseen Moon ascends,
More darkly drawn the towers appear,
Till every doubtful mass expands,
And lives upon the radiant air;

Then, peers she o’er the broad Keep’s height,
A spreading curve of light serene;
And, faithful to her loved Midnight,
There, reigns it’s pale and pensive Queen.

And touches, with her silver ray,
Terrace and woody steep below
The river’s willow-sheltered bay,
And waters quivering as they flow.

Where’er th’ Enchantress points her wand,
Forth from the deep of darkness crowd
Pale glimmering shapes, and silent stand
As waked from Death’s unfolding shroud.

The landscape lived, clear spread the lawn,
The groves their shadowy tops unfurled,
And airy hills in prospect dawn,
Like vision of another world.
The chimes sang midnight; Edwy shook,
While by the grove of elm he stood,
And cast a sly and wistful look
Around the turf and o’er the flood.

That wrinkled flood, all silver bright,
No sail of Fairie pinnace showed,
Nor, ‘neath the still elm’s bowery night,
A glimpse of elfin-pageant glowed.

St. George’s chimes, with falter sweet,
Like infants, tried their task to say;
But, waked from midnight’s slumber meet,
Th’ imperfect accents died away.

And soft they sunk to sleep again,
Ere the slow song was duly closed,
As seeming feebly to complain
Of broken rest, e’en while they dozed.

But Fairies met not Edwy’s eye;
For, here, alas! no more they rove;
Some urchins of the College nigh
Had surely scared them from the grove;

Such as the forest-keepers here
Have followed, helter-skelter, round
Hills, woods and dales, for tracking deer;
Till fond Thames bore the wights to ground;

To Eton ground, where, safe from law,
And praising oft the helping tide,
They peeped, well hid in grass, and saw
The foresters on t’other side!

Such as the May-pale oft has watched
Doff gown and mount the coach on high;
Such as the tavern-dinner snatched,
The bottle drank and ate the pie j

In fifteen minutes and away!
And, if an oxen-herd they met,
Sprung on their horns, in laughing play,
Then gravely joined the schoolroom set

Oh! those were happy times, I ween,
The light of Morning o’er the sky —
That touches all the varied scene
With life-full gleams of hope and joy.

The angered fairies, in revenge,
Still, the tale goes, “their tyrants flout

Plunge them in scrapes and mischief strange,
Then leave them to a flogging-bout!

But oft good Robin proves their friend,
And lays his bandage on the eyes
Of the grave Heads, who mildly blend
Remembrance with severe surmise.

And now, in more removed ground,
Up in the high Park's ancient shade,
On the grey forest's lonely bound,
These fairies dance in secret glade;
Where oaks Plantagenet still frown,
Great Edward's tree e'en each appears,
A warlike ruin, gaunt and lone,
The spectre of five hundred years.

Nursed by long centuries gone by,
Reared in the storms, that wrecked their kings,
Oh! could they give the Past a sigh,
And speak the tale of vanished things,

The peopled scenes they have beheld,
In long succession, varied guise,
More wonders here had stood revealed,
Than aught, that Fairie dream supplies.

Thus Edwy, with a face of rue,
Returned home for future feat;
Thus he, who does adventure woo,
Must sometimes disappointment meet.

PART II

THE FAIRIE COURT.

A SUMMER'S NIGHT IN WINDSOR PARK.

EDWY, in his lonely chamber,
Plying still his magic lore,
Watched, when all was hushed in slumber,
The dead planetary hour.

Two crystal planes, three inches square,
Steeped in the blood of milk-white fowl,
With careful skill he did prepare,
'Gainst next should hoot the midnight owl.

One would reveal the summoned Fay,
Who, by her-divining art
Should on the second plane display
Scenes to grieve, or cheer, his heart.
Thus endowed to conjure fairie,
He would fain have conjured sleep,
But the god of lovers, wary,
Hovers not o'er eyes that weep.

Sad and restless all the morning,
Sad and restless all the noon,
Counting every chime of warning
Through the longest day of June:

Thus he lingered, thus he wandered,
Round about his lady’s hall,
Till his hopes were nearly foundered —
Till a rival spoke his fall.

In an oriel he saw her,
Chatting, smiling, blooming gay;
Doating, maddening, he bewailed her,
Doubting his first doubts this day.

Breathing lilacs after showers,
Bending with the silver drops,
Greenest leaves and purple flowers,
Waving where the goldfinch hops,

And scattering round the scented dew,
And sparkling on the sunny air,
Not half so fresh as Aura glow,
Not half so graceful — half so fair.

Too soon she vanished from his eyes,
And Evening summoned him afar,
Then to the high-browed Park he hies;
There, must he meet the twilight-star.

With magic mirrors, hazel wand,
Eyelids touched with clearing spell,
He sought the Court of fairie land,
Hidden in their distant dell.

Through the shaded walks so wide,
That climb about the southern hill,
Edwy passed with rapid stride.
Nor saw one Elf — though all was still.

With toil he gained the airy brow,
And, panting, paused to breathe awhile;
And throw a lingering look below
O’er the still landscape’s parting smile.

Crowning the long vista’s shade,
O’ertopped with turrets, terraced high,
Windsor all its pomp displayed,
Beneath the glowing western sky.

Beyond, the low, blue hills repose,
Along the far horizon’s bound.
How soft the hues the forest throws,
Its leafy darkness shedding round!

Those hills their stretching woods display
In faint shade, through the azure veil,
While, sweetly bright, the setting ray
Bids many a spire once more — farewell.

And farewell to the banner proud,
That o’er the broad Keep floats on air,
Proclaiming, as with trumpet loud,
It’s royal lord reposes there.

Pale and more pale the scene retires,
And Windsor’s state has vanished now,
Save one dim tower, that boldly spires
To meet the star on twilight’s brow.

There stood he tranced, till, in the air,
Warbled music passed along;
So softly sweet, so finely clear!
This was sure a Fairie song.

For, now no woodlark waked to sing;
Every little eye was closed;
On slender foot, with drooping wing,
In it’s home each bird reposed.

Save one, and, where he winged his way,
Pleased, Edwy heard his strain advance,
On his smooth neck a Fairie lay,
Or rather did a Fairie dance.
A veil of gossamer she wore,
All spangled round with primrose dew;
A star-beam for a wand she bore,
Which she from Venus slyly drew.

This little bird on circling pinions
Wantoned over Edwy’s head,
Then to its shady, loved dominions,
With its Pairie Lady sped.

The while his Fairie Lady trills
“To the beech-woods follow me,
Up the lawns and o’er the hills,
To the high woods follow me.”

In tiny echoes “Follow me”
All the hills and glades prolong;
From every bush and hollow tree
Seemed to rise the choral song.

And Edwy, round each hollow tree,
Spied the motley Elves at play;
While, thick as emmets, “Follow me,”
They sang again, and passed away.

O’er greenest lawns, through proudest groves,
He pursued his feathered guide,
O’er scenes, that silent Moonlight loves,
To the long lake’s mossy side.

The little bird flew o’er the lake;
Edwy round the turf-banks went,
Close where the silver currents break,
And lower oaks their branches bent.

The stream is there with rocks inlaid;
He tripped o’er these, and reached the road,
That, broad and turfy ‘neath the shade,
Leads to the pleasantest abode.
Green above green, of every hue,
The bordering trees in vista bend,
Shrubs lay their low leaves on the dew,
And pine and larch on light ascend.

Galleries of verdure! all is green,
Here lawn and bending boughs below;
Above ‘tis stately shade; the scene
Seems made for glancing, Fairie show.

But, closer bowered, their noonday haunt
Rests in a hollow, beechen dell;
It’s marge no human hand could plant,
It’s shadows seem to breathe a spell.

Now, would you view the Fairies’ scene,
Where twilight-dances print the lawn,
Where it spreads out in softest green,
To gaps, whence distant landscapes dawn,

Hie to the western fprest-gate;
There Claudian beauty melts around;
There Elfin-turrets keep their state,
And tell, at once, ‘tis Fairie ground.

Or, at that later Evening-hour;
When the turf gladdens with the dew,
That almost darkens Windsor’s tower,
And gives near hills a distant blue.

And oh! if Silence could be seen,
Thus would she look, so meek, so pale,
The image of this very scene,
When Evening glances on the vale.

Now Edwy reached the wood-walks wild,
That open from the watery glade,
Where sweet vale-lilies, violets mild,
And primrose tufts the grass inlaid.

Climbing the spiky blades and stems;
Gathering dews, were Elves a million,
Diamond drops and crystal gems,
To fringe their Fairie Queen’s pavilion.

And see what flaming lights appear!
Flashed through the foliage arching high;
What silver horn winds, sweet and dear,
As breathing from the lips of Joy!

Sudden the elves, on flower and blade,
Forsake their task, and, with a bound,
Touch the green turf, and down the glade
Take hands and trip a welcome round.

But Edwy hears no more the strain
Of his fleeting, tiny lady,
And watches for her bird, in vain,
To lead him through the alleys shady.
By him an elfin-courier speeds
On grasshopper his forest-ways;
Brushing the humble cowslip heads,
While each its trembling homage pays.

And next, a winged beetle came,
Sounding deep his herald-horn,
The fairy sovereign to proclaim,
And evil sprites away to warn.

There, whisked an Indian lanthorn-fly
Quick flashing forth it's emerald sheen;
Dancing low and dancing high,
In many a ring of fiery green.

Then came a creeping, stilly breeze,
That made the crisped waters live,
That shivered all the sleeping trees,
And bade the leaves their essence give.

But see, the birds on every bough
Awake and stretch their ruffled wings;
And o'er the dewy turf below
His starry glance the glowworm flings;

And the whole woodbank's flowery couch.'
Is sprinkled now with glimmering bands,
Waiting their tiny Queen's approach,
Her guards and lights to Fairie lands.

Again, that horn of Joy breathes fine,
Again, the moonlight-light waters shake;
Where'er the foaming tips combine,
Rises a fairy of the lake.

Half veiled within the sparkling strife,
His inexperienced eyes scarce see
The pale forms changing into life,
Till all is glowing pageantry.

True to their sovereign's summons they,
Upon the lake's enchanted shore,
Await her presence proud and gay,
Where rides the fleet to waft her o'er.
And now a spicy, rare perfume,
Such as breathes from Indian dells,
Fills all the high-wood's leafy dome,
And the fine Fairie presence tells.

And faint aerial strains are-heard,
As through the rich, festooning ways,
The Queen in moonlit-pomp appeared,
Amongst ten thousand dancing Fays.

By gold and purple butterflies
Her rose-leaved car was drawn in air;
Above, two birds of Paradise
Arch o'er her head their plumage rare.

While, far around her, dancing beams,
That with bright rainbow colours glow,
Strike on the gloom in transient gleams,
And all her elfin-escort show.

All in the busy air around
Pert eyes and little wings are seen,
And voices whisper, feathers sounds
Attendant on their elfin-queen.

A robe of silvery snow she wore,
Frosted with magic art so true,
That the hot breath of Midsummer
Could never change it into dew.

And, wafted by her happy bird,
A courtier-fairy oft proclaims,
“Now let the mirthful song be heard;
Our lady queen a welcome claims.”

The little bird too ‘gan to sing,
And then the fairy tried her voice;
As gaily as the airs of Spring
Did that poor little bird rejoice.

The measure changed, a languid call,
Sweet with sorrow, thrice it sounded,
Concluding in a dying fall,
Softer than e’er fountain rounded.
“O Nightingale! it was thy song
Sent through the woods that dying dose;
I know thee now; the note prolong;
Oh! speak again those tender woes!”

Under the boughs, the elfin-train
Mutely listened to the measure;
But, when he trilled his joy again,
They beat the ground in antic pleasure.

“O bird of feeling, various, sweet!
Thee and thy guardian-friend I hail;
I KNOW THEE NOW, and gladly greet
The Love-Fay and her nightingale.

All fly before the elfin-queen,
Toward the lake’s high-crowned head,
Near where the forest-oaks begin
A reverential gloom to spread.

With thousand sparks the woodbank swarms:
Her glowworm knights, in long array,
Marshalled by Fire-fly — King at Arms,
Guard her and light her on her way.

Where’er they move, the drowsy flowers
Unclose their leafy curtains far;
And Fays, asleep within their bowers,
Leap forth, and dance before her car;

Dance to that crystal lake’s green side,
That winds through fir-crowned lawns and woods,
Whose beeches old, in giant pride,
Fling their broad shadows on the floods.

And oft they wantoned with the surge,
That, flowing near the Fairie court,
It’s silver line on line did urge,
As if to tempt and share their sport;

As if to woo the elfin-queen,
To float upon its moonlight breast;

Pleased to unfold each margent scene.
And bear her to her bower of rest.
The smile, that played upon it’s face,
She seemed by magic lore to read;
And, with a kind and sportive grace,
She bade her tiny sailors speed.

A fleet of pleasure-boats lay there;
Such vessels as befit a sprite;
The water-lilies schooners were,
Leaf after leaf outspreading white.

There skiffs, fresh gathered from the lime;
There acorn-barges broad and deep;
So safe, that, e’en in tempest-time,
An Elf upon his oars might sleep,

And in his HEART of OAK could go,
His tiny Dreadnought, singing gay,
Spite of the winds and rocks below,
Round *every* fairy cliff and bay.

Sweet wherries of long lavender,
Blossoms of every shape and stain,
From blue-bell yachts to bird-pepper,
Attended for the courtier-train.

But their bright Queen more proudly sailed
In a pearl-shell ship of the line:
By water mouse-ear was she veiled,
And she was fanned with eglantine.

Her canopy, bedropped with gold,
Had floated on the Indian tide;

A lotos-leaf, with ample fold,
Swelled for her sail, in snowy pride.

The cordage was of silver thread
Spun of fine bark of ashen tree;
The mast of sandal wood; the head
A living dolphin seemed to be.

Her green knights watched upon the shrouds,
Or ranged them far along the prow;
Stood round their Queen, in radiant crowds,
Or gleamed far on the wave below.
And others, ranked as on a cone,
Stage above stage, of towery height,
Moved on the lake around her throne,
Proud, floating pyramids of light.

Above them all, then might you spy,
In busy care, high o'er the mast,
Their king-at-arms, Sir Lanthom-fly,
Ordering the pageant, as it past;

And, glancing down the moonlight air,
He checked the lily-schooner's way;
And, whisking here and whisking there,
Recalled each blossom-sail astray.

Then, self-triumphant, in the van,
In airy circles pleased he danced;
Yet, while he led the revel on,
Back, for his Queen's applauses glanced.

And thus in gliding state she went
O'er the long windings of the wave,

Where many a watchful eye was beat,
From hollow oak and secret cave.

The screech-owl and the snake were then.
The boding raven, cruel kite,
That fill the timid heart with care,
And love to prowl in moonless night.

But chief on the old Forest's bound,
Where the still waters sink away,
Such evil agents walk their round,
Or lurk within the oaks so grey.

Bewildered in the wild-wood glades,
Edwy oft lost the long lake's side;
Till, through some deep grove's opening shades,
He saw the splendid vision glide.

Low glanced the silver oars along,
Quick came the spires of glowworm light,
That round their Queen's tall galley throng,
Shooting long beams aslant the night;
These, trembling through the branches' dome,
Touching each leaf with transient joy,
Now seen, now lost, from gloom to gloom,
Showed like the stars, when clouds fleet by.

Then, over banks and under woods,
Edwy pursued the pageant's way;
Till, having reached the smiling floods,
The frolick shores his hopes betray.

For, winding back, his course they mar,
Leaving him on some jutting steep,

‘Mid the lone waters, while afar
The inmost bay the Fairies sweep.

And thus through wilds and woods he toiled,
Lured by short glimpse of that bright train,
Which through the distant shadows smiled,
As if in mockery of his pain.

Till, once again, he heard remote
That gentle bird, faithful to lovers;
And, following the high-warbled note,
Again the Fairie fleet discovers:

Just as it touched the farther shore,
To land the Queen those groves among
When still was every little oar,
And every white sail breathless hung.

No sound was heard but Music’s voice,
Roused by the motley elfln-band,
Who play in moonshine, and rejoice
In choral welcomes o’er the strand.

The groves, that hovered o’er the brink,
The polished lake more dark returns;
And each bright star, in emerald twink,
Beneath the wave more keenly burns.

And there, the rival of their beams,
Reflected by the glass below,
A shooting-star Sir Fire-fly seems,
While marshalling the Fairie show.
Each shroud and sail of Fairie bark,
Each glittering oar and image fair,

Within that mirror, blue and dark,
Lay, like a picture, pencilled fair.

But when Sir Fire-fly's knights moved on,
And their green torches mutely raised,
Then all the Fairie's splendour shone,
And shores and woods and waters blazed.

Thus, ranged in vista-lines of light.
Moving beneath the leafy gloom,
Where forest-oaks spread deepest night,
They guard her to her sylvan home.

Under an ancient beech, that high
Out-hung it's spray, her dreams of night
Were veiled from every curious eye,
Save when with magic virtue bright.

It's mighty boughs a circle filled;
Like necromantic guard it stood;
It's air severe the wanderer chilled,
It's frown and haughty attitude.

Soon as that beechen shade she reached,
Rustled its every leaf for joy;
Then gracefully her wand she stretched,
And lighted all its leaves on high.

Yet flame of torch, or lamp, was none,
Nor any glittering sparkle there;
It seemed as if the setting sun
Tinged the rich spray with rosy air.

Her bower through many chambers ranged,
And each a different purpose showed;
This, oft with mystic shadows changed;
That, for the dance, or banquet, glowed.

Beyond them all, her cell of rest
In verdant shade and silence lay;
Save, when the ring-dove in her nest
Sung all her gentle cares away:
And sleepy leaves, scarce moved in air,
Or only swayed by breezes fleet,
With the lake's murmuring falls afar,
Made melody most sad and sweet.

Lime-blossoms strewed the mossy floor,
And breathed a dewy fragrance round,
Inviting her to slumbers pure,
While freshness seemed to bless the ground.

Yet here, sometimes, this Queen of dreams
Would weave such seeming forms of fate,
As, sent upon the still moonbeams,
Oft by the midnight sleeper wait.

Hid in her cool bower might she view
The noontide lake and sunny lawns;
The slow sail on the waters blue,
And, through the brakes, the fleeting fawns;

And watch them on the watery brim,
Bending to sip the dainty wave,
Then starting at the form so slim.
The shadowed crystal truly gave.

Unseen, she traced each step that roved
Rejoicing on that margent green;
Or sought the hills and groves beloved,
That crown with pleasant shade the scene.

Edwy had joined the Fairie's train,
Just as she reached her leafy dome,
While full arose the choral strain
Of welcome to her beechen home.

Her glowworm knights, wide, round the beech,
In glimmering circles take their stand;
Adder, nor bird of boding speech,
Nor step unblest may pass that band.

In front, high on the beechen spray,
Like Hesper, on the eastern dawn,
Sir Fire-fly spreads his watchful ray
O'er dell obscure and distant lawn.
No shape, among the shadows there,
Could glide unseen, nor move, where frowned
That beech's wizard brows in air,
And shrink not from the mystic ground.

Save Edwy, with his magic spell; —
Invisible and fearless, he
Might pass e'en to the Fairie's cell,
Unknown — but of one enemy.

She tripped into her vestibule,
Arched high with rose and eglantine,
Breathing a fragrance light and cool,
And bright with dewdrops, crystalline.

Here many a bell, that, in the day,
Had hung its fainting head awry,
Now waked for her in beauty gay,
And breathed for her its perfumed sigh.

Her pavilion next she entered;
Clear the glassy columns shone;
To the turf steps Edwy ventured,
And beheld her on her throne.

Under an ebon arch reclining,
With brilliant drops all thickly hung,
Where Mimosa's leaves were twining,
She listened, while the Love-Fay sung.

The thousand dewdrops hanging there
And in the swelling dome, on high,
Trembled with radiance keen and fair,
Poured from her living diamond's eye.

Splendour and Joy around her moved,
And winning smiles beamed in her face,
And every virtue most beloved
Gave to her air a tender grace.

On the ruby-pavement stealing,
Circling Elves their homage gave,
Then, in quaint moriscoes reeling,
They dance, and airy garlands wave.
The silver-triangle, the lute,
The tambourine, with tiny bells,
Mix with the softly-breathing flute;
The mellow horn more distant swells.

A quaint and various group arrived:
One, fliting on a bat’s wing came,
No orchard, where he haunted, thrived;
Malignant Elfant was his name.

One, upon a field-mouse gliding,
Oft the traveller appalled,
Wondrously his steps misguiding;
Sly Elféna she was called.

A third, upon a squirrel springing,
Never rested, night, or day;
Into some droll mischief bringing
Solemn heads, as well as gay.

On butterfly next sailed a Fairie;
She soothes fine ladies in their vapour,
Who of unchanging good are weary,
And weep, because they’ve nought to weep for.

Winged by an owl, there came an elf,
Who loved to haunt the study-table,
Where, full of grave, important self,
The wisest head he would disable.

And make it Pro-and-Con and fight
On subjects lofty as the steeple;
Or tempt some Witling to endite
Long dreams, about the elfin-people!

And now, the Fairie Queen demanded
Whether her elves the tasks had done,
That, at sun-set, she had commanded;
And now she called them one by one.

She called them, but they came not all;
Again, the magic horn was wound,
Then thronging sprites obeyed the call;
But still some truants wild were found.
Yet was this blast so distant heard,
That elves, on Windsor's battlement,
Mounted the moonbeams at it's word,
And o'er the Long Walk gaily went;

Not stayed upon the tufts to dance
Of the broad, bowery way, that swept,
With utmost pomp, beneath their glance,
Though there the yellow moonlight slept;

Though many a bird they loved was hid
In silent rest, beneath the leaves,
Which, if awaked and gently bid,
Would sing the song that care deceives —

Yet, had they surely waked them, too,
And danced a morrice on the trees,
Had not the horn complaining blew,
Like coming of a tempest breeze.

But e'en the Fairie's summons failed,
Yielding awhile to Beauty's spell,
When Windsors proudest groves they hailed,
Crowning its wildest, deepest dell.

They paused a moment on that brow,
Under the shading oaks they strayed,
To spy, beneath the branches low,
The moonlight-towers, beyond their shade.

Beyond that shade in peace they lay,
Oates, turrets, battlements aloft,
Just silvered by the distant ray,
That ‘neath the dark boughs glimmered oft.

It seemed some vision of the air,
By magic raised in forest lone,
That held entranced some lady fair,
Till nodding towers her knight should own.

The horn again! but not like breeze
Before some gentle summer shower,
But rushing through th’ affrighted trees,
E’en with an angry whirlwind’s power.
The moonlight-castle sinks and fades,
Beneath the tossing boughs afar;
And fear the truant elves invades;
And swift they mount their beamy car.

No banquet in the bower for them;
No tripping strains their steps invite;
The Fairie sovereign will condemn
Their disobedience and their slight.

“Hence,” she cries, “a vision weave
For the couch of that false lover,
Who could a trusting heart deceive;
Hence, and o’er his slumber hover.

“Dance before him, like a shade;
Trace upon his sleeping eye
Image of that mournful maid,
Whom he won, and left to die;

“In my cell of shadows look
You will there the semblance see,
Of the damsel he forsook
All from idle vanity.

“Touch his heart with jealousy,
Shape a dream to rouse despair;
Then to the sad maiden flee,
And expel her silly care.

“So, when the streaky dawn doth wake.
Each shall rise, with changed intent;
Each shall the other’s fortune take,
He, despair — and she, content.

“If these dreams ye shadow well,
Return, before the lark is up,
Or the chime of matin bell;
Dance the morrice; sip the cup.
“Now farewell.”

Scarce had she spoke, when all the bower
As in a twilight shadow lay;
The dewy lamp on every flower
Quivered first, then died away.
Her magic diamond warned the Queen
Of step unhallowed passing near;
It paled its ray to trembling green,
And shrunk with sympathetic fear.

Then hastily the Queen exclaimed,
“Some mortal footsteps press the ground

For Edwy, when the Elves she named,
Had nearer drawn to catch the sound.

Just then the little Nightingale,
In pity of the lover’s pain,
Sung from Mimosa’s shadowy veil
His softest, sweetest, saddest tale.

Which, well he knew, his Queen would win
From aught ungracious, or severe.
With charmed, attentive, brow serene,
She smiled, and, dashing off a tear,

On Eda called, the Love Fay, thrice,
Some tale of mortal truth to tell: —
Her name did Edwy’s bear! rejoice;
For, that Fay’s name completes his spell!

Then straight, the bower began to show
Returning light; and, through each bud,
From faintness freed to living glow,
Girded the bright transparent blood.

Now what of chastisement befell
This vagrant swain, for his intrusion,
Village-tradition doea not tell,
Or tells with most profound confusion.

But this most gossips do relate,
That, though he was not held in durance,
He gained no knowledge of his fate,
And nothing got by his assurance.

Unless it be, that he did see
What seldom had been seen before,
A Fairie Court, in starlight sport
With pleasure squadrons and on shore.
But haply, on some other day,
We may learn more of his manœuvres,
And then we shall not fail to say,
What came of Aura and her lovers.

PART III.

THE MAGIC MIRRORS.

A SUMMER NIGHT IN WINDSOR FOREST.

EDWY forsook the Fairie Court,
And to forest-glades withdrew,
Where never yet had elfin-sport
Cheered the melancholy view.

Upon the hazel-wands he writes
Eda’s name, with “thrice and three,”
Then buries them, with bidden rites,
Underneath a forest-tree.

It was an oak, whose trunk within
A foul and watching spirit lay,
Whose night-shrieks in the tempest-din,
Filled the traveller with dismay:

It was an oak, whose sinewy boughs
Threw a dark horror o’er the ground;

Whose high, gaunt top and warrior-brows
With the storms of ages frowned.

Its trunk was never touched with light,
So wide and deep the branching shade
Of leaves, that, on a starry night,
A gleam, like break of morning, shed.

But the brook, stealing from the brake,
Showed a glimpse of brighter ray,
When on it’s dewy banks did take
Will-o’-the Wisp his mystic way.

Round the high roots our Edwy drew,
With muttered charm, a magic line;
And in the circle heart’s ease threw,
And briony and eglantine;
Then sweets and poisons three mad three,
Jess’mine blossoms, violet bud,
The deadly nightshade’s tresses grey,
And the pale Monk’s gloomy bead.

Next, the buried wands be raised,
And “Eda! Eda! Eda!” called;
Thrice upon the West he gazed,
When, hark! a shriek his breast appalled.

It was the spirit of the oak,
Who, startled by the Love-Fay’s name,
His dark and secret home forsook.
He fled, in baste, whene’er she came.

A tongue from Windsor’s distant tower
Tolled Twelve along the silent wood,

When, lo! the planet of the hour
Quivered upon the trembling flood.

Cheered by the monitory sight,
Then Edwy forth his mirrors draw,
And by that star’s informing light.
Upheld them to his searching view.

Again be called on Eda’s name
Mildly and meekly to appear.
And round the crystals rolled a flame;
While unknown murmurs met his ear.

See! — o’er the mirrors mists arise,
And strange and fearful shadows throng;
Frowning faces, glaring eyes
Look and threat and glance along.

These gone, a tiny form there bounds,
Flitting along the magic glass;
Which, in an instant, her surrounds
With leaves of Love in Idleness.

She seems reclining in a bower,
As the green leaves around her spread,
The motley-yellow, purple flower
Bends in a top-knot o’er her head.
As round this cage of wreaths she hies,
Forth from her wand a lustre pale
Dawns o’er her blue and frolic eyes,
And silvers all her dewy veil.

Touches the rose upon her cheek,
The dimple, that her quaint lip owns,

The smile, that now begins to break,
Through clouds of wild, capricious frowns.

While Edwy gazed, a little strain
Of sweet complaint did feebly swell,
When, hovering round her leafy chain,
Behold! her faithful Nightingale!

He perched upon the true-knot there,
And tried to break, with slender bill,
Her prison-wreath, so flowery fair;
But the leaves mocked his puny skill.

Too late, she owns the forceful spell
The little purple blossom throws.
Fixed, as a painting, she must tell
Mildly and meekly all she knows!

“Fairy Eda! show to me
Aùra, as she’s now employed.” —
“On the other glass you ‘ll see
With pretty lisp the Fay replied.

He looked; the colours faintly dawn, ‘
And living forms begin to glow:
Aura, full-dressed in lace and lawn,
Blooms in a ball-room with a beau.

And, dancing with a Grace’s air,
And with the eyes of Venus smiling,
Edwy beheld her, with despair,
His hated rival’s heart beguiling.

To atoms he had almost dashed
The mirror, and so lost the spell,
But warning lights around him flashed,
Checked his hand, and all was well,
“Who is this Fop, so light and vain?” —
Quickly, the magic scene is changed
To rivers, woods, a wide domain,
With falconers on the banks ranged.

All at their head his rival pranced
In velvet cap, with feathers gay,
And proudly o’er the sward advanced,
While men and steeds their lord obey.

“O tell me, Eda — loves she him?
Can she her promise old forget?” —
A flame curled round the mirror’s rim;
The crystal darkened into jet.

And in long moonlight prospect rose
Windsor-Terrace, flanked with towers;
How soft the lights and shades repose —
Among the low Park’s lawns and bowers!

Oh! what an arch the heavens throw
Upon the vast horizon round!
The stars! how numberless they glow
Down to the landscape’s dim-seen bound!

Some battlements are left in night;
Others almost appear to shine
Of yonder tower, whose stately height
Draws on the sky a tall black line,

That measures, on the azure void.
Billions of miles, while worlds unknown,
Distant howe’er, glow, side by side,
Upon it’s shadowy profile shown.

Down on the terrace, men appear,
Gliding along the stately wall,
With arms enfolding the tall spear —
How still their measured footsteps fall!

Voices are heard round that vast shade,
Although no talkers meet the sight;
But, beyond, where moonbeams spread,
Figures steal upon the light.
‘Twas Aura, with a lady-friend —
‘Twas Aura, with this lover new!
Ah! does she to his suit attend?
The distance baffled Edwy’s view.

“Eda! Eda! why torment me
With obscure ambiguous truth?
Thou to show my fate wast sent me.
Say, will she wed this fopling-youth?”

Behold! the terrace fades away!
And a tap’stried room succeeds;
Her sire, with age and wisdom grey,
‘Mid lawyer, settlements and deed

Again, the charmed picture changed:
A gothic porch, with silk all hung;
There beaux and ladies fair are ranged,
While humbler gazers round them throng.

There a happy rival waited
With his friends, in trim array:
“Aura! what makes thee belated?
Aura! why this long delay?”

Again, the mirrors were in danger,
From our thoughtless Edwy’s rage;
But a fairie checked his anger —
Would she might his grief assuage!

Next, dimly on the crystal steals
A chamber in her father’s home;
There, Aura, weeping, pleads and kneels!
The father, frowning, quits the room.

Again the changeful glass receives
The porch — and Edwy, doth he tremble,
As smiling Aura there he sees?
And whom doth the bridegroom resemble?

It is — *himself!* — He’s joyous, frantic,
As the glass showed his happy shape;
But as he sprung, with gesture antic,
It fell, and let the fairie ‘scape!
Without due homage let her fly!
Straight, unknown voices from the ground
Wildly exclaimed, “ O fie! fie! fie!”
And “Fie! fie! fie!” the echoes sound.

Unhomaged he had let her fly f
From the old oak an owlet hooted;
And thence a louder “Fie! fie! fie!”
To the spot poor Edwy rooted.

But, soon recovered, through the woods,
Hopeful and light, away he sprung:
The moon peeped through their leafy hoods,
And o’er the path her chequers flung.

To the forest’s-edge he hied,
Where the Beech’s giant-form
Had, for age on age, defied,
With his lion-fangs the storm:

Where the Lime, with spotted bark —
Spots, that old moss on silver weaves,
Hung her spray on branches dark
Among the light transparent leaves,

And fragrant blossoms, forming bowers,
That cast, at noon, a twilight green,
Where ‘twas most sweet to watch the hours
Change the highly-tinctured scene.

The silvery Aspin quivered nigh,
The spiry Pine in darkness rose,
The Ash, all airy grace, on high
Waved her lightly-feathered boughs.

And there the mighty Chesnut reared
His massy verdure, deepening night;
Whose pale flowers through the dark appeared
Like gleams of April’s coldest light.

Under the low boughs Edwy went.
Shade, after shade, in dose array,
A sadder tint to midnight lent;
And thoughtless Edwy lost his way.

Now, far beyond the long-drawn gloom.
Where a faint, misty moonlight fell,
He watched a lonely figure roam,
And loud he made the echoes swell.

His call was heard, the stranger turned,
And paused a moment; but, in vain,
Our Edwy would his way have learned,
For, not a word in answer came.

The vision fled — but soon a cry,
Loud, though far-off, alarmed his ear;
And a footstep passed him by;
Which he followed fast and near.

Till a groan of sad affright
Almost killed him, with dismay;
And to his undoubting sight
There a man expiring lay.

As, horror-fixed, awhile he stood,
A cloud o’erspread it’s darkening veil;
It suited well his fearful mood;
It hid that dreadful visage pale.

Now, mark, where yonder high elms crowd,
What red lights gleam and pass along!
What funeral torches, dirges loud!
A bier and mourners round it throng.

Down th’ avenue of pines they go:
All sad and chaunting their despair,
Then wind they on in pomp of woe;
Then fade and vanish into air!

For, yonder, o’er the eastern hill,
Morning’s crystal tint is seen,
Edging the darkness, solemn still,
And glimmering o’er the sleeping scene.

O best of light! O light of soul!
O blessed Dawn, to thee we owe
The humbled thought — our mind’s best dole,
The bliss of praise — Devotion’s glow.
O blessed Dawn! more sweet to me
Thy gradual hues, thy influence fine
O’er flying darkness, than the ray
And glorious pomp, that doth enshrine

The cope of heaven, when the Sun
Comes laughing from the joyous East,
And bids th’ expressive shadows run
To tell his coming to the West.

At thy first tint the happy lark
Awakes, and trills his note of joy;
And feebler, warbling murmurs, hark!
Break from the woodlands — rise, and die,

At thy first tint, O blessed light!
Th’ observant Elves and spectres fled,
And that misguiding, watching sprite
Home to her oaken dungeon sped;

Elfena then, the mischief-fay,
Who with an urchin had combined
To ‘wilder Edwy thus astray;
Now in a Monk’s-hood is confined.

No dying man was there — no moan,
There were no red-lights, near the elms,
No funeral torches, dirge's moan,
No sable band, whom grief o'erwhelms.

Still, doubtful of his homeward way,
Our hero watched the rise of dawn,
Over a beech-tree's airy spray,
That trembles on the Park's high lawn.

And soon the glorious Sun was spied,
And Windsor, in her pomp of groves,
Hose up in battlemented pride,
Queen of the vale, that Old Thames loves —

From where the far-seen western hill
In smiling slumber seems to lie,
Upon the azure vault so still
As listening heaven's harmony,
To where, beneath the eastern ray,
With swelling dome and spires aloft,
Vast London's lengthened city lay,
All miniatured, distinct and soft —

To where, upon the northern edge,
Learned Harrow points her vane,
And Stanmore lifts it's heathy ridge,
Sloping to the cultured plain,

Which, purpled with the morning's glow,
To boundless tints of azure fades,
While humbler spires and hamlets show
Their sun-lights o'er the woody shades;

And gleaming Thames along the vale,
‘Midst willowy meads, his waters led,
While, here and there, a feeble sail
Was to the scarce-felt breeze outspread.

The willowy meads and lawns rejoice;
And every heath, and warbling wood;
The fragrant air, with whispering voice,
The golden clouds, the brightened flood,

All laugh and sing beneath the morn,
The dancing lamb, the springing deer;
The wild bee with his humming horn,
And, loud and long, Sir Chanticleer.

Soon as his joyous clarion calls,
Answering notes strike up and swell
From rafter dark and loop-holed walls,
Where sleep and silence seemed to dwell,

Surprising with their clamour clear
The passing herdsman and his hound;
Thus, far and near, Sir Chanticleer
Rouses up all the country round.

Edwy so roused, who long had stood
Over this scene of morning beauty,
Forgetting every other good,
And lost to each forgotten duty,
Now, bounding lightly down the hills
And through the high o’erarching groves,
Hied to his home, where Eda wills
He soon shall wed the nymph he loves;

And grateful for the boon she grants,
He now resolves, that, never more,
His spell shall shock her quiet haunts;
And quite abjures the magic lore.

But, — never let impatient wight,
When he presumes to woo a fairie,
Destroy his glass, — or rouse her spite,
But civil be — and very wary.

Thus all was well,
As watchmen tell,
Of fairie sports in Windsor glades,
Save that too long
A summer-song
Once lingered in those witching shades.

SCENE ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF SICILY .

HERE, from the Castle’s terraced site,
I view, once more, the varied scene
Of hamlets, woods, and pastures green,
And vales far stretching from the sight
Beneath the tints of coming night;
And there is misty ocean seen,
With glancing oars and waves serene,
And stealing sail of shifting light.
Now, let me hear the shepherd’s lay,
As on some bank he sits alone;
That oaten reed, of tender tone,
He loves, at setting sun, to play.
It speaks in Joy’s delightful glee;
Then Pity’s strains its breath obey —
Or Love’s soft voice it seems to be —
And steals at last the soul away!

The Non-Fictio n

Radcliffe lived for many years at 5 Stafford Row, Pimlico, modern day Bressenden Place. This is one of the few biographical locations that are known regarding the author's life.

JOURNEY MADE IN THE SUMMER OF 17 94

A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 Through Holland and the West Frontier of Germany is a travel narrative, published in 1795, which traces Radcliffe's journey through Holland to parts of West Germany, including a trip down the Rhine. Radcliffe also records her visits to the lakes of 'Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland'. This kind of travel writing was popular with writers and public figures in the 18th and 19th century, with Samuel Johnson, Charles Dickens and Thomas Jefferson all contributing to the genre. Radcliffe travelled with her husband and the work consists of their joint observations, although the whole book is written by Radcliffe. The opening section details her journey through Holland where she makes observations about the attire of Dutch people, the furniture and surroundings. Radcliffe includes a very detailed account of what she sees, such as the height and width of the corn and comments that roads were not divided by hedges or walls, but by deep ditches full of water. The wealth of the country and the national character come under scrutiny when Radcliffe proclaims that the Dutch love money not as a means, but an end, although she grants them a lack of cruelty in their enjoyment of sport.

Radcliffe visits Cologne where she describes the towers and spires and towers of churches and the suffocating air. While Radcliffe continues to comment on her environment and those she encounters, she also describes in great detail historical battles fought at certain locations and the colour of the Austrian regiments' uniforms. The tour through the lakes in Northern England provides Radcliffe with the opportunity to provide incredibly detailed observations about the shape, width and depth of the water expanses and the surrounding woods and summits. The architecture and construction of the villages is assessed alongside the behaviour of the 'poor' and the clergy. The author describes the history, geography and culture of the Lake-District and the manners and accents of its inhabitants. Whilst her travel narrative clearly reflects her tastes, Radcliffe avoids engaging with political ideas and it does not serve as a deliberate vehicle to express her philosophy or ideas.

Eighteenth Century map of Holland and Belgium

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Ullswater, Cumbria, visited by Radcliffe in her travels

A JOURNEY MADE IN THE SUMMER OF 1794, THROUGH HOLLAND AND THE WESTERN FRONTIER OF GERMANY, WITH A RETURN DOWN THE RHINE: TO WHICH ARE ADDED OBSERVATIONS DURING A TOUR TO THE LAKES OF LANCASHIRE, WESTMORELAND, AND CUMBERLAND.

BY ANN RADCLIFFE.

THE Author begs leave to observe, in explanation of the use made of the plural term in the following pages, that, her journey having been performed in the company of her nearest relative and friend, the account of it has been written so much from their mutual observation, that there would be a deception in permitting the book to appear, without some acknowledgment, which may distinguish it from works entirely her own. The title page would, therefore, have contained the joint names of her husband and herself, if this mode of appearing before the Public, besides being thought by that relative a greater acknowledgement than was due to his share of the work, had not seemed liable to the imputation of a design to attract attention by extraordinary novelty. It is, however, necessary to her own satisfaction, that some notice should be taken of this assistance. She may therefore, be permitted to intrude a few more words, as to this subject, by saying, that where the oeconomical and political conditions of countries are touched upon in the following work, the remarks are less her own than elsewhere.

With respect to the book itself, it is, of course, impossible, and would be degrading if it were not so, to prevent just censure by apologies; and unjust censure she has no reason, from her experience, to fear; — but she will venture to defend a practice adopted in the following pages, that has been sometimes blamed for its apparent nationality, by writers of the most respectable authority. The references to England, which frequently occur during the foreign part of the tour, are made because it has seemed that one of the best modes of describing to any class of readers what they may not know, is by comparing it with what they do.

May 20, 1795.

1. HOLLAN D

1.1. HELVOETSLUYS .

ABOUT twenty hours after our embarkation, at Harwich, and six after our first sight of the low-spread and barren coast of *Gorce*, we reached this place, which is seated on one of many inlets, that carry the waters of the German Ocean through the southern part of the province of Holland. *Goree*, rendered an island by these encroachments of the sea, is always the first land expected by the seamen; or rather they look out for the lofty tower of its church, which, though several miles more distant than the shore, is visible when that cannot be discerned. The entrance of the water between the land, in a channel probably three leagues wide, soon after commences; and Helvoetsluys is then presently seen, with the masts of vessels rising above its low houses, amidst green embankments and pastures, that there begin to reward the care of excluding the sea.

The names of Dutch towns are in themselves expressive of the objects most interesting to a people, who, for opportunities of commerce, have increased their original and natural dangers, by admitting the water in some parts, while, for their homes and their lives, they must prevent it from encroaching upon others. *Dam*, *Sluice*, or *Dyke* occur in almost all their compounded titles. The sluice, which gives this town part of its name, is also its harbour; affording, perhaps, an outlet to the overflowings of the country behind, but filled at the entrance to the depth of more than eighty feet by the sea, with which it communicates.

Upon the banks of this sluice, which are partly artificial, the town is built in one short street of small houses, inhabited chiefly by tradesmen and innkeepers. The dockyard bounds the sluice and the town, communicating with the former by gates, over which a small pivot bridge connects the two sides of the street. Each head of the pier, or harbour, has been extended beyond the land for several yards, by pile work, filled with earth and large stones, over which there is no pavement, that its condition may be constantly known. We stepped from the packet upon one of these, and, walking along the beams, that pass between the immense piles, saw how closely the *interstices* were filled, and how the earth and stones were again compacted by a strong kind of basket-work.

The arrival of a packet is the chief incident known at Helvoetsluys; and, as ours entered the harbour about noon, and in fine weather, perhaps, a fourth part of the inhabitants were collected as spectators. Their appearance did not surprise us with all the novelty, which we had expected from the first sight of a foreign people. The Dutch seamen every where retain the national dress; but the other men of Helvoetsluys differ from Englishmen in their appearance chiefly by wearing coarser clothes, and by bringing their pipes with them into the street. Further on, several women were collected about their baskets of herbs, and their dress had some of the novelty, for which we were looking; they had hats of the size of a small chinese umbrella, and almost as gaudily lined within; close, white jackets, with long flaps; short, coloured petticoats, in the shape of a divingbell; yellow slippers, without quarters at the heel; and caps, that exactly fitted the head and concealed the hair, but which were ornamented at the temples by gold filiagree clasps, twirling, like vine tendrils, over the cheeks of the wearer.

Our inn was kept by English people, but the furniture was entirely Dutch. Two beds, like cribs in a ship, were let into the wainscot; and we were told, that, in all the inns on our journey, we should seldom, or never, be shewn into a room, which had not a bed.

Helvoetsluys, it sufficiently appears, is a very inconsiderable place, as to its size and inhabitants. But it is not so in naval, or military estimation. It is distant about ten or twelve miles from the open sea, yet is nearly secure from attack on this side, because that part of the approach, which is deep enough for large vessels, is commanded by batteries on shore. It stands in the middle of an immense bay, large enough to contain all the navy of Holland, and has a dockyard and arsenal in the centre of the fortifications. When we passed through it, six ships of the line and two frigates were lying in the dockyard, and two ships of the line and three frigates, under the command of an Admiral, in the bay.

The fortifications, we were assured upon good military authority, were in such repair, that not a sod was out of its place, and are strong enough to be defended by five thousand men against an hundred thousand, for five weeks. The sea water rises to a considerable height in a wide ditch, which surrounds them. We omitted to copy an inscription, placed on one of the walls, which told the date of their completion; but this was probably about

the year 1696, when the harbour was perfected. Though the dockyard can be only one of the dependencies upon that of Rotterdam, the largest ships of that jurisdiction are preserved here, on account of the convenient communication between the port and the sea.

Near this place may be observed, what we examined with more leisure upon our return, the ingenuity, utility and vastness of the embankments, opposed by the Dutch to the sea. From Helvoetsluys eastward, for many miles, the land is preserved from the sea only by an artificial mound of earth, against which the water heavily and often impetuously strives for admission into the sheltered plains below. The sea, at high water, is so much above the level of the ground, from which it is thus boldly separated, that one who stands on the land side of the embankment hears the water foaming, as if over his head. Yet the mound itself, which has stood for two centuries, at least, without repair, though with many renewals of the means, that protect it, is still unhurt and undiminished, and may yet see generations of those, whom it defends, rising and passing away, on one side, like the fluctuations of the tides, which assail and retire from it, on the other.

It is better, however, to describe than to praise. The mound, which appears to be throughout of the same height, as to the sea, is sometimes more and sometimes less raised above the fields; for, where the natural level of the land assists in resistance to the water, the Hollanders have, of course, availed themselves of it, to exert the less of their art and their labour. It is, perhaps, for the most part, thirty feet above the adjoining land. The width at top is enough to permit the passage of two carriages, and there is a sort of imperfect road along it. In its descent, the breadth increases so much, that it is not very difficult to walk down either side. We could not measure it, and may therefore be excused for relating how its size may be guessed.

On the land side, it is said to be strengthened by stone and timber, which we did not see, but which may be there, covered by earth and grass. Towards the sea, somewhat above and considerably below high-water mark, a strong matting of flags prevents the surge from carrying away the surface of the mound; and this is the defence which has so long preserved it. The matting is held to the shore by bandages of twisted flags, running horizontally, at the distance of three or four yards from each other, and

staked to the ground by strong wooden pins. As this matting is worn by every tide, a survey of it is frequently made, and many parts appear to have been just repaired. Further in the sea, it is held down by stones; above, there are posts at every forty yards, which are numbered, that the spot may be exactly described where repairs are necessary. The impost for the maintenance of these banks amounts to nearly as much as the land-tax; and, as the land could not be possessed without it, this tax has the valuable character of being occasioned by no mismanagement, and of producing no discontent.

1.2. ROTTERDAM .

FROM Helvoetsluys to this place the usual way is by the Brill and Maesland sluice, with several changes of carriages and boats; but, on the days of the arrival of mails, a Rotterdam skipper, whose vessel has been left at a hamlet on the Maese, takes his party in carriages across the island of Voorn, on which Helvoetsluys stands, to his schuyt, and from thence by the Maese to Rotterdam. We paid two ducats, or about seventeen shillings, for the whole, and found this the highest price given for travelling in Holland. Our carriage was a sort of small coach of the fashion, exhibited in paintings of the sixteenth century, but open before, and so ill-furnished with springs, that the Dutch name, '"a covered waggon,"' was not an improper description of it. A bad road led us through some meadows of meagre grass, and through fields in which corn was higher, though thinner, than in England. The prospect was over an entire level to the horizon, except that the spires of distant villages, some small clusters of trees, and now and then a windmill, varied it. As we approached any of these clusters, we found usually a neat farm-house sheltered within, and included, together with its garden and orchard, in a perfect green fence: the fields were elsewhere separated from each other and from the road, neither by hedges or walls, but by deep ditches filled with water, over which are laid small bridges, that may be opened in the middle by a sort of trapdoor, raised and locked to a post, to prevent the intrusion of strangers.

On the way we passed now and then a waggon filled with large brass jugs, bright as new gold. In these vessels, which have short narrow necks, covered with a wooden stopper, milk is brought from the field throughout Holland. It is always carried to the towns in light waggons, or carts, drawn frequently by horses as sleek and wellconditioned as those in our best coaches.

The hamlet, at which we were to embark, was busied in celebrating some holiday. At the only cottage, that had a sign, we applied for refreshment, partly for the purpose of seeing its inside, by which we were not a little gratified. Thirty or forty peasants were seated upon benches, about a circle, in which children were dancing to the scraping of a French fiddler. The women wore their large hats, set up in the air like a spread fan,

and lined with damask, or flowered linen. Children of seven years old, as well as women of seventy, were in this preposterous disguise. All had necklaces, ear-rings, and ornamental clasps for the temples, of solid gold: some wore large black patches of the size of a shilling. The old woman of the house had a valuable necklace and head-dress. Among the group were many of Teniers' beauties; and over the countenances of the whole assemblage was an air of modesty, decorum, and tranquillity. The children left their dancing, to see us; and we had almost lost our tide to Rotterdam, by staying to see them.

Our sail up the Maese was very delightful. The river flows here with great dignity, and is animated with vessels of all countries passing to and from Rotterdam. The huge Archangelman, the lighter American, the smart, swift Englishman, and the bulky Dutchman, exhibit a various scene of shipping, upon a noble surface of water, winding between green pastures and rich villages, spread along the low shores, where pointed roofs, trees, and masts of fishing-boats, are seen mingled in striking confusion. Small trading schuyts, as stout and as round as their masters, glided by us, with crews reposing under their deep orange sails, and frequently exchanging some salute with our captain. On our left, we passed the little town of Flaarding, celebrated for its share of the herring-fishery on our coasts; and Schiedam, a larger port, where what is called the Rotterdam geneva is made, and where several English vessels were visible in the chief street of the place. After a sail of two hours we distinguished Rotterdam, surrounded by more wood than had yet appeared, and overtopped by the heavy round tower of the great church of St. Lawrence. The flatness of its situation did not allow us here to judge of its extent; but we soon perceived the grandeur of an ample city, extending along the north shore of the Maese, that, now spreading into a noble bay, along the margin of which Rotterdam rises, sweeps towards the south-east.

The part of the city first seen, from the river, is said to be among the finest in Europe for magnificence and convenience of situation. It is called the *Boom Quay, i. e.* the quay with trees, having rows of lofty elms upon the broad terrace, that supports many noble houses, but which is called a quay, because ships of considerable burthen may moor against it, and deliver their cargoes. The merchants accordingly, who have residences here, have their warehouses adjoining their houses, and frequently build

them in the form of domestic offices. The quay is said to be a mile in length, but appears to be somewhat less. There are houses upon it, as handsome as any in the squares of London.

At the top of the *Boom Quay* is one of the *Heads*, or entrances by water into the city, through which the greater part of its numerous canals receive their supplies. On the approach to it, the view further up the Maese detains attention to the bank of this noble river. A vast building, erected for the Admiralty, is made, by a bend of the Maese, almost to face you; and the interval, of more than a quarter of a mile, is filled by a line of houses, that open directly, and without a terrace, upon the water. The fronts of these are in another street; but they all exhibit, even on this side, what is the distinction of Dutch houses and towns, a nicety and a perfectness of preservation, which give them an air of gaiety without, and present you with an idea of comfort within. What in England would be thought a symptom of extraordinary wealth, or extravagance, is here universal. The outside of every house, however old or humble, is as clean as water and paint can make it. The window-shutters are usually coloured green; and whatever wood appears, whether in cornices or worse ornaments, is so frequently cleaned, as well as painted, that it has always the gloss of newness. Grotesque ornaments are sometimes by these means rendered conspicuous; and a street acquires the air of a town in a toyshop; but in general there is not in this respect such a want of taste as can much diminish the value of their care.

Our skipper reached his birth, which is constantly in the same place, soon after passing the *Head*, and entering by a canal into one of the principal streets of the city. Between the broad terraces of this street, which are edged with thick elms, the innumerable masts of Dutch schuyts, with gay pendants and gilded tops; the hulls of larger vessels from all parts of the world; the white drawbridges, covered with passengers; the boats, continually moving, without noise or apparent difficulty; all this did somewhat surprise us, who had supposed that a city so familiarly known, and yet so little mentioned as Rotterdam, could have nothing so remarkable as its wealth and trade.

In our way from the boat to the inn, other fine canals opened upon us on each side, and we looked at them till we had lost the man, whom we should have followed with our baggage. We had no fear that it would be

stolen, knowing the infrequency of robberies in Holland; and the first person, of whom we could enquire our way in broken Dutch, acknowledged his country people by answering in very good English. There are many hundreds of British residents in this place, and our language and commerce have greatly the sway here over those of all other foreign nations. The Dutch inscriptions over warehouses and shops have frequently English translations underneath them. Of large vessels, there are nearly as many English as Dutch in the harbour; and, if you speak to any Dutchman in the street, it is more probable that he can answer in English than in French. On a Sunday, the English fill two churches, one of which we attended on our return. It is an oblong brick building, permitted by the States to be within the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, Parliament having given 2500 l. towards its completion in the beginning of the present century. There are also many Protestant dissenters here, who are said to have their offices of worship performed with the ability, simplicity, and zeal, which are usually to be observed in the devotions of that class of Christians.

Rotterdam is the second city for size, and perhaps the first for beauty, in the United Provinces; yet, when we walked through it the next day, and expected to find the magnificence of the approach equalled in its interior, we were compelled to withdraw a little of the premature admiration, that had begun to extend to the whole place. The street, where there is most trade and the greatest passage, the *Hoogstraat*, is little wider, though it is abundantly cleaner, than a London lane. The Stadthouse is in this street, and is an old brick building, with a peaked roof, not entirely free from fantastic ornament. It has been built too early to have the advantages of modern elegance, and too late for the sanction of ancient dignity. The marketplace has only one wide access; and the communication between the street, from the principal *Head*, and that in which the Exchange is placed, is partly through a very narrow, though a short passage. The Exchange itself is a plain stone building, well designed for its purpose, and completed about fifty years ago. The happiest circumstance relating to it is, that the merchants are numerous enough to fill the colonnades on the four sides of its interior. Commerce, which cannot now be long discouraged in any part of Europe, because without it the interest of public

debts cannot be paid, is the permanent defender of freedom and knowledge against military glory and politics.

From the Exchange there is an excellent walk to the marketplace, where the wellknown statue of ERASMUS is raised. Being represented in his doctor's dress, the figure can display little of the artist's skill; but the countenance has strong lines, and a physiognomist would not deny them to be expressive of the discernment and shrewdness of the original.

The marketplace is really a large bridge, for a canal passes under it; but its size, and the easiness of ascent from the sides, prevent this from being immediately observed. Some of the surrounding houses have their dates marked upon glazed tiles. They were built during the long war, that rescued the provinces from the Spanish dominion; a time when it might be supposed that nothing would have been attended to, except the business of providing daily food, and the duty of resisting the enemy; but in which the Dutch enlarged and beautified their cities, prepared their country to become a medium of commerce, and began nearly all the measures, which have led to their present extensive prosperity.

Near this place is the great church of St. LAWRENCE, which we entered, but did not find to be remarkable, except for a magnificent brass balustrade that crosses it at the upper end. A profusion of *achievements,* which cover the walls almost to the top, contribute to its solemnity. In addition to the arms of the deceased, they contain the dates of their birth and death, and are used instead of inscriptions, though no names are expressed upon them. Under the pulpit was an hour-glass, which limits the discourse of the preacher: on one side a wand, having at the end a velvet bag and a small bell; this is carried about, during an interval in the service, and every body puts something into it for the poor. The old beadle, who shewed us the church, laid his hands upon us with pleasure, when he heard that we were English, and Protestants. There are three ministers to this church, with salaries of nearly two hundred pounds sterling each.

We went to our inn through the *Hoogstraat,* which was filled with people and carriages, but has no raised pavement to separate the one from the other. In all the towns which we saw, the footpath is distinguished from the road only by being paved with a sort of light coloured brick. The Dutch shops are in the shape, which those of London are described to have had fifty years since, with small high windows, and blocks between them and

the street. Silversmiths expose their goods in small glass cupboards upon the blocks, and nearly all the trades make upon them what little shew is customary. Almost every tenth house displays the inscription *Tabak te koop,* ‘“Tobacco to be sold.”’ This street, having no canal, is occupied entirely by retail traders. We bought in it the Antwerp Gazette for two doights, or one farthing; strawberries, large and well coloured, at a lower price than they could be had six weeks later in England, but without flavour; and went into several booksellers’ shops, expecting to have found something in Latin, or French, but could see only Dutch books. In another street a bookseller had several English volumes, and there are no doubt well filled shops, but not so numerous as that we could find any.

Over the canals, that flow through almost every street of Rotterdam, are great numbers of large drawbridges, which contribute much to the neat and gay appearance of the city; but, when these are raised, the obstruction to the passage occasions crowds on each side; and, therefore, in some of the most frequented parts, the bridges are entire and permanent, except for the breadth of three feet in the centre, where there is a plank, which opens upon hinges almost as easily as the lid of a trunk. Through this opening the masts of the small Dutch schuyts are easily conducted, but ships can pass only where there are drawbridges. The number of the former is immense; for, throughout the provinces, every village, if it is near a canal, has several schuyts, which carry away the superfluous produce of the country, and return with the manufactures, or stores of the towns. But neither their number, nor their neatness, is so remarkable as the ease and stillness, with which they traverse the city; and indeed ease and stillness are much the characteristics of all the efforts of Dutch industry. The noise and agitation, usual whenever many persons are employed together in other countries, are unknown here. Ships are brought to their moorings, schuyts pass each other in crowded canals, heavy burthens are raised and cargoes removed, almost without a word, that can be heard at twenty yards distance.

Another circumstance, rendering Dutch towns freer from noise than others of equal traffic, is the little use which is made of waggons and carts, even where some sort of land carriage must be employed. Heavy commodities are usually carried about the streets on sledges; and almost the greatest noise is, when the driver of one of these, after having delivered his load, meaning to render himself a prodigy of frolicsomeness,

stands upon the hinder edges of his sledge, and then, preventing himself from falling backward by his hold of the reins, is drawn rapidly through the admiring crowd.

We were long enough at Rotterdam, during three visits, to see how well it is provided with avenues towards the country and along the banks of the Maese. To one of these the way is over the two *Heads,* or chief canals, each of which you cross for a doight, or half a farthing, in boats that are continually passing between the two sides. This little voyage saves a walk of about three hundred yards to the nearest bridge. The boats will hold twenty or thirty persons, and the profit of them is very considerable to the City government, which applies the money to public purposes. Each boat is worked by one man, who pulls it over by a rope in a about two minutes.

Many of the inhabitants have what they call garden-houses upon these walks, and upon a semicircular road, which passes on the land side of the city; but the most wealthy have seats at greater distances, where they can be surrounded with grounds, and make the display of independent residences.

Upon the whole, Rotterdam has from its situation many conveniences and delights, and from its structure some magnificence, together with a general neatness; but is, for the most part, desicient in elegance, and its beauties have too much the air of prettinesses. The canals are indisputably fine, crowned with lofty terraces, and deep enough to carry large vessels into the centre of the city.

1.3. DELFT .

BETWEEN Rotterdam and this place we commenced our travelling in trechtschuyts, which are too well known to need description. The fare is at the rate of about a penny per mile, and a trifle more hires the *roof*, which is a small separate chamber, nearest to the stern of the vessel, lighted by windows on each side. In engaging this, you have an instance of the accuracy of the Dutch in their minutest transactions; a formal printed receipt, or ticket, is given for the few pence which it costs, by a commissary, who has no other business than to regulate the affairs of the trechtschuyts at his gate of the city. We could never learn what proportion of the fare is paid as a tax to the State, but it is said to be a considerable part; and not only these schuyts, but the ferries, the post waggons, and the pilotage throughout the United States, are made contributory to the public funds.

The punctuality of the departure and arrival of the trechtschuyts is well known, and justifies the Dutch method of reckoning distances, which is by hours, and not by leagues or miles. The canals being generally full to the brim, the top of the vessel is above the level of the adjoining country, and the view over it is of course extensive; but the houses and gardens, which are best worth seeing, are almost always upon the banks of the canal. We passed several such in the way to Delft, towards which the Rotterdam merchants have their favourite seats; but Dutch gardens are rather to be noticed by an Englishman as curiosities, than as luxuries. It is not only by the known ill taste of their ornaments, but by the effects of climate and the soil, that gardens are deprived of value, in a country, where the moisture is so disproportioned to the heat, that the verdure, though bright, has no fragrance, and the fruit, at its utmost size, scarcely any flavour.

A passage of two hours brought us to Delft, which we had expected to find a small and ill-inhabited place, knowing it to be not now occupied by any considerable trade. Our inn, we supposed, must be within a few minutes walk. We proceeded, however, through one street for half a mile, and, after some turnings, did not reach our inn, though we were led by the nearest way, in less than twenty minutes. During all this time we were upon the terraces of clear canals, amongst excellent houses, with a small

intermixture of shops and some public buildings. The mingled admiration and weariness, which we felt here, for the first time, have been, however, often repeated; for if there is a necessity for saying what is the next distinction of Dutch towns, after their neatness, their size must be insisted upon. There are Dutch villages, scarcely marked in a map, which exceed in size some of the county towns in England. *Maesland Sluice,* a place opposite to the Brill, is one. And here is Delft, a place with scarcely any other trade than consists in the circulation of commodities from Rotterdam through some neighbouring villages; which is not the seat of any considerable part of the national government, and is inferior, in point of situation, to all the surrounding towns. Delft, thus undistinguished, fills a large circumference, with streets so intricately thick, that we never went from our inn without losing our way.

The *Doolen,* one of the best inns in Holland, is a large building of the sixteenth century, raised by the Spaniards, and first intended to be a convent; but, having been used by the burghers of Delft for public purposes, during the struggle of the Provinces against Spain, it is now venerable as the scene of their councils and preparations. In the suite of large apartments, which were used by them, some of the city business is still transacted, and in these strangers are never entertained. Behind, is a bowling-green, in which the burghers to this day perform their military exercises: they were so employed when we came in; and it was pleasing to consider, that their inferiority to their ancestors, in point of martial appearance, was the result of the long internal peace secured by the exertions of the latter.

Over two arches of the building is the date of its erection, 1565, the year in which the destruction of all families, professing the Protestant religion either in France or Spain, is supposed to have been agreed upon at Bayonne between the sovereigns of the two countries, and one year preceding the first measures of confederate resistance in the Low Countries, which that and other efforts of persecution produced. One of these arches communicates with the rooms so long used by the burghers; and our hostess, an intelligent woman, accompanied us through them. The first is ornamented with three large pictures, representing several of the early burghers of the Commonwealth, either in arms or council. A portrait of BARNEVELDT is marked with the date and the painter’s name,

‘“MICHAEL MIEREVELD *delineavit ac perfunctoriè pinxit*, 1617,”’ one year before the flagitious arrest of BARNEVELDT, in defiance of the constitution of the provinces, by MAURICE of ORANGE. A piece, exhibiting some of the burghers in arms, men of an handsome and heroic appearance; is also dated, by having 1648 painted on a drum; that, which shews them in council, has a portrait of GROTIUS, painted when he was seventeen. His face is the seventh from the right hand in the second row.

Beyond this room are others containing several score of small cupboards, on the doors of each of which are two or three blazonries of arms. Here are deposited some parts of the dress and arms of an association of Arquesbusiers, usual in all the Dutch towns; the members of which society assemble annually in October, to shoot at a target placed in a pavilion of the old convent garden. The marksman takes his aim from the farthest room; and between him and the mark are two walls, perforated two feet and a half in length, and eight inches in breadth, to permit the passage of the shot. A man stands in the pavilion, to tell where the ball has struck; and every marksman, before he shoots, rings a bell, to warn this person out of the way. He that first hits a white spot in the target, has his liquor, for the ensuing year, free of excise duty; but, to render this more difficult, a stork is suspended by the legs from a string, which, passing down the whole length of the target, is kept in continual motion by the agitation of the bird. It did not appear whether the stork has any other share in this ancient ceremony, which is represented in prints of considerable date. It is held near the ground, out of the way of the shot, and is certainly not intended to be hurt, for the Dutch have no taste for cruelty in their amusements. The stork, it is also known, is esteemed by them a fort of tutelary bird; as it once was in Rome, where ASELLUS SEMPRONIUS RUFUS, who first had them served at an entertainment, is said to have lost the Praetorship for his sacrilegious gluttony. In these trivial enquiries we passed our first evening at Delft.

Early the next morning, a battalion of regular troops was reviewed upon a small plain within the walls of the town. The uniform is blue and red, in which the Dutch officers have not quite the smart appearance of ours. One of these, who gave the word to a company, was a boy, certainly not more than fifteen, whose shrill voice was ludicrously heard between the earnest

shouts of the others. The firing was very exact, which is all that we can tell of the qualities of a review.

Delft was a place of early importance in the United Provinces, being one of the six original cities, that sent deputies to the States of the province; a privilege, which, at the instance of their glorious WILLIAM the First of ORANGE, was afterwards properly extended to twelve others, including Rotterdam and the Brill. Yet it is little celebrated for military events, being unfortified, and having probably always obeyed the fortune of the neighbouring places. The circumstance which gives it a melancholy place in history, is the murder of the wise and beneficent Prince who founded the republic. His palace, a plain brick building, is still in good repair, where strangers are always shewn the staircase on which he fell, and the holes made in the wall by the shot that killed him. The old man, who keeps the house, told the story with as much agitation and interest as if it had happened yesterday. ‘“The prince and princess came out of that chamber — here stood the prince, here stood the murderer; when the prince stepped here to speak to him about the passport, the villain fired, and the prince fell all along here and died. Yes, so it was — there are the holes the balls made.”’ Over one of these, which is large enough to admit two fingers, is this inscription:

‘“*Hier onder staen de Teykenen der Kooglen daar meede Prins Willem van Orange is doorschootten op* 10 July, A. 1584.”’

To this detestable action the assassin acknowledged himself to have been instigated by the proclamation of Philip the Second, offering a reward for its perpetration. The princess, who had the wretchedness to witness it, had lost her father and her former husband in the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, which, though contrived by Catherine and Charles the Ninth of that country, is believed to have been the consequence of their interview at Bayonne, with Isabella, the wife of the same Philip.

The melancholy excited on this spot is continued by passing from it to the tomb of WILLIAM, in the great church, called the *Nieuwe Kerk.* There the gloomy pageantry of the black escutcheons, above a choir, silent, empty and vast, and the withering remains of colours, won by hands long since gone to their decay, prolong the consideration of the transientness of human worth and happiness, which can so easily be destroyed by the command, or the hand of human villainy.

This tomb is thought to be not exceeded by any piece of sepulchral grandeur in Europe. Standing alone, in a wide choir, it is much more conspicuous and striking than a monumental fabrick raised against a wall, at the same time that its sides are so varied as to present each a new spectacle. It was begun in 1609, by order of the States General, and completed in 1621; the artist, HENDRIK DE KEYZER, receiving 28,000 florins as its price, and 2000 more as a present. The length is 20 feet, the breadth 15, and height 27. A bronze statue of the prince, sitting in full armour, with his sword, scarf, and commander's staff, renders one side the chief; on the other is his effigy in white marble, lying at full length; and at his feet, in the same marble, the figure of the dog, which is said to have refused food from the moment of its master's death. Round the tomb, twentytwo columns of veined or black Italian marble, of the Doric order, and, with bases and capitals of white marble, support a roof or canopy, ornamented with many emblems, and with the *achievements* of the prince.

At the corners, are the statues of Religion, Liberty, Justice, and Fortitude, of which the first rests upon a piece of black marble, on which is inscribed in golden letters the name of CHRIST; and the second holds a cap, with the inscription *Aurea Libertas.* On the four sides of the canopy are the devices of the prince, with the inscriptions JEHOVAH. — *Je maintiendrai Piété et Justice. — Te vindice, tuta libertas.* — And, *Soevis tranquillus in undis.*

There are many other ornaments, which give dignity or elegance to the structure, but cannot be described without tediousness. The wellknown Epitaph is certainly worth transcribing:

D. O. M. et eternae memoriae Gulielmi Nassoviae, supremi Auransionensium Principis, Patr. patriae, qui Belgii fortunis suas posthabuit et suorum; validissimos exercitus aere plurimum privato bis conscripsit, bis induxit; ordinum auspiciis Hispaniae tyrannidem propulit; verae religionis cultum, avitas patriae leges revocavit, restituit; ipsam denique libertatem tantum non assertam, Mauritio principi, paternae virtutis haeredi filio, stabiliendam reliquit. Herois vere pii, prudentis, invicti, quem Philip. II. Hisp. R. Europae timor, timuit; non domuit, non terruit; sed empto percussore fraude nefanda sustulit; Faederat. Belgii provinc. perenni memor. monum. fec.

‘“To GOD the best and highest, and to the eternal memory of William of Nassau, Sovereign Prince of Orange, the father of his country, whose welfare he preferred to that of himself and his family; who, chiefly at his own expence, twice levied and introduced a powerful army; under the sanction of the States repelled the tyranny of Spain; recovered and restored the service of true religion and the ancient laws of the country; and finally left the liberty, which he had himself asserted, to be established by his son, Prince Maurice, the heir of his father’s virtues. The Confederated Belgic Provinces have erected this monument, in perpetual memory of this truly pious, prudent and unconquered Hero, whom Philip II. King of Spain, the dread of Europe, dreaded; never overcame, never terrified; but, with wicked treachery, carried off by means of an hired assassin.”’

The tomb of GROTIUS is in the same church, which is a stately building of brick and stone, but has nothing of the ‘“dim religious light,”’ that sooths the mind in Gothic structures. Upon the steeple are many small bells, the chimes rung upon which are particularly esteemed, both for tone and tune.

On the opposite side of a very large marketplace is the townhouse, an old building, but so fresh and so fantastic with paint, as to have some resemblance to a Chinese temple. The body is coloured with a light, or yellowish brown, and is two stories high to the roof, in which there are two tier of peaked windows, each under its ornament of gilded wood, carved into an awkward resemblance of shells. Upon the front is inscribed, ‘“*Delphensium Curia Reparata,* ”’ and immediately over the door ‘“*Reparata* 1761.”’

The *Oude Kerk,* or Old Church, is in another part of the town, and is not remarkable, except for the tombs of LEUWENHOEK, PETER HEINE and VAN TROMP. That of LEUWENHOEK has a short inscription, in Latin almost as bad as that of a verse epitaph upon GROTIUS in the other church. He was born, it appears, in October 1632, and died in August 1723. The tombs of HEINE and VAN TROMP are very handsome. There are the effigies of both in white marble, and one of the victories gained by the latter is represented in *alto relievo.* On account of the tombs, both churches are open, during certain hours in the day; and a beadle, or,

perhaps, an almsman, is placed in each, who presents a padlocked box, into which money may be put for the poor.

In this town is the chief arsenal of the province of Holland, except that the magazine of powder is at the distance of about a mile from it, near the canal to Rotterdam. In 1787, when the dissensions between the STATES GENERAL and the PRINCE of ORANGE were at their height, a provincial free corps seized this arsenal, and held it for the States till the return of the PRINCE of ORANGE to the Hague, a few weeks afterwards.

Having seen what was pointed out to our notice at Delft, and learned that its extensiveness was owing to the residence of a great number of retired merchants from Rotterdam, we left it in a *trechtschuyt* for the Hague, having little other notion of it in our minds, than that it is very dull and very rich, and of a size, for which there is no recompense to a stranger, except in considering, that its dullness is the rest of those, who have once been busy, and that its riches are at least not employed in aggravating the miseries of poverty by ostentation.

1.4. THE HAGUE .

A VOYAGE of an hour and a half brought us here over a canal well bordered by country houses and gardens, all of which, as in other parts of Holland, have some inscription upon their gates, to say, that they are pleasant, or are intended for pleasure. *Fine Sight, Pleasant Rest, High Delight,* or some similar inscription, is to be seen over the door of every country house, in gold letters. On our way, we looked for Ryswick, where the treaty of 1697 was signed, and saw the village, but not the palace, which, being of free stone, is mentioned as a sort of curiosity in the country. It is this palace, which is said to contain proofs of an extraordinary dispute upon questions of ceremony. The Ambassadors, sent to prepare the treaty, are related to have contended so long, concerning their rights of precedence, that the only mode of reconciling them was to make separate entrances, and to allow the Mediating Minister alone admission by the principal gate.

From the *trechtschuyt* we had a long walk to our inn, an handsome house, standing almost in the midst of palaces, and looking over a noble sheet of water, called the *Vyver,* which extends behind the *Court,* for its whole length, flowing nearly to the level of the lower windows. The *Court* itself, a large brick building, irregular, but light and pleasant, was entirely within our view, on the left; on the right, a row of magnificent houses, separated from the *Vyver* by a large mall; and, in front, beyond the *Vyver,* a broad place, bordered by several public buildings. In this Court all the superior colleges of government have their chambers, and the PRINCE of ORANGE his suite of apartments. The fossé, which surrounds it, three drawbridges and as many gates are the only fortifications of the Hague, which has been several times threatened with the entrance of an enemy, but has not been taken since 1595, when the magistrates of the then infant republic, and all the superior inhabitants, retired to *Delft,* leaving the streets to be overrun with grass, and the place to become a desert under the eyes of its oppressors. During the invasion of LOUIS the FOURTEENTH, it escaped the ravages of the DUKE of LUXEMBOURG’s column, by the sudden dissolution of the ice, on which he had placed 9000 foot and 2000 cavalry. Yet the advice of WILLIAM the THIRD, who probably thought

money better expended in strengthening the frontier than the interior of the country, counteracted a plan of fortification, which was then proposed, for the third or fourth time.

The Court consists of two squares; in the inner of which are the apartments of the STADTHOLDER, and none but himself and his family can enter this in carriages, or on horseback. On the northern side, in the first floor, are the apartments of the STATES GENERAL, which we saw. The principal one is spacious, as a room, but has not the air of a hall of debate. Twenty-six chairs for the Deputies are placed on two sides of a long table: the President, whose chair is in the centre, has on his right hand, first, a Deputy of his own province, then three Deputies of Friesland, and two of Groningen; on his left, six Deputies of Holland; opposite to him, nearest to the head of the table, six Deputies of Guelderland, then three of Zealand, then two of Utrecht, and two of Overyssel. The STADTHOLDER, who has a place, but not a vote, has a raised chair at the upper end of the table; the Secretary is seated opposite to him, and is allowed to wear his hat, like the Deputies, during their deliberations, but must stand uncovered, behind the President, when he reads letters, or other papers. The number of Deputies is known to be indefinite; about fifty are generally returned; and those, who are present from each province, more than the number allowed at the table, place themselves below it. The walls of this room are covered with tapestry, not representing historical events, but rural scenery; the backs and seats of the chairs are of green velvet; and all the furniture, though stately and in the best condition, is without the least approach to shew. These apartments, and the whole of this side of the Court, were the residence of CHARLES the FIFTH, when he visited the Hague, and of the EARL of LEICESTER, when he commanded the troops lent to the Republic by ELIZABETH.

The government of the United Provinces is too well known to permit a detailed description here, but some notice may reasonably be expected of it.

The chief depositaries of the sovereignty are not the States General, but the Provincial States, of whose Deputies the former body is composed, and without whose consent they never vote upon important measures. In the States General each Province has one vote; which, with the reasons for it, may be delivered by an unlimited number of Deputies; and the first

Deputy of each province presides in the States by rotation for a week. In questions relative to peace or war, alliances, taxes, coinages, and to the privileges of provinces, no measures can be taken but by unanimous consent; upon other occasions, a majority is sufficient. No persons holding military offices can be Deputies to the States General, which appoints and receives all ambassadors, declares war, makes peace, and names the Greffier, or Secretary of State, and all Staff Officers.

The Provincial States are variously composed, and the interior governments of the provinces variously formed. In the province of Holland, which contains the most prosperous part of the Republic, there are eighteen Deputies to the Provincial States, for as many towns, and one for the nobility. The Grand Pensionary presides in this assembly, and is always one of the Deputies from it to the States General.

The Council of Deputies is composed of ten members: nine from the towns, and one from the nobility. This Council, in which the Grand Pensionary also presides, regulates the finances of the province, and takes cognizance of the distribution of troops within it.

The Council, called the Council of State, is composed, like the States General, of Deputies returned from the provinces, and appears to be to that body, in a great measure, what the Council of Deputies is to the Provincial States, having the direction of the army and the finances.

As provincial affairs are directed by the Provincial States, so the affairs of each town are governed by its own Senate, which also returns the members, if the town is entitled to send one, to the States of the Province, and directs the vote, which that member shall give. The Burgomasters in each town are the magistrates charged with the police and the finances, and are usually elected annually by the old Council, that is, by those who have been Burgomasters, or *Echevins.* These latter officers have the administration of civil and criminal affairs, and are, in some places, appointed by the Stadtholder from a double number nominated to him; in others, are accepted from the recommendation of the Stadholder. The Bailiffs preside in the Council of Burgomasters and Echevins; and in their name prosecutions are instituted.

Of the Deputies to the States General, some are for life, and some for one or more years.

Such is the nicely complicated frame of this government, in which the Senates of the Towns elect the Provincial States, and the Provincial States the States General; the latter body being incapable of deciding in certain cases, except with unanimity and with the express consent of their constituents, the Provincial States; who again cannot give that consent, except with unanimity and with the consent of their constituents, the Senates.

The Stadtholder, it is seen, has not directly, and in consequence of that office, any share of the legislative power; but, being a Noble of four provinces, he, of course, participates in that part of the sovereignty, which the Nobility enjoy when they send Deputies to the Provincial States. Of Zealand he is the only Noble, all the other titled families having been destroyed in the original contest with Spain; and there are no renewals or creations of titles in the United Provinces. In Guelderland, Holland, and Utrecht, he is President of the Nobles. He is Commander of all the Forces of the Republic by sea and land; and the Council of State, of which he is a member, is, in military affairs, almost entirely under his direction; he names all subaltern officers, and recommends those for higher appointments to the States General. In Guelderland, Utrecht, and overyssel, which are called *Provinces aux Reglemens,* because, having submitted to LOUIS the FOURTEENTH, in 1672, they were not re-admitted to the Union, but with some sacrifice of their privileges, he appoints to offices, without the nomination of the cities; he is Governor General of the East and West Indian Companies, and names all the Directors from a treble number of candidates offered by the Proprietors. His name presides in all the courts of law; and his heart, it may be hoped, dictates in the noble right of pardoning.

This is the essential form of a government, which, for two centuries, has protected as great a share of civil and religious liberty as has been enjoyed in any other part of Europe, resisting equally the chances of dissolution, contained within itself; and the less dangerous schemes for its destruction, dictated by the jealousy of arbitrary interests without.

Its intricacy and delicacy are easily seen; yet, of the objections made to it on this account, more are founded on some maxims, assumed to be universal, than upon the separate considerations due to the condition of a separate people. How much the means of political happiness depend, for

their effect, upon the civil characters of those for whom they are designed, has been very little seen, or insisted upon. It has been unnoticed, because such enquiries have not the brilliancy, or the facility, of general speculations, nor can command equal attention, nor equally reward systems with those parts of their importance, that consist in the immensity of the sphere, to which they pretend. To extend their arms is the flagitious ambition of warriors; to enlarge their systems is the ambition of writers, especially of political writers. A juster effort of understanding would aim at rendering the application of principles more exact, rather than more extensive, and would produce enquiries into the circumstances of national character and condition, that should regulate that application. A more modest estimate of human means of doing good would shew the gradations, through which all human advances must be made. A more severe integrity of views would stipulate, that the means should be as honest as the end, and would strive to ascertain, from the moral and intellectual character of a people, the degree of political happiness, of which they are capable; a process, without which projected advances become obstructions; and the philosopher begins his experiment, for the amelioration of society, as prematurely as the sculptor would polish his statue before he had delineated the features.

Whether the constitution of the United Provinces is exactly as good an one as the people are capable of enjoying can be determined only after a much longer and abler enquiry than we could make; but it seemed proper to observe, that, in judging this question, it is not enough to discover better forms of government, without finding also some reason to believe, that the intellectual and moral condition of the people would secure the existence of those better forms. In the mean time, they, who make the enquiry, may be assured, that, under the present * government, there is a considerable degree of political liberty, though political happiness is not permitted by the present circumstances of Europe; that the general adoption of the Stadtholder’s measures by the States has been unduly mentioned to shew an immoderate influence, for that, in point of fact, his measures are often rejected; that this rejection produces no public agitation, nor can those, who differ from him in opinion, be successfully represented as enemies to their country; that there are very few offices, which enable private persons

to become rich, at the expence of the public, so as to have a different interest from them; that the sober industry and plain manners of the people prevent them from looking to political conduct of any sort as a means of improving their fortunes; that, for these reasons, the intricate connections between the parts of their government are less inconvenient than may be supposed, since good measures will not be obstructed, or bad ones supported, for corrupt purposes, though misconceptions may sometimes produce nearly the same effect; that conversation is perfectly free; and that the habit of watching the strength of parties, for the purpose of joining the strongest and persecuting the weakest, does not occupy the minds of any numerous classes amongst them.

We saw no other apartments than those of the States General, the PRINCE of ORANGE being then in his own. The Princess was at a seat in Guelderland, with her daughter-in-law, the wife of the Hereditary Prince, who had been indisposed since the surprise of the Dutch troops at Menin, on the 12th of September 1793, in which affair her husband was engaged. When the officer, who brought the first accounts, which were not written, to the Hague, had related that the younger prince was wounded, the Hereditary Princess enquired, with great eagerness, concerning his brother. The officer indiscreetly replied, that he knew nothing of him; which the Princess supposed to imply, that he was dead; and she has since been somewhat an invalid.

Though the salaries enjoyed by the Prince of Orange, in consequence of his offices, are by no means considerable, he is enabled, by his patrimonial estates, to maintain some modest splendour. The Court is composed of a grand master, a marshal, a grand equerry, ten chamberlains, five ladies of honour, and six gentlemen of the chamber. Ten young men, with the title of pages, are educated at the expence of the Prince, in a house adjoining his *manege*. As Captain-General, he is allowed eight adjutants, and, as Admiral, three.

We could not learn the amount of the income enjoyed by the PRINCE of ORANGE, which must, indeed, be very variable, arising chiefly from his own estates. The greater part of these are in the province of Zealand, where seventeen villages and part of the town of Breda are his property. The fortifications of several places there are said to have been chiefly erected at the expence of the Orange family. His farms in that

neighbourhood suffered greatly in the campaign of 1792, and this part of his income has since been much diminished. The management of his revenues, derived from possessions in Germany, affords employment to four or five persons, at an Office, separate from his ordinary Treasury; and he had estates in the Low Countries. All this is but the wreck of a fortune, honourably diminished by William the First of Orange, in the contest with Spain; the remembrance of whom may, perhaps, involuntarily influence one's opinion of his successors.

During May, the western gate of the palace is ornamented, according to antient custom, with garlands for each person of the Orange family. Chaplets, with the initials of each, in flowers, are placed under large coronets, upon green flag-staffs. We passed by when they were taking these down, and perceived that all the ornaments could scarcely have cost five shillings. So humble are the Dutch notions of pageantry.

Among the offices included within the walls of the court is a printing-house, in which the STATES GENERAL and the States of Holland employ only persons sworn to secrecy as to the papers committed to them. It may seem strange to require secrecy from those, whose art is chiefly useful in conferring publicity; but the truth is, that many papers are printed here, which are never communicated to the public, the States employing the press for the sake of its cheapness, and considering that any of their members, who would shew a printed paper, would do the same with a written one.

In a large square, near the court, is the cabinet of natural history, of which we have not the knowledge necessary for giving a description. It is arranged in small rooms, which are opened, at twelve o'clock, to those, who have applied the day before. One article, said to be very rare, and certainly very beautiful, was an animal of the Deer species, about fourteen inches high, exquisitely shaped and marked, and believed to be at its full growth. It was brought from the coast of Africa.

The Stadtholder's library was accidentally shut, owing to the illness of the librarian; the picture gallery was open, but of paintings we have resolved to exempt our readers from any mention. The former is said to contain eight thousand volumes, and fourteen thousand prints in portfolios. Among the illuminated M SS. in vellum is one, used by the sanguinary Catherine De Medicis and her children; and another, which

belonged to Isabella of Castille, the grandmother of Charles the Fifth. What must be oddly placed in a library is a suit of armour of Francis the First, which was once in the cabinet of Christina of Sweden. Though this collection is the private property of the Prince, the librarian is permitted to lend books to persons, known to him and likely to use them advantageously for science.

We passed a long morning in walking through the streets of this place, which contain probably more magnificent houses than can be found in the same space in any city of Northern Europe. The Grand *Voorhout* is rather, indeed, two series of palaces than a street. Between two broad carriage-ways, which pass immediately along the sides, are several alleys of tall lime trees, canopying walks, first laid out by Charles the Fifth, in 1536, and ordered to be carefully preserved, the *placard* being still extant, which directs the punishment of offenders against them. It would be tedious to mention the many splendid buildings in this and the neighbouring streets. Among the most conspicuous is the present residence of the British Ambassadors, built by HUGUETAN, the celebrated banker of LOUIS the FOURTEENTH, and that of the Russian Minister, which was erected by the Pensionary BARNEVELDT. But the building, which was intended to exceed all others at the Hague, is the Hotel of the Prince of NASSAU WEILBOURG; who, having married the sister of the Prince of ORANGE, bought, at an immense expence, eight good houses, facing the *Voorhout,* in order to erect upon their scite a magnificent palace. What has been already built of this is extremely fine, in the crescent form; but a German, arriving to the expenditure of a Dutch fortune, probably did not estimate it by Dutch prices. It was begun eighteen years since, and, for the last twelve, has not proceeded.

Superb public buildings occur at almost every step through the Hague. At one end of the terrace, on which we were lodged, is the *Doelen,* a spacious mansion, opening partly upon the *Tournois Veld*, or Place of Tournaments. The burgesses here keep their colours, and, what is remarkable, still preserve the *insignia* of the *Toison d'Or,* given to them by CHARLES the FIFTH. Our WILLIAM the THIRD being admitted, at ten years of age, to the right of a burgess here, was invested with this order by the Burgomaster. At the other end of the terrace is the palace, built for Prince MAURICE of NASSAU, upon his return from the government of

Brazil, by KAMPFEN, Lord of Rambroek, architect of the Stadthouse at Amsterdam. The interior of this building was destroyed by fire, in the commencement of the present century; but, the stately walls of stone and brick being uninjured, the rooms were restored by the proprietors, assisted by a lottery. It is an instance of the abundance of buildings here, that this palace is now chiefly used as a place of meeting, for the oeconomical branch of the society of Haerlem, and for a society, instituted here, for the encouragement of Dutch poetry.

The number of public buildings is much increased by the houses, which the eighteen towns provide for their Deputies, sent to the States of the Province. These are called the *Logements* of the several towns; and there has been a great deal of emulation, as to their magnificence. Amsterdam and Rotterdam have the finest.

The churches are not remarkable for antiquity, or grandeur. A congregation of English Protestants have their worship performed, in the manner of the Dissenters, in a small chapel near the *Vyver*, where we had the satisfaction to hear their venerable pastor, the Rev. Dr. M'CLEAN.

The residence of a Court at the Hague renders the appearance of the inhabitants less national and characteristic than elsewhere. There are few persons in the streets, who, without their orange cockades, might not be mistaken for English; but ribbons of this colour are almost universal, which some wear in their hats, and some upon a button-hole of the coat. The poorest persons, and there are more poor here than elsewhere, find something orange-coloured to shew. Children have it placed upon their caps; so that the practice is carried to an extent as ridiculous, as the prohibition was in 1785, when the magistrates ordered, that *nothing orange-coloured should be worn, or shewn, not even fruits, or flowers, and that carrots should not be exposed to sale with the ends outwards.*

The distinctions between political classes are very strongly marked and preserved in Holland. We were informed, that there are some villages, in which the wearing of a cockade, and others, in which the want of one, would expose a passenger, especially a native, to insults. In the cities, where those of both parties must transact business together, the distinction is not much observed. In Amsterdam, the friends of the Stadtholder do not wear cockades. For the most part, the seamen, farmers and labouring

classes in the towns are attached to the Orange family, whose opponents are chiefly composed of the opulent merchants and tradesmen.

A history, or even a description of the two parties, if we were enabled to give it, would occupy too much space here; but it may be shortly mentioned, that the original, or chief cause of the dissension was, as might be expected, entirely of a commercial nature. The English interest had an unanimous popularity in Holland, about the year 1750. In the war of 1756, the French, having sustained a great loss of shipping, employed Dutch vessels to bring the produce of their American islands to Europe, and thus established a considerable connection with the merchants of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The Court of Versailles took care, that the stream of French wealth, which they saw setting into the United Provinces, should carry with it some French politics; while the wealth itself effected more than all their contrivance, and gradually produced a kindness for France, especially in the province of Holland, through which it chiefly circulated. The English Ministers took all Dutch ships, having French property on board; and the popularity of England was for a time destroyed. Several maritime towns, probably with some instigation from France, demanded a war against England. The friends of the Stadtholder prevented this; and from that time the Prince began to share whatever unpopularity the measures of the English Ministers, or the industry of the English traders, could excite in a rival and a commercial country.

The capture of the French West India islands soon after removed the cause of the dispute; but the effects of it survived in the jealousy of the great cities towards the Stadtholder, and were much aggravated by the losses of their merchants, at the commencement of hostilities between England and the United Provinces, in 1780. The Dutch fleet being then unprepared to sail, and every thing, which could float, having been sent out of the harbours of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire to intercept their trading ships, the fortunes of many of the most opulent houses in Holland were severely shook, and all their members became the enemies of the Stadtholder.

If to these circumstances it is added, that the province of Holland, which pays fifty-eight parts of every hundred, levied by taxes, has an ambition for acquiring greater influence in the general government, than is bestowed by its single vote, we have probably all the original causes of the

party distinctions in Holland, though others may have been incorporated with others, during a long series of events and many violent struggles of the passions.

The Stadtholder, who has had the misfortune to attract so much attention by his difficulties, is said to be a man of plain manners and sound understanding, neither capable of political intrigue, nor inclined to it. His office requires, especially during a war, a great deal of substantial, personal labour, to which he devotes himself earnestly and continually, but which he has not the vigour to bear, without an evident oppression of spirits. We saw him at a parade of the Guards, and it is not necessary to be told of his labours to perceive how much he is affected by them. It is scarcely possible to conceive a countenance more expressive of a mind, always urged, always pressed upon, and not often receiving the relief of complete confidence in its efforts. His person is short and extremely corpulent; his air in conversation modest and mild. This attendance upon the parade is his chief exercise, or relaxation at the Hague, where he frequently passes ten of the hours between five in a morning and nine at night in his cabinet. He comes, accompanied by one or two officers, and his presence produces no crowd. When we had viewed the parade and returned home, we saw him walking under our windows towards the *Voorhout,* accompanied by an officer, but not followed by a single person.

Conversation does not turn so much upon the family of the Stadtholder, as that we could acquire any distinct opinions of the other parts of it. Of his humanity and temper, there was sufficient proof, in 1787, when he returned to the Hague and was master of the persons of those, who had lately banished him. Indeed, the conduct of both parties, with respect to the personal safety of their adversaries, was honourable to the character of the nation. The States of Holland, during the prevalence of their authority, did not pretend, according to the injustice of similar cases, to any right of destroying the friends of the Stadtholder, who were in their hands; the Stadtholder, when he returned, and when the public detestation of his adversaries was at an height, which would have permitted any measures against them, demanded no other retribution, than that seventeen, named in a lift, should be declared incapable of holding offices under the Republic.

One of the best excursions from the Hague is made to the *Maison du Bois*, a small palace of the Prince of ORANGE, in a wood, which commences almost at the northern gate of the town. This wood is called a park, but it is open to the public roads from Leyden, Haerlem and Amsterdam, which pass through its noble alleys of oak and beech. It is remarkable for having so much attracted the regard of Philip the Second, that, in the campaign of 1574, he ordered his officers not to destroy it; and is probably the only thing, not destined for himself, of which this ample destroyer of human kind and of his own family ever directed the preservation. LOUIS the FOURTEENTH, probably having heard the praises of this care, left the mall of Utrecht to be a monument of similar tenderness, during an unprovoked invasion, which cost ten thousand lives.

The apartments of the *Maison du Bois* are very variously furnished. The best are fitted up with a light grey sattin, imbossed with Chinese birds and plants, in silk and feathers of the most beautiful tints; the window curtains, screens and coverings of the sophas and chairs are the same, and the frames of the latter are also of Chinese workmanship. Nothing more delicate and tasteful can be conceived; but, that you may not be quite distracted with admiration, the carpets are such as an English merchant would scarcely receive into a parlour. The furniture of the state bedchamber is valuable, and has once been splendid; a light balustrade of curious Japan work, about three feet high, runs across the room, and divides that part, in which the bed stands, from the remainder. The Princess’s drawing-room, in which card parties are sometimes held, is well embellished with paintings, and may be called a superb apartment; but here again there is an instance of the incompleteness, said to be observable in the furniture of all rooms, out of England. Of four card tables two are odd ones, and literally would be despised in a broker’s shop in London. The great glory of the house is the *Salle d’Orange*, an oblong saloon of noble height, with pannels, painted by nine celebrated painters of the Flemish and Dutch schools, among whom VAN TULDEN, a pupil of RUBENS, has observed his manner so much in a workshop of Vulcan and in a figure of Venus forming a trophy, that they have been usually attributed to his master. The subjects on the pannels and ceiling are all allegorical, and complimentary, for the most part, to the Princes of the House of Orange, especially to FREDERIC HENRY, the son of the first

WILLIAM and the grandson of the Admiral COLIGNY. It was at the expence of his widow, that the house was built and the saloon thus ornamented.

Almost all the rooms are decorated with family portraits, of which some have just been contributed by the pencil of the Hereditary Princess. A large piece represents herself, taking a likeness of the Princess her mother-in-law, and includes what is said to be an admirable portrait of her husband. On the six doors of the grand cabinet are six whole lengths of ladies of the House of Orange, exhibited in allegorical characters. The doors being covered by the paintings, when that, by which you have entered, is shut, you cannot tell the way back again. A portrait of LOUISA DE COLIGNY, the widow of William the First, is enriched with a painter's pun; she is presented by *Hope* with a branch of an *orange* tree, containing only *one* orange; from which the spectator is to learn, that her *son* was her *only hope.*

The most delightful outlet from the Hague is towards Schevening, a village on the seashore, nearly two miles distant, the road to which has been often and properly celebrated as a noble monument of tasteful grandeur. Commencing at the canal, which surrounds the Hague, it proceeds to the village through a vista so exactly straight, that the steeple of Schevening, the central object at the end of it, is visible at the first entrance. Four rows of lofty elms are planted along the road, of which the two central lines form this perfect and most picturesque vista; the others shelter paths on each side of it, for foot passengers.

The village itself, containing two or three hundred houses of fishermen and peasants, would be a spectacle, for its neatness, any where but in Holland. There is no square, or street of the most magnificent houses in London, that can equal it for an universal appearance of freshness. It is positively bright with cleanliness; though its only street opens upon the sea, and is the resort of hundreds of fishermen. We passed a most delightful day at a little inn upon the beach, sometimes looking into the history of the village, which is very antient; then enquiring into its present condition; and then enjoying the prospect of the ocean, boundless to our view, on one side, and appearing to be but feebly restrained by a long tract of low white coast on the other.

The sea beats furiously upon the beach here, which has no doubt been much raised by art for the defence of the village. There is at least no other way of accounting for its security, since 1574, between which year and the latter end of the preceding century, it sustained six inundations. The first, in 1470, demolished a church; the last washed away an hundred and twenty houses; notwithstanding which, the inhabitants built again upon their stormy shore; and their industry, that, at length, protected them from the sea, enabled them to endure also the more inveterate ravages of the Spaniards. On this beach lie occasionally great numbers of herring busses, too stoutly built to be injured by touching it. We suspect our information to have been exaggerated; but we heard on the spot, that no less than one hundred and five belong to this village of little more than two hundred houses, or are managed by agents in it. About forty were set on float by the tide in the afternoon, and, being hauled by means of anchors beyond a very heavy surf, were out of sight, before we left the place.

It was amusing to see the persevering, effectual, but not very active exertions of the seamen in this business, which could not often be more difficult than it then was, when a strong wind blew directly upon the shore. We here first perceived, what we had many other opportunities of observing, that, notwithstanding the general admiration of Dutch industry, it is of a nature which would scarcely acquire that name in England. A Dutchman of the labouring class is, indeed, seldom seen unemployed; but we never observed one man working hard, according to the English notion of the term. Perseverance, carefulness, and steadiness are theirs, beyond any rivalship; the vehemence, force, activity and impatience of an English sailor, or workman, are unknown to them. You will never see a Dutchman enduring the fatigue, or enjoying the rest, of a London porter. Heavy burthens, indeed, they do not carry. At Amsterdam, where carriages are even somewhat obnoxious, a cask, holding four or five gallons of liquor, is removed by a horse and a sledge.

On our way from Schevening, where a dinner costs more than at an hotel in the Hague, we turned a little to the right to see Portland Gardens, once the favourite resort of William and Mary; and said to be laid out in the English taste. They are now a bad specimen even of Dutch gardens. The situation is unusually low, having on one hand the raised bank of the Schevening road, and, on another, the sand hills of the coast. Between

these, the moisture of the sea air is held for a long time, and finally drawn down upon the earth. The artificial ornaments are stained and decaying; and the grass and weeds of the neglected plots are capable only of a putrid green. Over walks of a black mould you are led to the orangery, where there is more decay, and may look through the windows of the green-house, to perceive how every thing is declining there. Some pavilions, provided with water spouts, are then to be seen; and, if you have the patience to wait the conclusion of an operation, intended to surprise you, you may count how many of the pipes refuse to perform their office.

Nearer to the Hague, we were stopped to pay a toll of a few doights; a circumstance which was attended with this proof of civility. Having passed in the morning, without the demand, we enquired why it should be made now. The gatherer replied, that he had seen us pass, but, knowing that we must return by the same way, had avoided giving more trouble than was necessary. This tax is paid for the support of the bank, or digue, over which the road passes; a work, begun on the 1st of May 1664, and finished on the 5th of December 1665, by the assistance of a loan granted for the enterprise. The breadth of the road is thirty-two yards.

The next day, after seeing the relief of the Stadtholder's *garde du corps,* the privates of which wear feathered hats, with uniforms of scarlet and gold, we left the Hague, with much admiration of its pleasantness and quiet grandeur, and took the *roof* of the trechtschuyt for Leyden.

1.5. LEYDEN .

THREE hours pleasant floating along a canal, adorned with frequent country houses, gardens, summer-houses and square balconies, or rather platforms, projecting over the water, within an hand’s breadth of its level, brought us to this city, which was esteemed the second in Holland, before Rotterdam gained its present extent. Leyden is, however, so large, that a traveller is likely to have a walk of half a league to his inn; and those who arrive, as we did, at the time of the fair, may find the procession not very pleasant. We increased our difficulties by turning away from the dirt and incivility of what was called the best inn, and did not afterwards find a better, though such, it seems, might have been had.

Having, at length, become contented with the worst, we went towards the fair, of which we had as yet seen only the crowd. The booths, being disposed under trees and along the borders of canals, made the whole appearance differ from that of an English fair, though not quite so much as we had expected. The stock of the shopkeepers makes a greater distinction. There were several booths filled with silversmiths’ and jewellers’ wares, to the amount of, probably, some thousand pounds each. Large French clocks in *or moulu* and porcelain were among their stores. All the trades displayed the most valuable articles, that could be asked for in similar shops in large cities. We had the pleasure to see great quantities of English goods, and there were English names over three, or four of the booths.

The Dutch dresses were now become so familiar to us, that the crowd seemed as remarkable for the number of other persons in it, as for the abundance of peasants in their holiday finery, which, it is pleasant to know, displays the ornamental relics of several generations, fashion having very little influence in Holland. The fair occupied about a fourth part of the town, which we soon left to see the remainder. Two streets, parallel to each other, run through its whole length, and include the few public halls of an University, which would scarcely be known to exist, if it had no more conspicuous objects than its buildings. The Dutch universities contain no endowed foundations; so that the professors, who have their salaries from the States, live in private houses, and the students in lodgings. The academical dress is worn only in the schools, and by the professors. The

library, to which Joseph Scaliger was a benefactor, is open only once in a week, and then for no more than two hours. It is the constant policy of the Dutch government, to make strangers leave as much money as possible behind them; and Leyden was once so greatly the resort of foreigners, that it was thought important not to let them read for nothing what they must otherwise be obliged to buy. The University is, of course, declining much, under this commercial wisdom of the magistrates.

There are students, however, of many nations and religions, no oaths being imposed, except upon the professors. Physic and botany especially are said to be cultivated here with much success; and there is a garden, to which not only individuals, but the East India Company, industriously contribute foreign plants. The salaries of the professors, who receive, besides, fees from the students, are nearly two hundred pounds a-year. The government of the University is in the rector, who is chosen out of three persons returned by the Senate to the States; the Senate consists of the professors; and, on extraordinary occasions, the Senate and Rector are directed by Curators, who are the agents for the States.

The chief street in the town is of the crescent form, so that, with more public buildings, it would be a miniature resemblance of Highstreet, Oxford. The townhouse is built with many spires, and with almost Chinese lightness. We did not see the interior of this, or, indeed, of any other public buildings; for, in the morning, when curiosity was to be indulged, our fastidiousness as to the inns returned, and induced us to take a passage for Haerlem. The MSS. of the Dutch version of the Bible, which are known to be deposited here, could not have been shewn, being opened only once in three years, when the Deputies of the Synod and States attend; but we might have seen, in the townhouse, some curious testimonies of the hardships and perseverance of the inhabitants, during the celebrated blockade of five months, in 1574, in consideration of which the University was founded.

After viewing some well-filled booksellers’ shops, and one wide street of magnificent houses, we again made half the circuit of this extensive city, in the way to the trechtschuyt for

1.6. HAERLEM .

THE canal between Leyden and this place is nearly the pleasantest of the great number, which connect all the towns of the province with each other, and render them to the traveller a series of spectacles, almost as easily visited as the amusements of one large metropolis. Though this is said to be one of the lowest parts of Holland, the country does not appear to have suffered more than the rest by water. The many country seats, which border the canals, are also proofs that it is thought to be well secured; yet this is the district, which has been proved, by indisputable observations, to be lower than the neighbouring sea, even in the profoundest calm. During the voyage, which was of four hours, we passed under several bridges, and saw numbers of smaller canals, crossing the country in various directions; but the passage of a trechtschuyt is not delayed for an instant by a bridge, the tow-rope being loosened from the boat, on one side, and immediately caught again, on the other, if it should not be delivered by some person, purposely stationed on the arch. It is not often that a canal makes any bend in its course; when it does so, there are small, high posts at the point, round which the tow-rope is drawn; and, that the cord may not be destroyed by the friction, the posts support perpendicular rollers, which are turned by its motion. Such posts and rollers might be advantageously brought into use in England. On most of the canals are halfway villages, where passengers may stop, about five minutes, for refreshment; but they will be left behind, without any ceremony, if they exceed the limited time, which the boatman employs in exchanging letters for such of the neighbouring country houses as have not packet boxes placed on the banks.

Haerlem, like Leyden, is fortisied by brick walls, but both seem to be without the solid earthern works, that constitute the strength of modern fortresses. A few pieces of cannon are planted near the gate, in order to command the bridge of a wide *fossé;* and the gate-house itself is a stout building, deep enough to render the passage underneath somewhat dark. There is otherwise very little appearance of the strength, that resisted the Duke of Alva, for twelve months, and exasperated his desire of vengeance

so far, that the murder of the inhabitants, who at last surrendered to his promises of protection, could alone appease it.

A narrow street leads from the gate to the marketplace, where two pieces of cannon are planted before the guardhouse; the first precaution against internal commotion, which we had seen in the country. Haerlem had a great share in the disputes of 1787, and is said to adhere more fully than any other city to the Anti-Stadtholderian politics of that period.

The marketplace is very spacious, and surrounds the great church, perhaps, the largest sacred building in the province of Holland. The lofty oak roof is marked with dates of the early part of the sixteenth century. The organ, sometimes said to be the best in Europe, is of unusual size, but has more power of sound than sweetness. The pipes are silvered, and the body carefully painted; for organs are the only objects in Dutch churches, which are permitted to be shewy. They are now building, in the great church at Rotterdam, a rival to this instrument, and need not despair of surpassing it.

A great part of the congregation sit upon chairs in the large aisle, which does not seem to be thought a much inferior place to the other parts. During an evening service, at which we were present, this was nearly filled; and while every person took a separate seat, women carried *chauffepieds*, or little wooden boxes, with pans of burning peat in them, to the ladies. This was on the 4th of June. The men enter the church with their hats on, and some wear them, during the whole service, with the most disgusting and arrogant hardihood.

We passed a night at Haerlem, which is scarcely worth so long a stay, though one street, formed upon the banks of a canal, consists of houses more uniformly grand, than any out of the Hague, and surprises you with its extensive magnificence at a place, where there is little other appearance of wealth and none of splendour. But the quietness of the Great in Holland is daily astonishing to a stranger, who sometimes passes through rows of palaces, without meeting a carriage, or a servant. The inhabitants of those palaces have, however, not less earnest views, than they who are more agitated; the difference between them is, that the views of the former are only such as their situation enables them to gratify, without the agitation of the latter. They can sit still and wait for the conclusion of every year, at which they are to be richer, or rather are to have much more money, than

in the preceding one. They know, that, every day the silent progress of interest adds so much to their principal; and they are content to watch the course of time, for it is time alone that varies their wealth, the single object of their attention. There can be no motive, but its truth, for repeating the trite opinion of the influence of avarice in Holland: we expected, perhaps, with some vanity, to have found an opportunity for contradicting it; but are able only to add another testimony of its truth. The infatuation of loving money not as a means, but as an end, is paramount in the mind of almost every Dutchman, whatever may be his other dispositions and qualities; the addiction to it is fervent, inveterate, invincible, and universal from youth to the feeblest old age.

Haerlem has little trade, its communication with the sea being through Amsterdam, which latter place has always been able to obstruct the reasonable scheme of cutting a canal through the four miles of land, that separate the former from the ocean. Its manufactures of silk and thread are much less prosperous than formerly. Yet there are no symptoms of decay, or poverty, and the environs are well covered with gardens especially on the banks of the *Sparen*, of which one branch flows through the town and the other passes under the walls. Some charitable institutions, for the instruction and employment of children, should be mentioned also, to assuage the general censure of a too great fondness for money.

The house of LAURANCE COSTER, who is opposed to FAUST, GOTTENBURGH and SCHEFFER, for the honour of having invented the art of printing, is near the great church and is still inhabited by a bookseller. An inscription, not worth copying, asserts him to be the inventor. The house, which is small and stands in a row with others, must have received its present brick front in some time subsequent to that of COSTER.

1.7. AMSTERDAM .

THE voyage between Haerlem and this place is less pleasant, with respect to the country, than many of the other trips, but more gratifying to curiosity. For great part of the way, the canal passes between the lake, called *Haerlemer Maer,* and a large branch of the *Zuyder Zee,* called the River Y. In one place, the neck of land, which separates these two waters, is so thin, that a canal cannot be drawn through it; and, near this, there is a village, where passengers leave their first boat, another waiting for them at the renewal of the canal, within a quarter of a mile. Here, as upon other occasions of the same sort, nearly as much is paid for the carriage of two or three trunks between the boats, as for the whole voyage; and there is an *Ordonnatie* to authorize the price; for the Magistrates have considered, that those, who have much baggage, are probably foreigners, and may be thus made to support many of the natives. The Dutch themselves put their linen into a velvet bag, called a *Rysack,* and for this accordingly no charge is made.

The *Half Wegen Sluice* is the name of this separation between two vast waters, both of which have gained considerably upon their shores, and, if united, would be irresistible. At the narrowest part, it consists of pile-work and masonry, to the thickness of probably forty feet. On this spot the spectator has, on his left hand, the Y, which, though called a river, is an immense inundation of the Zuyder Zee, and would probably carry a small vessel, without interruption, into the German ocean. On the other hand, is the Haerlem lake, about twelve miles long and nine broad, on which, during the siege of Haerlem, the Dutch and Spaniards maintained fleets, and fought battles. Extending as far as Leyden, there is a passage upon it from that city to Amsterdam, much shorter than by the canal, but held to be dangerous. Before the year 1657, there was, however, no other way, and it was probably the loss of the Prince of Bohemia and the danger of his dethroned father upon the lake, that instigated the making of the canal.

This sluice is one of several valuable posts, by which Amsterdam may be defended against a powerful army, and was an important station, during the approach of the Duke of BRUNSWICK in 1787, when this city was the last, which surrendered. All the roads being formed upon dikes, or

embankments, may be defended by batteries, which can be attacked only by narrow columns and in front. The Half Wegen Sluice was, however, easily taken by the Duke of BRUNSWICK, his opponents having neglected to place gun-boats on the Haerlem lake, over which he carried eight hundred men in thirty boats, and surprised the Dutch before day-break, on the morning of the first of October. This was one of his real assaults, but there were all together eleven made on that day, and, on the next, the city proposed to surrender.

Beyond the sluice, the canal passes several breaches, made by inundations of the Y, and not capable of being drained, or repaired. In these places the canal is separated from the inundations either by piles, or floating planks. None of the breaches were made within the memory of the present generation, yet the boatmen have learned to speak of them with horror.

There is nothing magnificent, or grand, in the approach to Amsterdam, or the prospect of the city. The sails of above an hundred windmills, moving on all sides, seem more conspicuous than the public buildings of this celebrated capital.

The trechtschuyt having stopped on the outside of the gate, we waited for one of the public coaches, which are always to be had by sending to a livery stable, but do not stand in the street for fares. It cost half-a-crown for a drive of about two miles into the city; the regulated price is a guilder, or twenty-pence. Our direction was to the *Doolen;* but the driver chose to take us to another inn, in the same street, which we did not discover to be otherwise called, till we had become satisfied with it.

Nearly all the chief thorough-fares of Amsterdam are narrow, but the carriages are neither so numerous as in other places of the same size, nor suffered to be driven with the same speed; so that, though there is no raised pavement, foot passengers are as safe as elsewhere. There are broad terraces to the streets over the two chief canals, but these are sometimes encumbered by workshops, placed immediately over the water, between which and the houses the owners maintain an intercourse of packages and planks, with very little care about the freedom of the passage. This, indeed, may be constantly observed of the Dutch: they will never, either in their societies, or their business, employ their time, for a moment, in gratifying the little malice, or shewing the little envy, or assuming the

little triumphs, which fill so much of life with unnecessary miseries; but they will seldom step one inch out of their way, or surrender one moment of their time, to save those, whom they do not know, from any inconvenience. A Dutchman, throwing cheeses into his warehouse, or drawing iron along the pathway, will not stop, while a lady, or an infirm person passes, unless he perceives somebody inclined to protect them; a warehouseman trundling a cask, or a woman in the favourite occupation of throwing water upon her windows, will leave it entirely to the passengers to take care of their limbs, or their clothes.

The canals themselves, which are the ornaments of other Dutch cities, are, for the most part, the nuisances of Amsterdam. Many of them are entirely stagnant, and, though deep, are so laden with filth, that, on a hot day, the feculence seems pestilential. Our windows opened upon two, but the scent very soon made us willing to relinquish the prospect. The bottoms are so muddy, that a boathook, drawn up, perhaps, through twelve feet of water, leaves a circle of slime at the top, which is not lost for many minutes. It is not unusual to see boats, laden with this mud, passing during midday, under the windows of the most opulent traders; and the fetid cargoes never disturb the intense studies of the counting-houses within.

After this distaste of the streets and canals of Amsterdam, it was a sort of duty to see, what is the glory of the city, the interior of the Stadthouse; but we lost this spectacle, by a negligence of that severe punctuality, in which the Dutch might be usefully imitated throughout the world. Our friends had obtained for us a ticket of admission at ten; we called upon them about half an hour afterwards; but, as the ride from their house would have required ten minutes more, the time of this ticket was thought to be elapsed. We would not accept one, which was offered to be obtained for another day, being unwilling to render it possible, that those, who were loading us with the sincerest civilities, should witness another apparent instance of inattention.

The Stadthouse, as to its exterior, is a plain stone building, attracting attention chiefly from its length, solidity and height. The front is an hundred and eight paces long. It has no large gate, but several small ones, and few statues, that would be observed, except one of Atlas on the top. The tales, as to the expence of the building, are inexhaustible. The foundation alone, which is entirely of piles, is said to have cost a million

of guilders, or nearly ninety thousand pounds, and the whole edifice treble that sum. Its contents, the stock of the celebrated Bank, are estimated at various amounts, of which we will not repeat the lowest.

The Exchange is an humble building, and not convenient of access. The Post Office is well situated, upon a broad terrace, near the Stadthouse, and seems to be properly laid out for its use.

None of the churches are conspicuous for their structure; but the regulation, with respect to their ministers, should be more known. Two are assigned to each, and all throughout the city have equal and respectable salaries.

At a distance from the Exchange are some magnificent streets, raised on the banks of canals, nearly equalling those of the Hague for the grandeur of houses, and much exceeding in length the best of Leyden and Haerlem. These are the streets, which must give a stranger an opinion of the wealth of the city, while the Port, and that alone, can display the extensiveness of its commerce. The shops and the preparations for traffic in the interior have a mean appearance to those, who try them by the standard of London conveniences and elegance.

The best method of seeing the Port is to pass down it in a boat to some of the many towns, that skirt the Zuyder Zee. One convenience, easy to be had every where, is immediately visible from the quays. Small platforms of planks supported by piles project from the shore between the vessels, which are disposed with their heads towards the sides of these little bridges; the furthest has thus a communication with the quay, and, if the cargo is not of very heavy articles, may be unladen at the same time with the others. The port is so wide, that, though both sides are thronged with shipping, the channel in the middle is, at least, as broad as the Thames at London Bridge; but the harbour does not extend to more than half the length of the *Pool* at London, and seems to contain about half the number of vessels. The form of the port is, however, much more advantageous for a display of shipping, which may be here seen nearly at one glance in a fine bay of the *Zuyder.*

After a sail of about an hour, we landed at Saardam, a village celebrated for the Dockyards, which supply Amsterdam with nearly all its fleets. A short channel carries vessels of the greatest burthen from Saardam to the Zuyder Zee, which the founders of the place took care not to approach too

nearly; and the terrace at the end of this channel is prepared for the reception of cannon, that must easily defend it from any attack by sea. Though the neighbourhood of a dockyard might be supposed a sufficient antidote to cleanliness, the neatness of this little town renders it a spectacle even to the Dutch themselves. The streets are so carefully swept, that a piece of orange peel would be noticed upon the pavement, and the houses are washed and painted to the highest polish of nicety. Those, who are here in a morning, or at night, may probably see how many dirty operations are endured for the sake of this excessive cleanliness.

We were shewn nearly round the place, and, of course, to the cottage, in which the indefatigable Peter the First of Russia resided, when he was a workman in the dockyard. It is a tenement of two rooms, standing in a part of the village, so very mean, that the alleys near it are not cleaner, than those of other places. An old woman lives in the cottage, and subsists chiefly by shewing it to visitors, amongst whom have been the present Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia; for the Court of Petersburgh acknowledge it to have been the residence of Peter, and have struck a medal in commemoration of so truly honourable a palace. The old woman has received one of these medals from the present Empress, together with a grant of a small annuity to encourage her care of the cottage.

We passed an agreeable afternoon, at an inn on the terrace, from whence pleasure vessels and passage boats were continually departing for Amsterdam, and had a smart sail, on our return, during a cloudy and somewhat a stormy sunset. The approach to Amsterdam, on this side, is as grand as that from Haerlem is mean, half the circuit of the city, and all its spires, being visible at once over the crowded harbour. The great church of Haerlem is also seen at a small distance, on the right.

The Amstel, a wide river, which flows through the city into the harbour, fills nearly all the canals, and is itself capable of receiving ships of considerable burthen: one of the bridges over it, and a terrace beyond, are among the few pleasant walks enjoyed by the inhabitants. The Admiralty, an immense building, in the interior of which is the dockyard, stands on this terrace, or quay; and the East India Company have their magazine here, instead of the interior of the city, where it would be benevolence to let its perfume counteract the noxiousness of the canals.

The government of Amsterdam is said to collect by taxes, rents and dues of various sorts, more than an English million and a half annually; and, though a great part of this sum is afterwards paid to the use of the whole Republic, the power of collecting and distributing it must give considerable consequence to the magistrates. The Senate, which has this power, consists of thirty-six members, who retain their seats during life, and were formerly chosen by the whole body of burghers; but, about two centuries ago, this privilege was surrendered to the Senate itself, who have ever since filled up the vacancies in their number by a majority of their own voices. The *Echevins,* who form the court of justice, are here chosen by the burghers out of a double number, nominated by the Senate: in the other cities, the Stadtholder, and not the burghers, makes this choice.

It is obvious, that when the City Senates, which return the Provincial States, and, through them, the States General, were themselves elected by the burghers, the legislature of the United Provinces had a character entirely representative; and, at present, a respect for public opinion is said to have considerable influence in directing the choice of the Senates.

The province of Holland, of which this city is the most important part, is supposed to contain 800,000 persons, who pay taxes to the amount of twenty-four millions of guilders, or two millions sterling, forming an average of two pounds ten shillings per person. In estimating the real taxation of a people, it is, however, necessary to consider the proportion of their consumption to their imports; for the duties, advanced upon imported articles, are not ultimately and finally paid till these are consumed. The frugal habits of the Dutch permit them to retain but a small part of the expensive commodities, which they collect; and the foreigners, to whom they are resold, pay, therefore, a large share of the taxation, which would be so enormous, if it was confined to the inhabitants. Among the taxes, really paid by themselves, are the following; — a land-tax of about four shillings and nine pence per acre; a sale-tax of eight per cent. upon horses, one and a quarter per cent. upon other moveables, and two and an half per cent. upon land and buildings; a tax upon inheritances out of the direct line, varying from two and an half to eleven per cent.; two per cent. upon every man’s income; an excise of three pounds per hogshead upon wine, and a charge of two per cent. upon all public offices. The latter tax is not quite so popular here as in other countries, because many of these offices

are actually purchased, the holders being compelled to buy stock to a certain amount, and to destroy the obligations. The excise upon coffee, tea and salt is paid annually by each family, according to the number of their servants.

The inhabitants of Amsterdam, and some other cities, pay also a tax, in proportion to their property, for the maintenance of companies of city-guards, which are under the orders of their own magistrates. In Amsterdam, indeed, taxation is somewhat higher than in other places. Sir William Temple was assured, that no less than thirty duties might be reckoned to have been paid there, before a certain dish could be placed upon a table at a tavern.

The exact sums, paid by the several provinces towards every hundred thousand guilders, raised for the general use, have been often printed. The share of Holland is 58,309 guilders and a fraction; that of Overssel, which is the smallest, 3571 guilders and a fraction.

Of five colleges of Admiralty, established within the United Provinces, three are in Holland, and contribute of course to point out the preeminence of that province. It is remarkable, that neither of these supply their ships with provisions: They allow the captains to deduct about four-pence halfpenny per day from the pay of each sailor for that purpose; a regulation, which is never made injurious to the seamen by any improper parsimony, and is sometimes useful to the public, in a country where pressing is not permitted. A captain, who has acquired a character for generosity amongst the sailors, can muster a crew in a few days, which, without such a temptation, could not be raised in as many weeks.

We cannot speak with exactness of the prices of provisions in this province, but they are generally said to be as high as in England. The charges at inns are the same as on the roads within an hundred miles of London, or, perhaps, something more. Port wine is not so common as a wine which they call Claret, but which is compounded of a strong red wine from Valencia, mixed with some from Bourdeaux. The general price for this is twenty pence English a bottle; three and four pence is the price for a much better sort. About halfa-crown per day is charged for each apartment; and *logement* is always the first article in a bill.

Private families buy good claret at the rate of about eighteen pence per bottle, and chocolate for two shillings per pound. Beef is sold for much

less than in England, but is so poor that the Dutch use it chiefly for soup, and salt even that which they roast. Good white sugar is eighteen pence per pound. Bread is dearer than in England; and there is a sort, called milk bread, of uncommon whiteness, which costs nearly twice as much as our ordinary loaves. Herbs and fruits are much lower priced, and worse in flavour; but their colour and size are not inferior. Fish is cheaper than in our maritime counties, those excepted which are at a great distance from the metropolis. Coffee is very cheap, and is more used than tea. No kind of meat is so good as in England; but veal is not much inferior, and is often dressed as plainly and as well as with us. The innkeepers have a notion of mutton and lamb chops; but then it is *à la Maintenon;* and the rank oil of the paper is not a very delightful sauce. Butter is usually brought to table *clarified*, that is, purposely melted into an *oil;* and it is difficult to make them understand that it may be otherwise.

The Dutch have much more respect for English than for other travellers; but there is a jealousy, with respect to our commerce, which is avowed by those, who have been tutored to calm discussion, and may be perceived in the conversation of others, whenever the state of the two countries is noticed. This jealousy is greater in the maritime than in the other provinces, and in Amsterdam than in some of the other cities. Rotterdam has so much direct intercourse with England, as to feel, in some degree, a share in its interests.

Some of our excursions round Amsterdam were made in a curious vehicle; the body of a coach placed upon a sledge, and drawn by one horse. The driver walks by the side, with the reins in one hand, and in the other a wetted rope, which he sometimes throws under the sledge to prevent it from taking fire, and to fill up the little gaps in the pavement. The appearance of these things was so whimsical, that curiosity tempted us to embark in one; and, finding them laughed at by none but ourselves, the convenience of being upon a level with the shops, and with the faces that seemed to contain the history of the shops, induced us to use them again. There are great numbers of them, being encouraged by the magistrates, in preference to wheel carriages, and, as is said, in tenderness to the piled foundations of the city, the only one in Holland in which they are used. The price is eight pence for any distance within the city, and eight pence an hour for attendance.

Near Amsterdam is the small village of Ouderkirk, a place of some importance in the short campaign of 1787, being accessible by four roads, all of which were then fortified. It consists chiefly of the country houses of Amsterdam merchants, at one of which we passed a pleasant day. Having been but slightly defended, after the loss of the posts of *Half Wegen* and *Amstelreen*, it was not much injured by the Prussians; but there are many traces of balls thrown into it. The ride to it from Amsterdam is upon the chearful banks of the Amstel, which is bordered, for more than five miles, with gardens of better verdure and richer groves than had hitherto appeared. The village was spread with booths for a fair, though it was Sunday; and we were somewhat surprised to observe, that a people in general so gravely decorous as the Dutch, should not pay a stricter deference to the Sabbath. We here took leave of some friends, whose frank manners and obliging dispositions are remembered with much more delight than any other circumstances, relative to Amsterdam.

1.8. UTRECHT .

THE passage from Amsterdam hither is of eight hours; and, notwithstanding the pleasantness of trechtschuyt conveyance, seemed somewhat tedious, after the habit of passing from city to city in half that time. The canal is, however, justly preferred to others, on account of the richness of its surrounding scenery; and it is pleasing to observe how gradually the country improves, as the distance from the province of Holland and from the sea increases. Towards Utrecht, the gardens rise from the banks of the canal, instead of spreading below its level, and the grounds maintain avenues and plantations of lofty trees. Vegetation is stronger and more copious; shrubs rise to a greater height; meadows display a livelier green; and the lattice-work of the bowery avenues, which occur so frequently, ceases to be more conspicuous than the foliage.

It was Whitsuntide, and the banks of the canal were gay with holiday people, riding in waggons and carts; the latter frequently carrying a woman wearing a painted hat as large as an umbrella, and a man with one in whimsical contrast clipped nearly close to the crown. The lady sometimes refreshed herself with a fan, and the gentleman, meanwhile, with a pipe of tobacco. Every village we passed resounded with hoarse music and the clatter of wooden shoes: among these the prettiest was *Nieuversluys*, bordering each side of the canal, with a white drawbridge picturesquely shadowed with high trees, and green banks sloping to the water’s brim. Pleasure-boats and trechtschuyts lined the shores; and the windows of every house were thronged with broad faces. On the little terraces below were groups of smokers, and of girls in the neat trim Dutch dress, with the fair complexion and air of decorous modesty, by which their countrywomen are distinguished.

About half way from Amsterdam stands a small modern fortification; and it is an instance of Dutch carefulness, that grass had just been mowed even from the parapets of the batteries, and was made up in heaps within the works. Not far from it is an ancient castle of one tower, left in the state to which it was reduced during the contest with the Spaniards.

Near Utrecht, the ground has improved so much, that nothing but its evenness distinguishes it from other countries; and, at some distance

eastward, the hills of Guelderland rise to destroy this last difference. The entrance into the city is between high terraces, from which steps descend to the canal; but the street is not wide enough to have its appearance improved by this sort of approach. Warehouses, formed under the terraces, shew also that the latter have been raised more for convenience than splendour.

The steeple of the great church, formerly a cathedral, excites, in the mean time, an expectation of dignity in the interior, where some considerable streets and another canal complete the air of an opulent city. It is not immediately seen, that a great part of the body of this cathedral has been destroyed, and that the canals, being subject to tides, have dirty walls during the ebb. The splendour, which might be expected in the capital of a province much inhabited by nobility, does not appear; nor is there, perhaps, any street equal to the best of Leyden and Haerlem; yet, in general beauty, the city is superior to either of these.

We arrived just before nine, at which hour a bell rings to denote the shutting of the larger gates; for the rules of a walled town are observed here, though the fortifications could be of little other use than to prevent a surprise by horse. The *Chateau d'Anvers*, at which we lodged, is an excellent inn, with a landlord, who tells, that he has walked sixty years in his own passage, and that he had the honour of entertaining the Marquis of Granby thirteen times, during the war of 1756. Though the Dutch inns are generally unobjectionable, there is an air of English completeness about this which the others do not reach.

Utrecht is an university, but with as little appearance of such an institution as Leyden. The students have no academical dress; and their halls, which are used only for lectures and exercises, are formed in the cloisters of the ancient cathedral. The chief sign of their residence in the place is, that the householders, who have lodgings to let, write upon a board, as is done at Leyden, *Cubicula locanda.* We were shewn round the town by a member of the university, who carefully avoided the halls; and we did not press to see them.

There are still some traces remaining of the Bishopric, which was once so powerful, as to excite the jealousy, or rather, perhaps, to tempt the avarice of Charles the Fifth, who seized upon many of its possessions. The use made of the remainder by the States General, is scarcely more

justifiable; for the prebends still subsist, and are disposed of by sale to lay canons, who send delegates to the Provincial States, as if they had ecclesiastical characters.

The substantial remains of the Cathedral are one aisle, in which divine service is performed, and a lofty, magnificent Gothic tower, that stands apart from it. The ascent of this tower is one of the tasks prescribed to strangers, and, laborious as it is, the view from the summit sufficiently rewards them. A stone staircase, steep, narrow, and winding, after passing several grated doors, leads into a floor, which you hope is at the top, but which is little more than half way up. Here the family of the belfryman fill several decently furnished apartments, and shew the great bell, with several others, the noise of which, it might be supposed, no human ears could bear, as they must, at the distance of only three, or four yards. After resting a few minutes in a room, the windows of which command, perhaps, a more extensive land view than any other inhabited apartment in Europe, you begin the second ascent by a staircase still narrower and steeper, and, when you seem to be so weary as to be incapable of another step, half the horizon suddenly bursts upon the view, and all your meditated complaints are overborne by expressions of admiration.

Towards the west, the prospect, after including the rich plain of gardens near Utrecht, extends over the province of Holland, intersected with water, speckled with towns, and finally bounded by the sea, the mists of which hide the low shores from the sight. To the northward, the Zuyder Zee spreads its haziness over Amsterdam and Naerden; but from thence to the east, the spires of Amersfoort, Rhenen, Arnheim, Nimeguen and many intermediate towns, are seen amongst the woods and hills, that gradually rise towards Germany. Southward, the more mountainous district of Cleves and then the level parts of Guelderland and Holland, with the windings of the Waal and the Leck, in which the Rhine loses itself, complete a circle of probably more than sixty miles diameter, that strains the sight from this tremendous steeple. The almost perpendicular view into the streets of Utrecht affords afterwards some relief to the eye, but increases any notions of danger, you may have had from observing, that the openwork Gothic parapet, which alone prevents you from falling with dizziness, has suffered something in the general decay of the church.

While we were at the top, the bells struck; and, between the giddiness communicated by the eye, and the stunning effect of a sound that seemed to shake the steeple, we were compelled to conclude sooner than had been intended this comprehensive and farewell prospect of Holland.

The Mall, which is esteemed the chief ornament of Utrecht, is, perhaps, the only avenue of the sort in Europe, still fit to be used for the game that gives its name to them all. The several rows of noble trees include, at the sides, roads and walks; but the centre is laid out for the game of *Mall,* and, though not often used, is in perfect preservation. It is divided so as to admit of two parties of players at once, and the side boards sufficiently restrain spectators. The Mall in St. James's Park was kept in the same state, till 1752, when the present great walk was formed over the part, which was separated by similar side boards. The length of that at Utrecht is nearly three quarters of a mile. The luxuriance and loftiness of the trees preserve a perspective much superior to that of St. James's, but in the latter the whole breadth of the walks is greater, and the view is more extensive, as well as more ornamented.

This city, being a sort of capital to the neighbouring nobility, is called the politest in the United Provinces, and certainly abounds, more than the others, with the professions and trades, which are subservient to splendour. One practice, observed in some degree, in all the cities, is most frequent here; that of bows paid to all parties, in which there are ladies, by every gentleman who passes. There are, however, no plays, or other public amusements; and the festivities, or ceremonies, by which other nations commemorate the happier events in their history, are as unusual here as in the other parts of the United Provinces, where there are more occasions to celebrate and fewer celebrations than in most European countries. Music is very little cultivated in any of the cities, and plays are to be seen only at Amsterdam and the Hague, where German and Dutch pieces are acted upon alternate nights. At Amsterdam, a French Opera-house has been shut up, and, at the Hague, a *Comédie,* and the actors ordered to leave the country.

The ramparts of the city, which are high and command extensive prospects, are rather emblems of the peacefulness, which it has long enjoyed, than signs of any effectual resistance, prepared for an enemy. They are in many places regularly planted with trees, which must be old

enough to have been spared, together with the Mall, by Louis the Fourteenth; in others, pleasure houses, instead of batteries, have been raised upon them. A few pieces of old cannon are planted for the purpose of saluting the Prince of ORANGE, when he passes the city.

Trechtschuyts go no further eastward than this place, so that we hired a voiturier's carriage, a sort of curricle with a driver's box in front, for the journey to Nimeguen. The price for thirty-eight, or thirty-nine miles, was something more than a guinea and a half; the horses were worth probably sixty pounds upon the spot, and were as able as they were showy, or they could not have drawn us through the deep sands, that cover one third of the road.

We were now speedily quitting almost every thing, that is generally characteristic of Dutch land. The pastures were intermixed with fields of prosperous corn; the best houses were surrounded by high woods, and the grounds were separated by hedges, instead of water, where any sort of partition was used. Windmills were seldom seen, and those only for corn. But these improvements in the appearance of the country were accompanied by many symptoms of a diminished prosperity among the people. In eight-and-thirty miles there was not one considerable town; a space, which, in the province of Holland, would probably have included three opulent cities, several extensive villages, and ranges of mansions, erected by merchants and manufacturers.

Wyk de Duerstede, the first town in the road, is distinguishable at some distance, by the shattered tower of its church, a monument of the desolation, spread by the Spaniards. The inhabitants, probably intending, that it should remain as a lesson to posterity, have not attempted to restore it, further than to place some stones over the part filled by the clock. The body of the church and the remainder of the tower are not deficient of Gothic dignity. The town itself consists of one, or two wide streets, not well filled either with inhabitants, or houses.

The road here turns to the eastward and is led along the right bank of the Leck, one of the branches of the Rhine, upon a raised mound, or dique, sometimes twenty, or thirty feet, above the river on the one side, and the plains, on the other. Small posts, each numbered, are placed along this road, at unequal distances, for no other use, which we could discover, than to enable the surveyors to report exactly where the mound may want

repairs. The carriage way is formed of a deep sand, which we were very glad to leave, by crossing the river at a ferry; though this road had given us a sine view of its course and of some stately vessels, pressing against the stream, on their voyage to Germany.

On the other side, the road went further from the river, though we continued to skirt it occasionally as far as a small ferry-house, opposite to Rhenen, at which we dined, while the horses rested under a shed, built over the road, as weigh houses are at our turnpikes. Rhenen is a walled town, built upon an ascent from the water, and appears to have two, or three neat streets.

Having dined in a room, where a table, large enough for twenty persons, was placed, on one side, and a line of four, or five beds, covered by one long curtain, was formed against the wainscot, on the other, the voiturier clamoured, that the gates of Nimeguen would be shut before we could get to them, and we soon began to cross the country between the Leck and the Waal, another branch of the Rhine, which, in Guelderland, divides itself into so many channels, that none can be allowed the preeminence of retaining its name. Soon after reaching the right bank of the Waal, the road affords a view of the distant towers of Nimeguen, which appear there to be very important, standing upon a brow, that seems to front the whole stream of the river. In the way, we passed several noble estates, with mansions, built in the castellated form, which James the First introduced into England, instead of the more fortified residences; and there was a sufficient grandeur of woods and avenues, to shew, that there might be parks, if the owners had the taste to form them. Between the avenues, the gilded ornaments of the roof, and the peaked coverings, placed, in summer, over the chimneys, glittered to the light, and shewed the fantastic style of the architecture, so exactly copied in Flemish landscapes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As the sun declined and we drew near Nimeguen, the various colouring of a scene more rich than extensive rendered its effect highly interesting. The wide Waal on our left, reflecting the evening blush, and a vessel whose full sails caught a yellow gleam from the west; the ramparts and pointed roofs of Nimeguen rising over each other, just tinted by the vapour that ascended from the bay below; the faint and fainter blue of two ridges of hills in Germany retiring in the distance, with the mellow green of

nearer woods and meadows, formed a combination of hues surprisingly gay and beautiful. But Nimeguen lost much of its dignity on a nearer approach; for many of the towers, which the treachery of fancy had painted at distance, changed into forms less picturesque; and its situation, which a bold sweep of the Waal had represented to be on a rising peninsula crowning the flood, was found to be only on a steep beside it. The ramparts, however, the high old tower of the citadel, the Belvidere, with the southern gate of the town beneath, composed part of an interesting picture on the opposite margin of the river. But there was very little time to observe it: the driver saw the flying bridge, making its last voyage, for the night, towards our shore, and likely to return in about twenty minutes; he, therefore, drove furiously along the high bank of the river, and, turning the angle of the two roads with a velocity, which would have done honour to a Brentford postillion, entered that adjoining the first half of the bridge, and shewed the directors of the other half, that we were to be part of their cargo.

This bridge, which is partly laid over boats and partly over two barges, that float from the boats to the shore, is so divided, because the stream is occasionally too rapid to permit an entire range of boats between the two banks. It is thus, for one half, a bridge of boats, and, for the other, a flying bridge; which last part is capable of containing several carriages, and joins to the other so exactly as not to occasion the least interruption. It is also railed for the safety of foot passengers, of whom there are commonly twenty, or thirty. The price for a carriage is something about twenty-pence, which the tollmen carefully collect as soon as the demi-bridge has begun its voyage.

1.9. NIMEGUE N

HAS, towards the water, little other fortification than an antient brick wall, and a gate. Though it is a garrison town, and certainly no trifling object, we were not detained at the gate by troublesome ceremonies. The commander, affecting no unnecessary carefulness, is satisfied with a copy of the report, which the innkeepers, in all the towns, send to the Magistrates, of the names and conditions of their guests. A printed paper is usually brought up, after supper, in which you are asked to write your name, addition, residence, how long you intend to stay, and to whom you are known in the province. We did not shew a passport in Holland.

The town has an abrupt but short elevation from the river, which you ascend by a narrow but clean street, opening into a spacious marketplace. The great church and the guardhouse are on one side of this; from the other, a street runs to the eastern gate of the town, formed in the old wall, beyond which commence the modern and strong fortifications, that defend it, on the land side. At the eastern extremity of the place, a small mall leads to the house, in which the Prince of Orange resided, during the troubles of 1786; and, beyond it, on a sudden promontory towards the river, stands a prospect house, called the Belvidere, which, from its eastern and southern windows, commands a long view into Germany, and to the north looks over Guelderland. From this place all the fortifications, which are very extensive, are plainly seen, and a military person might estimate their strength. There are several forts and outworks, and, though the ditch is pallisadoed instead of filled, the place must be capable of a considerable defence, unless the besieging army should be masters of the river and the opposite bank. There was formerly a fortress upon this bank, which was often won and lost, during the sieges of Nimeguen, but no remains of it are visible now.

The town is classic ground to those, who venerate the efforts, by which the provinces were rescued from the dominion of the Spaniards. It was first attempted by SENGIUS, a Commander in the Earl of LEICESTER’S army, who proposed to enter it, at night, from the river, through a house, which was to be opened to him; but his troops by mistake entered another, where a large company was collected, on occasion of a wedding, and,

being thus discovered to the garrison, great numbers of those, already landed upon the beach, were put to the sword, or drowned in the confusion of the retreat. An attempt by Prince Maurice to surprise it was defeated by the failure of a *petard*, applied to one of the gates; but it was soon after taken by a regular siege, carried on chiefly from the other side of the river. This and the neighbouring fortress of Grave were among the places, first taken by Louis the Fourteenth, during his invasion, having been left without sufficient garrisons.

The citadel, a remnant of the antient fortifications, is near the eastern gate, which appears to be thought stronger than the others, for, on this side, also is the arsenal.

Nimeguen has been compared to Nottingham, which it resembles more in situation than in structure, though many of the streets are steep, and the windows of one range of houses sometimes overlook the chimnies of another; the views also, as from some parts of Nottingham, are over a green and extensive level, rising into distant hills; and here the comparison ends. The houses are built entirely in the Dutch fashion, with many coloured, painted fronts, terminating in peaked roofs; but some decline of neatness may be observed by those who arrive here from the province of Holland. The marketplace, though gay and large, cannot be compared with that of Nottingham, in extent, nor is the town more than half the size of the latter, though it is said to contain nearly fifty thousand inhabitants. From almost every part of it you have, however, a glimpse of the surrounding landscape, which is more extensive than that seen from Nottingham, and is adorned by the sweeps of a river of much greater dignity than the Trent.

We left Nimeguen, in the afternoon, with a Voiturier, whose price, according to the *ordonnatic*, was higher than if we had set out half an hour sooner, upon the supposition that he could not return that night. The road lies through part of the fortifications, concerning which there can, of course, be no secrecy. It then enters an extensive plain, and runs almost parallel to a range of heights, at the extremity of which Nimeguen stands, and presents an appearance of still greater strength and importance than when seen from the westward.

2. GERMAN Y

After a few miles, this road leaves the territories of the United Provinces, and enters the Prussian duchy of Cleves, at a spot where a mill is in one country, and the miller’s house in the other. An instance of difference between the conditions of the people in the two countries was observable even at this passage of their boundary. Our postillion bought, at the miller’s, a loaf of black bread, such as is not made in the Dutch provinces, and carried it away for the food of his horses, which were thus initiated into some of the blessings of the German peasantry. After another quarter of a mile you have more proofs that you have entered the country of the King of Prussia. From almost every cluster of huts barefooted children run out to beg, and ten or a dozen stand at every gate, nearly throwing themselves under the wheels to catch your money, which, every now and then, the bigger seize from the less.

Yet the land is not ill-cultivated. The distinction between the culture of land in free and arbitrary countries, was, indeed, never very apparent to us, who should have been ready enough to perceive it. The great landholders know what should be done, and the peasantry are directed to do it. The latter are, perhaps, supplied with stock, and the grounds produce as much as elsewhere, though you may read, in the looks and manners of the people, that very little of its productions is for them.

Approaching nearer to Cleves, we travelled on a ridge of heights, and were once more cheared with the ‘“pomp of groves.”’ Between the branches were delightful catches of extensive landscapes, varied with hills clothed to their summits with wood, where frequently the distant spires of a town peeped out most picturesquely. The open vales between were chiefly spread with corn; and such a prospect of undulating ground, and of hills tufted with the grandeur of forests, was inexpressibly chearing to eyes fatigued by the long view of level countries.

At a few miles from Cleves the road enters the Park and a close avenue of noble plane-trees, when these prospects are, for a while, excluded. The first opening is where, on one hand, a second avenue commences, and, on the other, a sort of broad bay in the woods, which were planted by Prince Maurice, includes an handsome house, now converted into an inn, which,

owing to the pleasantness of the situation, and its vicinity to a mineral spring, is much frequented in summer. A statue of General Martin Schenck, of dark bronze, in complete armour, and with the beaver down, is raised upon a lofty Ionic column, in the centre of the avenue, before the house. Resting upon a lance, the figure seems to look down upon the passenger, and to watch over the scene, with the sternness of an ancient knight. It appears to be formed with remarkable skill, and has an air more striking and grand than can be readily described.

The *orangerie* of the palace is still preserved, together with a semicircular pavilion, in a recess of the woods, through which an avenue of two miles leads you to

2.1. CLEVES .

THIS place, which, being the capital of a duchy, is entitled a City, consists of some irregular streets, built upon the brow of a steep hill. It is walled, but cannot be mentioned as fortified, having no solid works. The houses are chiefly built of stone, and there is a little of Dutch cleanliness; but the marks of decay are strongly impressed upon them, and on the ancient walls. What little trade there is, exists in retailing goods sent from Holland. The Dutch language and coins are in circulation here, almost as much as the German.

The established religion of the town is Protestant; but here is an almost universal toleration, and the Catholics have several churches and monasteries. Cleves has suffered a various fate in the sport of war during many centuries, but has now little to distinguish it except the beauty of its prospects, which extend into Guelderland and the province of Holland, over a country enriched with woody hills and vallies of corn and pasturage.

Being convinced, in two or three hours, that there was nothing to require a longer stay, we set out for Xanten, a town in the same duchy, distant about eighteen miles. For nearly the whole of this length the road lay through a broad avenue, which frequently entered a forest of oak, fir, elm, and majestic plane-trees, and emerged from it only to wind along its skirts. The views then opened over a country, diversified with gentle hills, and ornamented by numberless spires upon the heights, every small town having several convents. The castle of Eltenberg, on the summit of a wooded mountain, was visible during the whole of this stage and part of the next day’s journey. Yet the fewness, or the poverty, of the inhabitants appeared from our meeting only one chaise, and two or three small carts, for eighteen miles of the only high-road in the country.

It was a fine evening in June, and the rich lights, thrown among the forest glades, with the solitary calmness of the scene, and the sereneness of the air, filled with scents from the woods, were circumstances which persuaded to such tranquil rapture as Collins must have felt when he had the happiness to address to Evening —

For when thy folding star, arising, shews
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp,
The fragrant hours and elves
Who slept in buds the day:
And many a nymph, who wreaths her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

A small halfway village, a stately convent, with its gardens, called Marienbaum, founded in the 15th century by Maria, Duchess of Cleves, and a few mud cottages of the woodcutters, were the only buildings on the road: the foot passengers were two Prussian soldiers. It was moonlight, and we became impatient to reach Xanten, long before our driver could say, in a mixture of German and Dutch, that we were near it. At length from the woods, that had concealed the town, a few lights appeared over the walls, and dissipated some gloomy fancies about a night to be passed in a forest.

2.2. XANTEN .

THIS is a small town, near the Rhine, without much appearance of prosperity, but neater than most of the others around it. Several narrow streets open into a wide and pleasant marketplace, in the centre of which an old but flourishing elm has its branches carefully extended by a circular railing, to form an arbour over benches. A cathedral, that proves the town to have been once more considerable, is on the north side of this place; a fine building, which, shewn by the moon of a summer midnight, when only the bell of the adjoining convent calling the monks to prayers, and the waving of the aged tree, were to be heard, presented a scene before the windows of our inn, that fully recompensed for its want of accommodation.

There were also humbler reasons towards contentment; for the people of the house were extremely desirous to afford it; and the landlord was an orator in French, of which and his address he was pleasantly vain. He received us with an air of humour, mingled with his complaisance, and hoped, that, ‘“as *Monsieur* was *Anglois*, he should surprise him with his *vin extraordinaire,* all the Rhenish wine being adulterated by the Dutch, before they sent it to England. His house could not be fine, because he had little money; but he had an excellent cook, otherwise it could not be expected that the prebendaries of the cathedral would dine at it, every day, and become, as they were, *vraiment, Monsieur, gros comme vous me voyez!* ”’

There are in this small town several monasteries and one convent of noble canonesses, of which last the members are few and the revenues very great. The interior of the cathedral is nearly as grand as the outside; and mass is performed in it with more solemnity than in many, which have larger institutions.

We left Xanten, the next morning, in high spirits, expecting to reach Cologne, which was little more than fifty miles distant, before night, though the landlord and the postmaster hinted, that we should go no further than Neuss. This was our first use of the German post, the slowness of which, though it has been so often described, we had not estimated. The day was intensely hot, and the road, unsheltered by trees, lay over deep

sands, that reflected the rays. The refreshing forests of yesterday we now severely regretted, and watched impatiently to catch a freer air from the summit of every hill on the way. The postillion would permit his horses to do little more than walk, and every step threw up heaps of dust into the chaise. It had been so often said by travellers, that money has as little effect in such cases as intreaties, or threats, that we supposed this slowness irremediable, which was really intended only to produce an offer of what we would willingly have given.

2.3. RHEINBERG .

IN something more than three hours, we reached Rheinberg, distant about nine miles; a place often mentioned in the military history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which we had supposed would at least gratify us by the shew of magnificent ruins, together with some remains of its former importance. It is a wretched place of one dirty street, and three or four hundred mean houses, surrounded by a decayed wall that never was grand, and half filled by inhabitants, whose indolence, while it is probably more to be pitied than blamed, accounts for the sullenness and wretchedness of their appearance. Not one symptom of labour, or comfort, was to be perceived in the whole town. The men seemed, for the most part, to be standing at their doors, in unbuckled shoes and woollen caps. What few women we saw were brown, without the appearance of health, which their leanness and dirtiness prevented. Some small shops of hucksters' wares were the only signs of trade.

The inn, that seemed to be the best, was such as might be expected in a remote village, in a cross road in England. The landlord was standing before the door in his cap, and remained there some time after we had found the way into a sitting room, and from thence, for want of attendance, into a kitchen; where two women, without stockings, were watching over some sort of cookery in earthen jugs. We were supplied, at length, with bread, butter and sour wine, and did not suffer ourselves to consider this as any specimen of German towns, because Rheinberg was not a station of the post; a delusion, the spirit of which continued through several weeks, for we were always finding reasons to believe, that the wretchedness of present places and persons was produced by some circumstances, which would not operate in other districts.

This is the condition of a town, which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was thought important enough to be five times attacked by large armies. FARNESE, the Spanish commander, was diverted from his attempt upon it, by the necessity of relieving Zutphen, then besieged by the Earl of Leceister: in 1589, the Marquis of Varambon invested it, for the Spaniards, by order of the Prince of Parma; but it was relieved by our Colonel Vere, who, after a long battle, completely defeated the Spanish army. In 1599,

when it was attacked by Mendoza, a magazine caught fire. The governor, his family, and a part of the garrison were buried in the ruins of a tower, and the explosion sunk several vessels in the Rhine; after which, the remainder of the garrison surrendered the place. The Prince of Orange retook it in 1633. Four years afterwards, the Spaniards attempted to surprise it in the night; but the Deputy Governor and others, who perceived that the garrison could not be immediately collected, passed the walls, and, pretending to be deserters, mingled with the enemy, whom they persuaded to delay the attack for a few minutes. The troops within were in the mean time prepared for their defence, and succeeded in it; but the Governor, with two officers and fifteen soldiers who had accompanied him, being discovered, were killed. All these contests were for a place not belonging to either party, being in the electorate of Cologne, but which was valuable to both, for its neighbourhood to their frontiers.

Beyond Rheinberg, our prospects were extensive, but not so woody, or so rich as those of the day before, and few villages enlivened the landscape. Open corn lands, intermixed with fields of turnips, spread to a considerable distance, on both sides; on the east, the high ridges of the Westphalian mountains shut up the scene. The Rhine, which frequently swept near the road, shewed a broad surface, though shrunk within its sandy shores by the dryness of the season. Not a single vessel animated its current, which was here tame and smooth, though often interrupted by sands, that rose above its level.

2.4. HOOGSTRASS .

THE next town was Hoogstrass, a post station, fifteen miles from Xanten, of which we saw little more than the inn, the other part of this small place being out of the road. A large house, which might have been easily made convenient, and was really not without plenty, confirmed our notion, that, at the post stages, there would always be some accommodation. We dined here, and were well attended. The landlord, a young man who had served in the army of the country, and appeared by his dress to have gained some promotion, was very industrious in the house, during this interval of his other employments.

The next stage was of eighteen miles, which make a German post and an half; and, during this space, we passed by only one town, Ordingen, or Urdingen, the greatest part of which spread between the road and the Rhine.

Towards evening, the country became more woody, and the slender spires of convents frequently appeared, sheltered in their groves and surrounded by corn lands of their own domain. One of these, nearer to the road, was a noble mansion, and, with its courts, offices and gardens, spread over a considerable space. A summer-house, built over the garden wall, had no windows towards the road, but there were several small apertures, which looked upon it and beyond to a large tract of inclosed wood, the property of the convent.

2.5. NEUSS .

SOON after sun-set, we came to Neuss, which, as it is a post town, and was mentioned as far off as Xanten, we had been sure would afford a comfortable lodging, whether there were any vestiges, or not, of its ancient and modern history. The view of it, at some little distance, did not altogether contradict this notion, for it stands upon a gentle ascent, and the spires of several convents might justly give ideas of a considerable town to those, who had not learned how slightly such symptoms are to be attended to in Germany.

On each side of the gate, cannon balls of various sizes remain in the walls. Within, you enter immediately into a close street of high, but dirty stone houses, from which you expect to escape presently, supposing it to be only some wretched quarter, appropriated to disease and misfortune. You see no passengers, but, at the door of every house, an haggard group of men and women stare upon you with looks of hungry rage, rather than curiosity, and their gaunt figures excite, at first, more fear than pity. Continuing to look for the better quarter, and to pass between houses, that seem to have been left after a siege and never entered since, the other gate of the town at length appears, which you would rather pass at midnight than stop at any place yet perceived. Within a small distance of the gate, there is, however, a house with a wider front, and windows of unshattered glass and walls not quite as black as the others, which is known to be the inn only because the driver stops there, for, according to the etiquette of sullenness in Germany, the people of the house make no shew of receiving you.

If it had not already appeared, that there was no other inn, you might learn it from the manners of the two hostesses and their servants. Some sort of accommodation is, however, to be had; and those, who have been longer from the civilities and assiduities of similar places in England, may, by more submission and more patience, obtain it sooner than we did. By these means they may reduce all their difficulties into one, that of determining whether the windows shall be open or shut; whether they will endure the closeness of the rooms, or will admit air, loaded with the feculence of putrid kennels, that stagnate along the whole town.

This is the *Novesium* of Tacitus, the entrance of the thirteenth legion into which he relates, at a time when the Rhine, *incognita illi coelo siccitate,* became *vix navium patiens,* and which VOCULA was soon after compelled to surrender by the treachery of other leaders and the corruption of his army, whom he addressed, just before his murder, in the fine speech, beginning, ‘“*Nunquam apud vos verba feci, aut pro vobis solicitior, aut pro me securior;* ‘ a passage so near to the *cunctisque timentem, securumque sui,* by which LUCAN describes CATO, that it must be supposed to have been inspired by it.

This place stood a siege, for twelve months, against 60,000 men, commanded by CHARLES the BOLD, Duke of Burgundy, and succeeded in its resistance. But, in 1586, when it held out for GEBHERT DE TRUSCHES, an Elector of Cologne, expelled by his Chapter, for having married, it was the scene of a dreadful calamity. FARNESE, the Spanish General, who had just taken Venlo, marched against it with an army, enraged at having lost the plunder of that place by a capitulation. When the inhabitants of Neuss were upon the point of surrendering it, upon similar terms, the army, resolving not to lose another prey of blood and gold, rushed to the assault, set fire to the place, and murdered all the inhabitants, except a few women and children, who took refuge in two churches, which alone were saved from the flames.

When the first shock of the surprise, indignation and pity, excited by the mention of such events, is overcome, we are, of course, anxious to ascertain whether the perpetrators of them were previously distinguished by a voluntary entrance into situations, that could be supposed to mark their characters. This was the army of Philip the Second. The soldiers were probably, for the most part, forced into the service. The officers, of whom only two are related to have opposed the massacre, could not have been so.

What was then the previous distinction of the officers of Philip the Second? But it is not proper to enter into a discussion here of the nature of their employment.

Neuss was rebuilt, on the same spot; the situation being convenient for an intercourse with the eastern shore of the Rhine, especially with Dusseldorff, to which it is nearly opposite. The ancient walls were partly restored by the French, in 1602. One of the churches, spared by the Spaniards, was founded by a daughter of CHARLEMAGNE, in the ninth

century, and is now attached to the Chapter of Noble Ladies of St. Quirin; besides which there are a Chapter of Canons, and five or six convents in the place.

2.6. COLOGNE .

FROM Neuss hither we passed through a deep, sandy road, that sometimes wound near the Rhine, the shores of which were yet low and the water tame and shallow. There were no vessels upon it, to give one ideas either of the commerce, or the population of its banks.

The country, for the greater part of twenty miles, was a flat of corn lands; but, within a short distance of Cologne, a gentle rise affords a view of the whole city, whose numerous towers and steeples had before appeared, and of the extensive plains, that spread round it. In the southern perspective of these, at the distance of about eight leagues, rise the fantastic forms of what are called the Seven Mountains; westward, are the cultivated hills, that extend towards Flanders; and, eastward, over the Rhine, the distant mountains, that run through several countries of interior Germany. Over the wild and gigantic features of the Seven Mountains dark thunder mists soon spread an awful obscurity, and heightened the expectation, which this glimpse of them had awakened, concerning the scenery we were approaching.

The appearance of Cologne, at the distance of one, or two miles, is not inferior to the conception, which a traveller may have already formed of one of the capitals of Germany, should his mind have obeyed that almost universal illusion of fancy, which dresses up the images of places unseen, as soon as much expectation, or attention is directed towards them. The air above is crowded with the towers and spires of churches and convents, among which the cathedral, with its huge, unfinished mass, has a striking appearance. The walls are also high enough to be observed, and their whole inclosure seems, at a distance, to be thickly filled with buildings.

We should have known ourselves to be in the neighbourhood of some place larger than usual, from the sight of two, or three carriages, at once, on the road; nearly the first we had seen in Germany. There is besides some shew of labour in the adjoining villages; but the sallow countenances and miserable air of the people prove, that it is not a labour beneficial to them. The houses are only the desolated homes of these villagers; for there is not one that can be supposed to belong to any prosperous inhabitant of

the city, or to afford the coveted stillness, in which the active find an occasional reward, and the idle a perpetual misery.

A bridge over a dry fossé leads to the northern gate, on each side of which a small modern battery defends the ancient walls. The city is not fortified, according to any present sense of the term, but is surrounded by these walls and by a ditch, of which the latter, near the northern gate, serves as a sort of kitchen garden to the inhabitants.

Before passing the inner gate, a soldier demanded our names, and we shewed our passport, for the first time; but, as the inquisitor did not understand French, in which language passports from England are written, it was handed to his comrades, who formed a circle about our chaise, and began, with leaden looks, to spell over the paper. Some talked, in the mean time, of examining the baggage; and the money, which we gave to prevent this, being in various pieces and in Prussian coin, which is not perfectly understood here, the whole party turned from the passport, counting and estimating the money in the hand of their collector, as openly as if it had been a legal tribute. When this was done and they had heard, with surprise, that we had not determined where to lodge, being inclined to take the pleasantest inn, we wrote our names in the corporal’s dirty book, and were allowed to drive, under a dark tower, into the city.

Instantly, the narrow street, gloomy houses, stagnant kennels and wretchedly looking people reminded us of the horrors of Neuss. The lower windows of these prison-like houses are so strongly barricadoed, that we had supposed the first two, or three, to be really parts of a gaol; but it soon appeared, that this profusion of heavy iron work was intended to exclude, not to confine, robbers. A succession of narrow streets, in which the largest houses were not less disgusting than the others for the filthiness of their windows, doorways and massy walls, continued through half the city. In one of these streets, or lanes, the postillion stopped at the door of an inn, which he said was the best; but the suffocating air of the street rendered it unnecessary to enquire, whether, contrary to appearances, there could be any accommodation within, and, as we had read of many squares, or marketplaces, he was desired to stop at an inn, situated in one of these. Thus we came to the Hotel de Prague, a large straggling building, said to be not worse than the others, for wanting half its furniture, and probably superior to them, by having a landlord of better than German civility.

Having counted from our windows the spires of ten, or twelve churches, or convents, we were at leisure to walk farther into the city, and to look for the spacious squares, neat streets, noble public buildings and handsome houses, which there could be no doubt must be found in an Imperial and Electoral city, seated on the Rhine, at a point where the chief roads from Holland and Flanders join those of Germany, treated by all writers as a considerable place, and evidently by its situation capable of becoming a sort of *emporium* for the three countries. The spot, into which our inn opened, though a parallelogram of considerable extent, bordered by lime trees, we passed quickly through, perceiving, that the houses on all its sides were mean buildings, and therefore such as could not deserve the attention in the Imperial and Electoral city of Cologne. There are streets from each angle of this place, and we pursued them all in their turn, narrow, winding and dirty as they are, pestilent with kennels, gloomy from the height and blackness of the houses, unadorned by any public buildings, except the churches, that were grand, or by one private dwelling, that appeared to be clean, with little shew of traffic and less of passengers, either busy, or gay, till we saw them ending in other streets still worse, or concluded by the gates of the city. One of them, indeed, led through a marketplace, in which the air is free from the feculence of the streets, but which is inferior to the other opening in space, and not better surrounded by buildings.

‘“These diminutive observations seem to take away something from the dignity of writing, and therefore are never communicated, but with hesitation, and a little fear of abasement and contempt* .”’ And it is not only because they take away something from the dignity of writing, that such observations are withheld. To be thought capable of commanding more pleasures and preventing more inconveniences than others is a too general passport to respect; and, in the ordinary affairs of life, for one, that will shew somewhat less prosperity than he has, in order to try who will really respect him, thousands exert themselves to assume an appearance of more, which they might know can procure only the mockery of esteem for themselves, and the reality of it for their supposed conditions. Authors are not always free from a willingness to receive the fallacious sort of respect, that attaches to accidental circumstances, for the real sort, of which it

would be more reasonable to be proud. A man, relating part of the history of his life, which is always necessarily done by a writer of travels, does not choose to shew that his course could lie through any scenes deficient of delights; or that, if it did, he was not enough elevated by his friends, importance, fortune, fame, or business, to be incapable of observing them minutely. The curiosities of cabinets and of courts are, therefore, exactly described, and as much of every occurrence as does not shew the relater moving in any of the plainer walks of life; but the difference between the stock of physical comforts in different countries, the character of conditions, if the phrase may be used, such as it appears in the ordinary circumstances of residence, dress, food, cleanliness, opportunities of relaxation; in short, the information, which all may gain, is sometimes left to be gained by all, not from the book, but from travel. A writer, issuing into the world, makes up what he mistakes for his best appearance, and is continually telling his happiness, or shewing his good-humour, as people in a promenade always smile, and always look round to observe whether they are seen smiling. The politest salutation of the Chinese, when they meet, is, '"Sir, prosperity is painted on your countenance;"' or, '"your whole air announces your felicity;"' and the writers of travels, especially since the censure thrown upon SMOLLET, seem to provide, that their prosperity shall be painted on their volumes, and all their observations announce their felicity.

Cologne, though it bears the name of the Electorate, by which it is surrounded, is an imperial city; and the Elector, as to temporal affairs, has very little jurisdiction within it. The government has an affectation of being formed upon the model of Republican Rome; a form certainly not worthy of imitation, but which is as much disgraced by this burlesque of it, as ancient statues are by the gilding and the wigs, with which they are said to be sometimes arrayed by modern hands. There is a senate of forty-nine persons, who, being returned at different times of the year, are partly nominated by the remaining members, and partly chosen by twentytwo tribes of burgesses, or rather by so many companies of traders. Of six burgomasters, two are in office every third year, and, when these appear in public, they are preceded by LICTORS, bearing *fasces*, surmounted by their *own arms!* Each of the tribes, or companies, has a President, and the twentytwo Presidents form a Council, which is authorised to enquire into

the conduct of the Senate: but the humbleness of the burgesses in their individual condition has virtually abolished all this scheme of a political constitution. Without some of the intelligence and personal independence, which are but little consistent with the general poverty and indolence of German traders, nothing but the forms of any constitution can be preserved, long after the virtual destruction of it has been meditated by those in a better condition. The greater part of these companies of traders having, in fact, no trade which can place them much above the rank of menial servants to their rich customers, the design, that their Council shall check the Senate, and the Senate direct the Burgomasters, has now, of course, little effect. And this, or a still humbler condition, is that of several cities in Germany, called free and independent, in which the neighbouring sovereigns have scarcely less authority, though with something more of circumstance, than in their own dominions.

The constitution of Cologne permits, indeed, some direct interference of the Elector; for the Tribunal of Appeal, which is the supreme court of law, is nominated by him: he has otherwise no direct power within the city; and, being forbidden to reside there more than three days successively, he does not even retain a palace, but is contented with a suite of apartments, reserved for his use at an inn. That this exclusion is no punishment, those, who have ever passed two days at Cologne, will admit; and it can tend very little to lessen his influence, for the greatest part of his personal expenditure must reach the merchants of the place; and the officers of several of his territorial jurisdictions make part of the inhabitants. His residences, with which he is remarkably well provided, are at Bonn; at Bruhl, a palace between Cologne and that place; at Poppelsdorff, which is beyond it; at Herzogs Freud, an hunting seat; and in Munster, of which he is the Bishop.

The duties of customs and excise are imposed by the magistrates of the city, and these enable them to pay their contributions to the Germanic fund; for, though such cities are formally independent of the neighbouring princes and nobility, they are not so of the general laws or expences of the empire, in the Diet of which they have some small share, forty-nine cities being allowed to send two representatives, and thus to have two votes out of an hundred and thirty-six. These duties, of both sorts, are very high at Cologne; and the first form a considerable part of the interruptions, which

all the States upon the Rhine give to the commerce of that river. Here also commodities, intended to be carried beyond the city by water, must be re-shipped; for, in order to provide cargoes for the boatmen of the place, vessels from the lower parts of the Rhine are not allowed to ascend beyond Cologne, and those from the higher parts cannot descend it farther. They may, indeed, reload with other cargoes for their return; and, as they constantly do so, the Cologne boatmen are not much benefited by the regulation; but the transfer of the goods employs some hands, subjects them better to the inspection of the customhouse officers, and makes it necessary for the merchants of places, on both sides, trading with each other, to have intermediate correspondents here. Yet, notwithstanding all this aggression upon the freedom of trade, Cologne is less considerable as a port, than some Dutch towns, never mentioned in a book, and is inferior, perhaps, to half the minor seaports in England. We could not find more than thirty vessels of burthen against the quay, all mean and ill-built, except the Dutch, which are very large, and, being constructed purposely for a tedious navigation, contain apartments upon the deck for the family of the skipper, well furnished, and so commodious as to have four or five sashed windows on each side, generally gay with flower-pots. Little flower-gardens, too, sometimes formed upon the roof of the cabin, increase the domestic comforts of the skipper; and the neatness of his vessel can, perhaps, be equalled only by that of a Dutch house. In a time of perfect peace, there is no doubt more traffic; but, from what we saw of the general means and occasions of commerce in Germany, we cannot suppose it to be much reduced by war. Wealthy and commercial countries may be injured immensely by making war either for Germany or against it; by too much friendship or too much enmity; but Germany itself cannot be proportionately injured with them, except when it is the scene of actual violence. Englishmen, who feel, as they always must, the love of their own country much increased by the view of others, should be induced, at every step, to wish, that there may be as little political intercourse as possible, either of friendship or enmity, between the blessings of their Island and the wretchedness of the Continent.

Our inn had formerly been a convent, and was in a part of the town where such societies are more numerous than elsewhere. At five o’clock, on the Sunday after our arrival, the bells of churches and convents began

to sound on all sides, and there was scarcely any entire intermission of them till evening. The places of public amusement, chiefly a sort of tea-gardens, were then set open, and, in many streets, the sound of music and dancing was heard almost as plainly as that of the bells had been before; a disgusting excess of licentiousness, which appeared in other instances, for we heard, at the same time, the voices of a choir on one side of the street, and the noise of a billiard table on the other. Near the inn, this contrast was more observable. While the strains of revelry arose from an adjoining garden, into which our windows opened, a pause in the music allowed us to catch some notes of the vesper service, performing in a convent of the order of Clarisse, only three or four doors beyond. Of the severe rules of this society we had been told in the morning. The members take a vow, not only to renounce the world, but their dearest friends, and are never after permitted to see even their fathers or mothers, though they may sometimes converse with the latter from behind a curtain. And, lest some lingering remains of filial affection should tempt an unhappy nun to lift the veil of separation between herself and her mother, she is not allowed to speak even with her, but in the presence of the abbess. Accounts of such horrible perversions of human reason make the blood thrill and the teeth chatter. Their fathers they can never speak to, for no man is suffered to be in any part of the convent used by the sisterhood, nor, indeed, is admitted beyond the gate, except when there is a necessity for repairs, when all the votaries of the order are previously secluded. It is not easily, that a cautious mind becomes convinced of the existence of such severe orders; when it does, astonishment at the artificial miseries, which the ingenuity of human beings forms for themselves by seclusion, is as boundless as at the other miseries, with which the most trivial vanity and envy so frequently pollute the intercourses of social life. The poor nuns, thus nearly entombed during their lives, are, after death, tied upon a board, in the clothes they die in, and, with only their veils thrown over the face, are buried in the garden of the convent.

During this day, Trinity Sunday, processions were passing on all sides, most of them attended by some sort of martial music. Many of the parishes, of which there are nineteen, paraded with their officers; and the burgesses, who are distributed into eight corps, under a supposition that they could and would defend the city, if it was attacked, presented their

captains at the churches. The host accompanied all these processions. A party of the city guards followed, and forty or fifty persons out of uniform, the representatives probably of the burgesses, who are about six thousand, succeeded. Besides the guards, there was only one man in uniform, who, in the burlesque dress of a drum-major, entertained the populace by a kind of extravagant marching dance, in the middle of the procession. Our companion would not tell us that this was the captain.

The cathedral, though unfinished, is conspicuous, amongst a great number of churches, for the dignity of some detached features, that shew part of the vast design formed for the whole. It was begun, in 1248, by the Elector Conrad, who is related, in an hexameter inscription over a gate, to have laid the first stone himself. In 1320, the choir was finished, and the workmen continued to be employed upon the other parts in 1499, when of two towers, destined to be 580 feet above the roof, one had risen 21 feet, and the other 150 feet, according to the measurement mentioned in a printed description. We did not learn at what period the design of completing the edifice was abandoned; but the original founder lived to see all the treasures expended, which he had collected for the purpose. In its present state, the inequality of its vast towers renders it a striking object at a considerable distance; and, from the large unfilled area around it, the magnificence of its Gothic architecture, especially of some parts, which have not been joined to the rest, and appear to be the ruined remains, rather than the commencement of a work, is viewed with awful delight.

In the interior of the cathedral, a fine choir leads to an altar of black marble, raised above several steps, which, being free from the incongruous ornaments usual in Romish churches, is left to impress the mind by its majestic plainness The tall painted windows above, of which there are six, are superior in richness of colouring and design to any we ever saw; beyond even those in the Chapter-house at York, and most resembling the very fine ones in the cathedral of Canterbury. The nave is deformed by a low wooden roof, which appears to have been intended only as a temporary covering, and should certainly be succeeded by one of equal dignity to the vast columns placed for its support, whether the other parts of the original design can ever be completed or not.

By some accident we did not see the tomb of the three kings of Jerusalem, whose bodies are affirmed to have been brought here from Milan in 1162, when the latter city was destroyed by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa. Their boasted treasures of golden crowns and diamonds pass, of course, without our estimation.

A description of the churches in Cologne, set out with good antiquarian minuteness, would fill volumes. The whole number of churches, chapters and chapels, which last are by far the most numerous, is not less than eighty, and none are without an history of two or three centuries. They are all opened on Sundays; and we can believe, that the city may contain, as is asserted, 40,000 souls, for nearly all that we saw were well attended. In one, indeed, the congregation consisted only of two or three females, kneeling at a great distance from the altar, with an appearance of the utmost intentness upon the service, and abstraction from the noise of the processions, that could be easily heard within. They were entirely covered with a loose black drapery; whether for penance, or not, we did not hear. In the cathedral, a figure in the same attitude was rendered more interesting by her situation beneath the broken arches and shattered fretwork of a painted window, through which the rays of the sun scarcely penetrated to break the shade she had chosen.

Several of the chapels are not much larger than an ordinary apartment, but they are higher, that the nuns of some adjoining convent may have a gallery, where, veiled from observation by a lawn curtain, their voices often mingle sweetly with the choir. There are thirty-nine convents of women and nineteen of men, which are supposed to contain about fifteen hundred persons. The chapters, of which some are noble and extremely opulent, support nearly four hundred more; and there are said to be, upon the whole, between two and three thousand persons, under religious denominations, in Cologne. Walls of convents and their gardens appear in every street, but do not attract notice, unless, as frequently happens, their bell sounds while you are passing. Some of their female inhabitants may be seen in various parts of the city, for there is an order, the members of which are employed, by rotation, in teaching children and attending the sick. Those of the noble chapters are little more confined than if they were with their own families, being permitted to visit their friends, to appear at balls and promenades, to wear what dresses they please, except when they

chaunt in the choir, and to quit the chapter, if the offer of an acceptable marriage induces their families to authorise it; but their own admission into the chapter proves them to be noble by sixteen quarterings, or four generations, and the offer must be from a person of equal rank, or their descendants could not be received into similar chapters; an important circumstance in the affairs of the German noblesse.

Some of these ladies we saw in the church of their convent. Their habits were remarkably graceful; robes of lawn and black silk flowed from the shoulder, whence a quilled ruff, somewhat resembling that of Queen Elizabeth's time, spread round the neck. The hair was in curls, without powder, and in the English fashion. Their voices were peculiarly sweet, and they sung the responses with a kind of plaintive tenderness, that was extremely interesting.

The Jesuits' church is one of the grandest in Cologne, and has the greatest display of paintings over its numerous altars, as well as of marble pillars. The churches of the chapters are, for the most part, very large, and endowed with the richest ornaments, which are, however, not shewn to the public, except upon days of fête. We do not remember to have seen that of the chapter of St. Ursula, where heads and other relics are said to be handed to you from shelves, like books in a library; nor that of the convent of Jacobins, where some MSS. and other effects of Albert the Great, bishop of Ratisbon, are among the treasures of the monks.

Opposite to the Jesuits' church was an hospital for wounded soldiers, several of whom were walking in the court yard before it, halfcloathed in dirty woollen, through which the bare arms of many appeared. Sickness and neglect had subdued all the symptoms of a soldier; and it was impossible to distinguish the wounded French from the others, though we were assured that several of that nation were in the crowd. The windows of the hospital were filled with figures still more wretched. There was a large assemblage of spectators, who looked as if they were astonished to see, that war is compounded of something else, besides the glories, of which it is so easy to be informed.

The soldiery of Cologne are under the command of the magistrates, and are employed only within the gates of the city. The whole body does not exceed an hundred and fifty, whom we saw reviewed by their colonel, in the place before the Hotel de Prague. The uniform is red, faced with white.

The men wear whiskers, and affect an air of ferocity, but appear to be mostly invalids, who have grown old in their guardhouses.

Protestants, though protected in their persons, are not allowed the exercise of their religion within the walls of the city, but have a chapel in a village on the other side of the Rhine. As some of the chief merchants, and those who are most useful to the inhabitants, are of the reformed church, they ventured lately to request that they might have a place of worship within the city; but they received the common answer, which opposes all sort of improvement, religious or civil, that, though the privilege in itself might be justly required, it could not be granted, because they would then think of asking something more.

The government of Cologne in ecclesiastical affairs is with the Elector, as archbishop, and the Chapter as his council. In civil matters, though the city constitution is of little effect, the real power is not so constantly with him as might be supposed; those, who have influence, being sometimes out of his interest. Conversation, as we were told, was scarcely less free than in Holland, where there is justly no opposition to any opinion, however improper, or absurd, except from the reason of those, who hear it. On that account, and because of its easy intercourse with Brussels and Spa, this city is somewhat the resort of strangers, by whom such conversation is, perhaps, chiefly carried on; but those must come from very wretched countries, who can find pleasure in a residence at Cologne.

Amongst the public buildings must be reckoned the Theatre, of which we did not see the inside, there being no performance, during our stay, except on Sunday. This, it seems, may be opened, without offence to the Magistrates, though a protestant church may not. It stands in a row of small houses, from which it is distinguished only by a painted front, once tawdry and now dirty, with the inscription, ‘“*Musis Gratiisque decentibus.* ”’ The Townhouse is an awkward and irregular stone building. The arsenal, which is in one of the narrowest streets, we should have passed, without notice, if it had not been pointed out to us. As a building, it is nothing more than such as might be formed out of four or five of the plainest houses laid into one. Its contents are said to be chiefly antient arms, of various fashions and sizes, not very proper for modern use.

2.7. BONN .

AFTER a stay of nearly three tedious days, we left Cologne for Bonn, passing through an avenue of limes, which extends from one place to the other, without interruption, except where there is a small half way village. The distance is not less than eighteen miles, and the diversified culture of the plains, through which it passes, is unusually grateful to the eye, after the dirty buildings of Cologne and the long uniformity of corn lands in the approach to it. Vines cover a great part of these plains, and are here first seen in Germany, except, indeed, within the walls of Cologne itself, which contain many large inclosures, converted from gardens and orchards into well sheltered vineyards. The vines reminded us of English hop plants, being set, like them, in rows, and led round poles to various heights, though all less than that of hops. Corn, fruit or herbs were frequently growing between the rows, whose light green foliage mingled beautifully with yellow wheat and larger patches of garden plantations, that spread, without any inclosures, to the sweeping Rhine, on the left. Beyond, appeared the blue ridges of Westphalian mountains. On the right, the plains extend to a chain of lower and less distant hills, whose skirts are covered with vines and summits darkened with thick woods.

The Elector’s palace of Bruhl is on the right hand of the road, at no great distance, but we were not told, till afterwards, of the magnificent architecture and furniture, which ought to have attracted our curiosity.

On a green and circular hill, near the Rhine, stands the Benedictine abbey of Siegbourg, one of the first picturesque objects of the rich approach to Bonn; and, further on, the castle-like towers of a convent of noble ladies; both societies celebrated for their wealth and the pleasantness of their situations, which command extensive prospects over the country, on each side of the river. As we drew near Bonn, we frequently caught, between the trees of the avenue, imperfect, but awakening glimpses of the pointed mountains beyond; contrasted with the solemn grandeur of which was the beauty of a round woody hill, apparently separated from them only by the Rhine and crowned with the spire of a comely convent. Bonn, with tall slender steeples and the trees of its ramparts, thus backed by sublime mountains, looks well, as you approach

it from Cologne, though neither its noble palace, nor the Rhine, which washes its walls, are seen from hence.

We were asked our names at the gate, but had no trouble about passports, or baggage. A long and narrow street leads from thence to the market place, not disgusting you either with the gloom, or the dirt of Cologne, though mean houses are abundantly intermixed with the others, and the best are far from admirable. The *physiognomy of the place,* if one may use the expression, is wholesome, though humble. By the recommendation of a Dutch merchant, we went to an inn in another street, branching from the market place, and found it the cleanest, since we had left Holland.

Bonn may be called the political capital of the country, the Elector's Court being held only there; and, what would not be expected, this has importance enough to command the residence of an agent from almost every Power in Europe. The present Elector being the uncle of the Emperor, this attention is, perhaps, partly paid, with the view, that it may be felt at the Court of Vienna. Even Russia is not unrepresented in this miniature State.

The Elector's palace is, in point of grandeur, much better fitted to be the scene of diplomatic ceremonies, than those of many greater Sovereigns; and it is fitted also for better than diplomatic purposes, being placed before some of the most striking of nature's features, of which it is nearly as worthy an ornament as art can make. It is seated on the western bank of the Rhine, the general course of which it fronts, though it forms a considerable angle with the part immediately nearest. The first emotion, on perceiving it, being that of admiration, at its vastness, the wonder is, of course, equal, with which you discover, that it is only part of a greater design. It consists of a centre and an eastern wing, which are completed, and of a western wing, of which not half is yet raised. The extent from east to west is so great, that, if we had enquired the measurement, we should have been but little assisted in giving an idea of the spectacle, exhibited by so immense a building.

It is of stone, of an architecture, perhaps, not adequate to the grandeur of its extent, but which fills no part with unsuitable, or inelegant ornaments. Along the whole garden front, which is the chief, a broad terrace supports a promenade and an orangery of noble trees, occasionally refreshed by

fountains, that, ornamented with statues, rise from marble bafons. An arcade through the centre of the palace leads to this terrace, from whence the prospect is strikingly beautiful and sublime. The eye passes over the green lawn of the garden and a tract of level country to the groupe, called the Seven Mountains, broken, rocky and abrupt towards their summits, yet sweeping finely near their bases, and uniting with the plains by long and gradual descents, that spread round many miles. The nearest is about a league and a half off. We saw them under the cloudless sky of June, invested with the mistiness of heat, which, softening their rocky points, and half veiling their recesses, left much for the imagination to supply, and gave them an aërial appearance, a faint tint of silvery grey, that was inexpressibly interesting. The Rhine, that winds at their feet, was concealed from us by the garden groves, but from the upper windows of the palace it is seen in all its majesty.

On the right from this terrace, the smaller palace of Poppelsdorff terminates a long avenue of limes and chesnut trees, that communicates with both buildings, and above are the hill and the convent *Sanctae Crucis,* the latter looking out from among sirs and shrubby steeps. From thence the western horizon is bounded by a range of hills, cloathed to their summits with wood. The plain, that extends between these and the Rhine, is cultivated with vines and corn, and the middle distance is marked by a pyramidal mountain, darkened by wood and crowned with the tower and walls of a ruined castle.

The gardens of the palace are formally laid out in straight walks and alleys of cut trees; but the spacious lawn between these gives fine effect to the perspective of the distant mountains; and the bowery walks, while they afford refreshing shelter from a summer sun, allow partial views of the palace and the romantic landscape.

It was the Elector Joseph Clement, the same who repaired the city, left in a ruinous state by the siege of 1703, under the Duke of Marlborough, that built this magnificent residence. There are in it many suites of state rooms and every sort of apartment usual in the mansions of Sovereigns; saloons of audience and ceremony, a library, a cabinet of natural history and a theatre. Though these are readily opened to strangers, we are to confess, that we did not see them, being prevented by the attentions of those, whose civilities gave them a right to command us, while their

situations enabled them to point out the best occupation of our time. The hall of the grand master of the Teutonic order, ornamented with portraits of all the grand masters, we are, however, sorry to have neglected even for the delights of Poppelsdorff, which we were presently shewn.

Leaving the palace, we passed through the garden, on the right, to a fine avenue of turf, nearly a mile long, bordered by alleys of tall trees, and so wide, that the late Elector had designed to form a canal in the middle of it, for an opportunity of passing between his palaces, by land, or water, as he might wish. The palace of Poppelsdorff terminates the perspective of this avenue. It is a small building, surrounded by its gardens, in a taste not very good, and remarkable chiefly for the pleasantness of its situation. An arcade, encompassing a court in the interior, communicates with all the apartments on the ground floor, which is the principal, and with the gardens, on the eastern side of the chateau. The entrance is through a small hall, decorated with the ensigns of hunting, and round nearly the whole arcade stags' heads are placed, at equal distances. These have remained here, since the reign of Clement Augustus, the founder of the palace, who died in 1761; and they exhibit some part of the history of his life; for, under each, is an inscription, relating the events and date of the hunt, by which he killed it. There are twenty-three such ornaments.

The greatest part of the furniture had been removed, during the approach of the French, in 1792; and the Archduchess Maria Christina, to whom the Elector, her brother, had lent the chateau, was now very far from sumptuously accommodated. On this account, she passed much of her time, at Goodesberg, a small watering place in the neighbourhood. After her retreat from Brussels, in consequence of the advances of the French in the same year, she had accompanied her husband, the Duke of Saxe Teschen, into Saxony; but, since his appointment to the command of the Emperor's army of the Upper Rhine, her residence had been established in the dominions of her brother.

We were shewn through her apartments, which she had left for Goodesberg, a few hours before. On the table of her sitting room lay the fragments of a painted cross, composed of small pieces, like our dissected maps, the putting of which together exercises ingenuity and passes, perhaps, for a sort of piety. The attendant said, that it served to pass the time; but it cannot be supposed, that rank and fortune have so little power

to bestow happiness, as that their possessors should have recourse to such means of lightening the hours of life.

On another table, was spread a map of all the countries, then included in the Theatre of War, and on it a box, filled with small pieces of various coloured wax, intended to mark the positions of the different armies. These were of many shades, for the Archduchess, who is said to be conversant with military affairs and to have descended to the firing of bombs at the siege of Lisle, was able to distinguish the several corps of the allied armies, that were acting separately from each other. The positions were marked up to the latest accounts then public. The course of her thoughts was visible from this chart, and they were interesting to curiosity, being those of the sister of the late unfortunate Queen of France.

The walls of an adjoining cabinet were ornamented with drawings from the antique by the Archduchess, disposed upon a light ground and serving instead of tapestry.

The chapel is a rotunda, rising into a dome, and, though small, is splendid with painting and gilding. In the centre are four altars, formed on the four sides of a square pedestal, that supports a figure of our Saviour; but the beauty of this design is marred by the vanity of placing near each altar the statue of a founder of the Teutonic order. The furniture of the Elector’s gallery is of crimson velvet and gold.

On another side of the chateau, we were shewn an apartment entirely covered with grotto work, and called the hall of shells; a curious instance of patient industry, having been completed by one man, during a labour of many years. Its situation in the middle of an inhabited mansion is unsuitable to the character of a grotto; but its coolness must render it a very convenient retreat, and the likenesses of animals, as well as the other forms, into which the shells are thrown, though not very elegant, are fanciful enough, especially as the ornaments of fountains, which play into several parts of the room.

Leaving the palace by the bridge of a moat, that nearly surrounds it, we passed through the pleasant village of Poppelsdorff, and ascended the hill SANCTAE CRUCIS, called so from the convent of the same name, which occupies its summit. The road wound between thick woods, but we soon left it for a path, that led more immediately to the summit, among shrubs and plantations of larch and fir, and which opened into easy avenues of

turf, that sometimes allowed momentary views of other woody points and of the plains around. The turf was uncommonly fragrant and fine, abounding with plants, which made us regret the want of a Botanist's knowledge and pleasures. During the ascent, the peaked tops of the mountains of the Rhine, so often admired below, began to appear above a ridge of dark woods, very near us, in a contrast of hues, which was exquisitely fine. It was now near evening; the mistiness of heat was gone from the surface of these mountains, and they had assumed a blue tint so peculiar and clear, that they appeared upon the sky, like supernatural transparencies.

We had heard, at Bonn, of the Capuchins' courtesy, and had no hesitation to knock at their gate, after taking some rest in the portico of the church, from whence we looked down another side of the mountain, over the long plains between Bonn and Cologne. Having waited some time at the gate, during which many steps fled along the passage and the head of a monk appeared peeping through a window above, a servant admitted us into a parlour, adjoining the refectory, which appeared to have been just left. This was the first convent we had entered, and we could not help expecting to see more than others had described; an involuntary habit, from which few are free, and which need not be imputed to vanity, so long as the love of surprise shall be so visible in human pursuits. When the lay-brother had quitted us, to inform the superior of our request, not a footstep, or a voice approached, for near a quarter of an hour, and the place seemed as if uninhabited. Our curiosity had no indulgence within the room, which was of the utmost plainness, and that plainness free from any thing, that the most tractable imagination could suppose peculiar to a convent. At length, a monk appeared, who received us with infinite good humour, and with the ease which must have been acquired in more general society. His shaven head and black garments formed a whimsical contrast to the character of his person and countenance, which bore no symptoms of sorrow, or penance, and were, indeed, animated by an air of cheerfulness and intelligence, that would have become the happiest inhabitant of the gayest city.

Through some silent passages, in which he did not shew us a cell and we did not perceive another monk, we passed to the church, where the favour of several Electors has assisted the display of paintings, marble, sculpture,

gold and silver, mingled and arranged with magnificent effect. Among these was the marble statue, brought from England, at a great expence, and here called a representation of St. Anne, who is said to have found the Cross. Our conductor seemed to be a man of good understanding and desirous of being thought so; a disposition, which gave an awkwardness to his manner, when, in noticing a relic, he was obliged to touch upon some unproved and unimportant tradition, peculiar to his church and not essential to the least article of our faith. His sense of decorum as a member of the convent seemed then to be struggling with his vanity, as a man.

But there are relics here, pretending to a connection with some parts of christian history, which it is shocking to see introduced to consideration by any means so trivial and so liable to ridicule. It is, indeed, wonderful, that the absurd exhibitions, made in Romish churches, should so often be minutely described, and dwelt upon in terms of ludicrous exultation by those, who do not intend that most malignant of offences against human nature, the endeavour to excite a wretched vanity by sarcasm and jest, and to employ it in eradicating the comforts of religion. To such writers, the probable mischief of uniting with the mention of the most important divine doctrines the most ridiculous of human impositions ought to be apparent; and, as the risk is unnecessary in a Protestant country, why is it encountered? That persons otherwise inclined should adopt these topics is not surprising; the easiest pretences to wit are found to be made by means of familiar allusions to sacred subjects, because their necessary incongruity accomplishes the greatest part of what, in other cases, must be done by wit itself; there will, therefore, never be an end of such allusions, till it is generally seen, that they are the resources and symptoms of mean understandings, urged by the feverish desire of an eminence, to which they feel themselves inadequate.

From the chapel we ascended to a tower of the convent, whence all the scattered scenes, of whose beauty, or sublimity, we had caught partial glimpses between the woods below, were collected into one vast landscape, and exhibited almost to a single glance. The point, on which the convent stands, commands the whole horizon. To the north, spread the wide plains, before seen, covered with corn, then just embrowned, and with vines and gardens, whose alternate colours formed a gay checker

work with villages, convents and castles. The grandeur of this level was unbroken by any inclosures, that could seem to diminish its vastness. The range of woody heights, that bound it on the west, extend to the southward, many leagues beyond the hill *Sanctae Cruois;* but the uniform and unbroken ridges of distant mountains, on the east, cease before the Seven Mountains rise above the Rhine in all their awful majesty. The bases of the latter were yet concealed by the woody ridge near the convent, which gives such enchanting effect to their aerial points. The sky above them was clear and glowing, unstained by the lightest vapour; and these mountains still appeared upon it, like unsubstantial visions. On the two highest pinnacles we could just distinguish the ruins of castles, and, on a lower precipice, a building, which our reverend guide pointed out as a convent, dedicated to St. Bernard, giving us new occasion to admire the fine taste of the monks in their choice of situations.

Opposite to the Seven Mountains, the plains of Goodesberg are screened by the chain of hills already mentioned, which begin in the neighbourhood of Cologne, and whose woods, spreading into France, there assume the name of the Forest of Ardennes. Within the recesses of these woods the Elector has a hunting-seat, almost every window of which opens upon a different alley, and not a stag can cross these without being seen from the chateau. It is melancholy to consider, that the most frequent motives of man's retirement among the beautiful recesses of nature, are only those of destroying the innocent animals that inhabit her shades. Strange! that her lovely scenes cannot soften his heart to milder pleasures, or elevate his fancy to nobler pursuits, and that he must still seek his amusement in scattering death among the harmless and the happy.

As we afterwards walked in the garden of the convent, the greater part of which was planted with vines, the monk further exhibited his good humour and liberality. He enquired concerning the events of the war, of which he appeared to know the latest; spoke of his friends in Cologne and other places; drew a ludicrous picture of the effect which would be produced by the appearance of a capuchin in London, and laughed immoderately at it. '"There,"' said he, '"it would be supposed, that some harlequin was walking in a capuchin's dress to attract spectators for a pantomime; here nobody will follow him, left he should lead them to church. Every nation has its way, and laughs at the ways of others.

Considering the effects, which differences sometimes have, there are few things more innocent than that sort of laughter."'

The garden was stored with fruits and the vegetable luxuries of the table, but was laid out with no attention to beauty, its inimitable prospects having, as the good monk said, rendered the society careless of less advantages. After exchanging our thanks for his civilities against his thanks for the visit, we descended to Poppelsdorff by a steep road, bordered with firs and fragrant shrubs, which frequently opened to corn lands and vineyards, where peasants were busied in dressing the vines.

About a mile from Bonn is a garden, or rather nursery, to which they have given the name of *Va [...]xhall*. It is much more rural than that of London, being planted with thick and lofty groves, which, in this climate, are gratefully refreshing, during the summer-day, but are very pernicious in the evening, when the vapour, arising from the ground, cannot escape through the thick foliage. The garden is lighted up only on great festivals, or when the Elector or his courtiers give a ball in a large room built for the purpose. On some days, half the inhabitants of Bonn are to be seen in this garden, mingling in the promenade with the Elector and his nobility; but there were few visitors when we saw it. Count GIMNICH, the commander, who had surrendered Mentz to the French, was the only person pointed out to us.

The road from hence to Bonn was laid out and planted with poplars at the expence of the Elector, who has a taste for works of public advantage and ornament. His Grand-mastership of the Teutonic Order renders his Court more frequented than those of the other ecclesiastical Princes, the possessions of that Order being still considerable enough to support many younger brothers of noble families. Having passed his youth in the army, or at the courts of Vienna or Brussels, he is also environed by friends, made before the vacancy of an ecclesiastical electorate induced him to change his profession, and the union of his three incomes, as Bishop of Munster, Grand Master and Elector, enables him to spend something more than two hundred thousand pounds annually. His experience and revenues are, in many respects, very usefully employed. To the nobility he affords an example of so much personal dignity, as to be able to reject many ostentatious customs, and to remove some of the ceremonial barriers, which men do not constantly place between themselves and their fellow-

beings, except from some consciousness of personal weakness. All sovereigns, who have had any sense of their individual liberty and power, have shewn a readiness to remove such barriers; but not many have been able to effect so much as the Elector of Cologne against the chamberlains, pages, and other footmanry of their courts, who are always upon the *alerte* to defend the false magnificence that makes their offices seem necessary. He now enjoys many of the blessings, usual only in private stations; among others, that of conversing with great numbers of persons, not forced into his society by their rank, and of dispensing with much of that attendance, which would render his menial servants part of his company.

His secretary, Mr. Floret, whom we had the pleasure to see, gave us some accounts of the industry and carefulness of his private life, which he judiciously thought were better than any other panegyrics upon his master. His attention to the relief, employment and education of the poor, to the state of manufactures and the encouragement of talents, appears to be continual; and his country would soon have elapsed from the general wretchedness of Germany, if the exertions of three campaigns had not destroyed what thirty years of care and improvement cannot restore.

His residence at Bonn occasions expenditure enough to keep the people busy, but he has not been able to divert to it any part of the commerce, which, though it is of so little use at Cologne, is here spoken of with some envy, and seems to be estimated above its amount. The town, which is much neater than the others in the electorate, and so pleasantly situated, that its name has been supposed to be formed from the Latin synonym for good, is ornamented by few public buildings, except the palace. What is called the University is a small brick building, used more as a school than a college, except that the masters are called professors. The principal church of four, which are within the walls, is a large building, distinguished by several spires, but not remarkable for its antiquity or beauty.

Many of the German powers retain some shew of a representative government, as to affairs of finance, and have States, by which taxes are voted. Those of the electorate of Cologne consist of four colleges, representing the clergy, nobility, knights and cities; the votes are given by colleges, so that the inhabitants of the cities, if they elect their

representatives fairly, have one vote in four. These States assemble at Bonn.

One of the privileges, which it is surprising that the present Elector should retain, is that of grinding corn for the consumption of the whole town. His mill, like those of all the towns on the Rhine, is a floating one, moored in the river, which turns its wheel. Bread is bad at Bonn; but this oppressive privilege is not entirely answerable for it, there being little better throughout the whole country. It generally appears in rolls, with glazed crusts, half hollow; the crumb not brown, but a sort of dirty white.

There are few cities in Germany without walls, which, when the dreadful science of war was less advanced than at present, frequently protected them against large armies. These are now so useless, that such cannon as are employed against batteries could probably not be fired from them without shaking their foundations. The fortifications of Bonn are of this sort; and, though they were doubtless better, when the Duke of Marlborough arrived before them, it is wonderful that they should have sustained a regular siege, during which great part of the town was demolished. The electorate of Cologne is, indeed, so ill prepared for war, that it has not one town, which could resist ten thousand men for three days.

The inhabitants of Bonn, whenever they regret the loss of their fortifications, should be reminded of the three sieges, which, in the course of thirty years, nearly destroyed their city. Of these the first was in 1673, when the Elector had received a French garrison into it; but the resistance did not then continue many days. It was in this siege that the Prince of Orange, afterwards our honoured William the Third, had one of his few military successes. In 1689, the French, who had lately defended it, returned to attack it; and, before they could subdue the strong garrison left in it by the Elector of Brandenburg, the palace and several public buildings were destroyed. The third siege was commanded by the Duke of Marlborough, and continued from the 24th of April to the 16th of May, the French being then the defenders, and the celebrated Cohorn one of the assailants. It was not till fifteen years afterwards, that all the houses, demolished in this siege, could be restored by the efforts of the Elector Joseph.

The present Elector maintains, in time of peace, about eight hundred soldiers, which is the number of his contingent to the army of the Empire: in the present war he has supplied somewhat more than this allotment; and, when we were at Bonn, two thousand recruits were in training. His troops wear the general uniform of the Empire, blue faced with red, which many of the Germanic sovereigns give only to their contingent troops, while those of their separate establishments are distinguished by other colours. The Austrian regiments are chiefly in white, faced with light blue, grey, or red; but the artillery are dressed, with very little shew, in a cloak speckled with light brown.

Bonn was one of the very few places in Germany, which we left with regret. It is endeared to the votaries of landscape by its situation in the midst of fruitful plains, in the presence of stupendous mountains, and on the bank of a river, that, in summer, is impelled by the dissolved snows of Switzerland, and, in winter, rolls with the accumulation of a thousand torrents from the rocks on its shores. It contained many inhabitants, who had the independence to aim at a just taste in morals and letters, in spite of the ill examples with which such countries supply them; and, having the vices of the form of government, established in it, corrected by the moderation and immediate attention of the governor, it might be considered as a happy region in the midst of ignorance, injustice and misery, and remembered like the green spot, that, in an Arabian desert, cheers the senses and sustains the hopes of the weary traveller.

2.8. GOODESBERG .

THE ride from Bonn to this delightful village is only one league over a narrow plain, covered with corn and vineyards. On our right was the range of hills, before seen from the mountain SANCTAE CRUCIS, sweeping into frequent recesses, and starting forward into promontories, with inequalities, which gave exquisite richness to the forest, that mantled from their bases to their utmost summits. Many a lurking village, with its slender grey steeple, peeped from among the woody skirts of these hills. On our left, the tremendous mountains, that bind the eastern shore of the Rhine, gradually lost their aërial complexion, as we approached them, and displayed new features and new enchantments; an ever-varying illusion, to which the transient circumstance of thunder clouds contributed. The sunbeams, streaming among these clouds, threw partial gleams upon the precipices, and, followed by dark shadows, gave surprising and inimitable effect to the natural colouring of the mountains, whose pointed tops we now discerned to be covered with dark heath, extended down their rocky sides, and mingled with the reddish and light yellow tints of other vegetation and the soil. It was delightful to watch the shadows sweeping over these steeps, now involving them in deep obscurity, and then leaving them to the sun’s rays, which brought out all their hues into vivid contrast.

Near Goodesberg, a small mountain, insulated, abrupt and pyramidal, rises from the plain, which it seems to terminate, and conceals the village, that lies along its southern skirt. This mountain, covered with vineyards and thick dwarf wood to its summit, where one high tower and some shattered walls appear, is a very interesting object.

At the entrance of the village, the road was obstructed by a great number of small carts, filled with soldiers apparently wounded. The line of their procession had been broken by some carriages, hastening with company to the ridotto at Goodesberg, and was not easily restored. Misery and festivity could scarcely be brought into closer contrast. We thought of Johnson’s ‘“many-coloured life,”’ and of his picture, in the preface to Shakespeare, of cotemporary wretchedness and joy, when ‘“the reveller is hastening to his wine, and the mourner is burying his friend.”’ This was a procession of wounded French prisoners, chiefly boys, whose appearance

had, indeed, led us to suspect their nation, before we saw the stamp of the *fasces*, and the words ‘“*Republique Françoise*”’ upon the buttons of some, whom our driver had nearly overset. The few, that could raise themselves above the floor of their carts, shewed countenances yellow, or livid with sickness. They did not talk to their guards, nor did the latter shew any signs of exultation over them.

In a plain, beyond the village, a row of large houses, built upon one plan, and almost resembling a palace, form the little watering place of Goodesberg, which has been founded partly at the expence of the Elector, and partly by individuals under his patronage. One of the houses was occupied by the Archduchess, his sister, and is often used by the Elector, who is extremely solicitous for the prosperity of the place. A large building at the end contains the public rooms, and is fitted up as an hotel.

The situation of this house is beautiful beyond any hope or power of description; for description, though it may tell that there are mountains and rocks, cannot paint the grandeur, or the elegance of outline, cannot give the effect of precipices, or draw the minute features, that reward the actual observer by continual changes of colour, and by varying their forms at every new choice of his position. Delightful Goodesberg! the sublime and beautiful of landscape, the charms of music, and the pleasures of gay and elegant society, were thine! The immediate unhappiness of war has now fallen upon thee; but, though the graces may have fled thee, thy terrible majesty remains, beyond the sphere of human contention.

The plain, that contains the village and the Spa, is about five miles in length and of half that breadth. It is covered by uninclosed corn and nearly surrounded by a vast amphitheatre of mountains. In front of the inn, at the distance of half a league, extend, along the opposite shore of the Rhine, the Seven Mountains, so long seen and admired, which here assume a new attitude. The three tallest points are now nearest to the eye, and the lower mountains are seen either in the perspective between them, or sinking, with less abrupt declivities, into the plains, on the north. The whole mass exhibits a grandeur of outline, such as the pencil only can describe; but fancy may paint the stupendous precipices of rock, that rise over the Rhine, the rich tuftings of wood, that emboss the cliffs or lurk within the recesses, the spiry summits and the ruined castles, faintly discerned, that crown them. Yet the appearance of these mountains, though more grand,

from Goodesberg, is less sublime than from Bonn; for the nearness, which increases their grandeur, diminishes their sublimity by removing the obscurity that had veiled them. To the south of this plain, the long perspective is crossed by further ranges of mountains, which open to glimpses of others still beyond; an endless succession of summits, that lead on the imagination to unknown vallies and regions of solitary obscurity.

Amidst so many attractions of nature, art cannot do much. The little, which it attempts, at Goodesberg, is the disposition of some walks from the houses to a spring, which is said to resemble that at Spa, and through the woods above it. Twice a week there are some musical performances and a ball given by the Elector, who frequently appears, and with the ease and plainness of a private gentleman. At these entertainments the company, visiting the spring, are joined by neighbouring families, so as to be in number sixty, or a hundred. The balls, agreeably to the earliness of German hours, begin at six; and that, which we meant to see, was nearly concluded before our arrival. The company then retired to a public game, at which large sums of gold were risked, and a severe anxiety defied the influence of Mozart's music, that continued to be played by an excellent orchestra. The dresses of the company were in the English taste, and, as we were glad to believe, chiefly of English manufacture; the wearing of countenances by play appears to be also according to our manners, and the German ladies, with features scarcely less elegant, have complexions, perhaps, finer than are general in England.

Meditating censures against the Elector's policy, or carelessness, in this respect, we took advantage of the last gleams of evening, to ascend the slender and spiry mountain, which bears the name of the village, and appears ready to precipitate the ruins of its antient castle upon it. A steep road, winding among vineyards and dwarf wood, enters, at the summit of the mountain, the broken walls, which surround the ancient citadel of the castle; an almost solid building, that has existed for more than five centuries. From the area of these ruins we saw the sun set over the whole line of plains, that extend to the westward of Cologne, whose spires were distinctly visible. Bonn, and the hill SANCTAE CRUCIS, appeared at a league's distance, and the windings of the Rhine gleamed here and there amidst the rich scene, like distant lakes. It was a still and beautiful

evening, in which no shade remained of the thunder clouds, that passed in the day. To the west, under the glow of sun-set, the landscape melted into the horizon in tints so soft, so clear, so delicately roseate as Claude only could have painted. Viewed, as we then saw it, beyond a deep and dark arch of the ruin, its effect was enchanting; it was to the eye, what the finest strains of Paisiello are to the heart, or the poetry of Collins is to the fancy — all tender, sweet, elegant and glowing.

From the other side of the hill the character of the view is entirely different, and, instead of a long prospect over an open and level country, the little plain of Goodesberg appears reposing amidst wild and awful mountains. These were now melancholy and silent; the last rays were fading from their many points, and the obscurity of twilight began to spread over them. We seemed to have found the spot, for which Collins wished:

> “Now let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
> Or find some ruin ‘midst its dreary dells,
> Whose walls more awful nod
> By thy religious gleams.”
>
> ODE TO EVENING.

And this is a place almost as renowned in the history of the country, as it is worthy to exercise the powers of poetry and painting. The same Ernest, in the cause of whose sovereignty the massacre of Neuss was perpetrated, besieged here the same Gerard de Trusches, the Elector, who had embraced the Protestant religion, and for whom Neuss held out. The castle of Goodesberg was impregnable, except by famine, but was very liable to that from its insulated situation, and the ease, with which the whole base of the mountain could be surrounded. Gerard’s defence was rendered the more obstinate by his belief, that nothing less than his life, and that of a beautiful woman, the marrying of whom had constituted one of the offences against his Chapter, would appease his ferocious enemies. He was personally beloved by his garrison, and they adhered to him with the affection of friends, as well as with the enthusiasm of soldiers. When, therefore, they perceived, that their surrender could not be much longer

protracted, they resolved to employ their remaining time and strength in enabling him to separate his fortunes from theirs. They laboured incessantly in forming a subterraneous passage, which should open beyond the besiegers' lines; and, though their distress became extreme before this was completed, they made no overtures for a surrender, till Gerard and his wife had escaped by it. The fugitives arrived safely in Holland, and the vengeance of their adversaries was never gratified further than by hearing, many years after, that they died poor.

The fortress, rendered interesting by these traits of fidelity and misfortune, is not so far decayed, but that its remains exhibit much of its original form. It covered the whole summit of the hill, and was valuable as a residence, as well as a fortification. What seem to have been the walls of the great hall, in which probably the horn of two quarts was often emptied to welcome the guest, or reward the soldier, are still perfect enough to preserve the arches of its capacious windows, and the doorways, that admitted its festive trains. The vast strength of the citadel has been unsubdued by war, or time. Though the battlements, that crown it, are broken, and of a gallery, that once encircled it half way from the ground, the corbells alone remain, the solid walls of the building itself are unimpaired. At the narrow doorway, by which only it could be entered, we measured their thickness, and found it to be more than ten feet, nearly half the diameter of its area. There has never been a fixed staircase, though these walls would so well have contained one; and the hole is still perfect in the floor above, through which the garrison ascended and drew up their ladder after them. Behind the loop-holes, the wall has been hollowed, and would permit a soldier, half bent, to stand within them and use his bow. It was twilight without and night within the edifice; which fancy might have easily filled with the stern and silent forms of warriors, waiting for their prey, with the patience of safety and sure superiority.

We wandered long among these vestiges of ancient story, rendered still more interesting by the shadowy hour and the vesper bell of a chapel on a cliff below. The village, to which this belongs, straggles half way up the mountain, and there are several little shrines above it, which the cottagers, on festivals, decorate with flowers. The Priest is the schoolmaster of the parish, and almost all the children, within several miles of the hill, walk to it, every day, to prayers and lessons. Whether it is from this care of their

minds, or that they are under the authority of milder landlords than elsewhere, the manners of the inhabitants in this plain differ much from those, usual in Germany. Instead of an inveterate sullenness, approaching frequently to malignity, they shew a civility and gentleness in their intercourse with strangers, which leave the enjoyments derived from inanimate nature, unalloyed by the remembrances of human deformity, that mingle with them in other districts. Even the children's begging is in a manner, which shews a different character. They here kiss their little hands, and silently hold them out to you, almost as much in salute, as in entreaty; in many parts of Germany their manner is so offensive, not only for its intrusion, but as a symptom of their disposition, that nothing but the remembrance of the oppression, that produces it, can prevent you from denying the little they are compelled to require.

The music had not ceased, when we returned to the inn; and the mellowness of French horns, mingled with the tenderness of hautboys, gave a kind of enchantment to the scenery, which we continued to watch from our windows. The opposite mountains of the Rhine were gradually vanishing in twilight and then as gradually reappearing, as the rising moon threw her light upon their broken surfaces. The perspective in the east received a silvery softness, which made its heights appear like shadowy illusions, while the nearer mountains were distinguished by their colouring, as much as by their forms. The broad Rhine, at their feet, rolled a stream of light for their boundary, on this side. But the first exquisite tint of beauty soon began to fade; the mountains became misty underneath the moon, and, as she ascended, these mists thickened, till they veiled the landscape from our view.

The spring, which is supposed to have some medicinal qualities, is about a quarter of a mile from the rooms, in a woody valley, in which the Elector has laid out several roads and walks. It rises in a stone bason, to which the company, if they wish to drink it on the spot, descend by an handsome flight of steps. We were not told its qualities, but there is a ferrugineous tint upon all the stones, which it touches. The taste is slightly unpleasant.

The three superior points of the Seven Mountains, which contribute so much to the distinction of Goodesberg, are called Drakenfels, Wolkenbourg and Lowenbourg, and have each been crowned by its castle,

of which two are still visible in ruins. There is a story faintly recorded, concerning them. Three brothers, resolving to found three distinguished families, took the method, which was anciently in use for such a purpose, that of establishing themselves in fortresses, from whence they could issue out, and take what they wanted from their industrious neighbours. The pinnacles of Drakenfels, Wolkenbourg and Lowenbourg, which, with all assistance, cannot be ascended now, without the utmost fatigue, were inaccessible, when guarded by the castles, built by the three brothers. Their depredations, which they called successes in war, enriched their families, and placed them amongst the most distinguished in the empire.

They had a sister, named Adelaide, famed to have been very beautiful; and, their parents being dead, the care of her had descended to them. Roland, a young knight, whose castle was on the opposite bank of the Rhine, became her suitor, and gained her affections. Whether the brothers had expected, by her means, to form a more splendid alliance, or that they remembered the ancient enmity between their family and that of Roland, they secretly resolved to deny the hand of Adelaide, but did not choose to provoke him by a direct refusal. They stipulated, that he should serve, a certain number of years, in the war of Palestine, and, on his return, should be permitted to renew his suit.

Roland took a reluctant farewell of Adelaide, and went to the war, where he was soon distinguished for an impetuous career. Adelaide remained in the castle of Drakenfels, waiting, in solitary fidelity, for his return. But the brothers had determined, that he should not return for her. They clothed one of their dependents in the disguise of a pilgrim, and introduced him into the castle, where he related, that he was arrived from the holy wars, and had been desired by Roland in his latest moments to assure Adelaide of his having loved her till death.

The unhappy Adelaide believed the tale, and, from that time, devoted herself to the memory of Roland and to the nourishment of her sorrow. She rejected all the suitors, introduced by her brothers, and accepted no society, but that of some neighbouring nuns. At length, the gloom of a cloister became so necessary to the melancholy of her imagination, that she resolved to found a convent and take the veil; a design, which her brothers assisted, with the view of placing her effectually beyond the reach of her lover. She chose an island in the Rhine between her brother’s castle

and the seat of Roland, both of which she could see from the windows of her convent; and here she passed some years in the placid performance of her new duties.

At length, Roland returned, and they both discovered the cruel device, by which they had been separated for ever. Adelaide remained in her convent, and soon after died; but Roland, emulating the fidelity of her retirement, built, at the extreme point of his domains towards the Rhine, a small castle, that overlooked the island, where he wasted his days in melancholy regret, and in watching over the walls, that shrouded his Adelaide.

This is the story, on which the wild and vivid imagination of Ariosto is said to have founded his Orlando.

2.9. THE VALLEY OF ANDERNACH .

AFTER spending part of two days at Goodesberg, we set out, in a sultry afternoon, for the town of Andernach, distant about five-and-twenty English miles. The road wound among cornlands towards the Rhine, and approached almost as near to the Seven Mountains, as the river would permit. Opposite to the last, and nearly the tallest of these, called Drakenfels, the open plain terminates, and the narrower valley begins.

This mountain towers, the majestic sentinel of the river over which it aspires, in vast masses of rock, varied with rich tuftings of dwarfwood, and bearing on its narrow peak the remains of a castle, whose walls seem to rise in a line with the perpendicular precipice, on which they stand, and, when viewed from the opposite bank, appear little more than a rugged cabin. The eye aches in attempting to scale this rock; but the sublimity of its height and the grandeur of its intermingled cliffs and woods gratify the warmest wish of fancy.

The road led us along the western bank of the Rhine among vineyards, and corn, and thick trees, that allowed only transient catches of the water between their branches; but the gigantic form of Drakenfels was always seen, its superior features, perhaps, appearing more wild, from the partial concealment of its base, and assuming new attitudes as we passed away from it. Lowenberg, whose upper region only had been seen from Goodesberg, soon unfolded itself from behind Drakenfels, and displayed all its pomp of wood, sweeping from the spreading base in one uninterrupted line of grandeur to the spiry top, on which one high tower of the castle appears enthroned among the forests. This is the loftiest of the Seven Mountains; and its dark sides, where no rock is visible, form a fine contrast with the broken cliffs of Drakenfels. A multitude of spiry summits appeared beyond Lowenberg, seen and lost again, as the nearer rocks of the shore opened to the distance, or re-united. About a mile further, lies the pleasant island, on which Adelaide raised her convent. As it was well endowed, it has been rebuilt, and is now a large and handsome quadrangle of white stone, surrounded with trees, and corn, and vineyards, and still allotted to the society, which she established. An abrupt, but not lofty rock, on the western shore of the Rhine, called Rolands Eck, or

Roland’s Corner, is the site of her lover’s castle, of which one arch, picturesquely shadowed with wood, is all that remains of this monument to faithful love. The road winds beneath it, and nearly overhangs the narrow channel, that separates Adelaide’s island from the shore. Concerning this rock there is an ancient rhyme in the country, amounting to something like the following:

Was not Roland, the knight, a strange silly wight,
For the love of a nun, to live on this height?

After passing the island, the valley contracts, and the river is soon shut up between fruitful and abrupt hills, which rise immediately over it, on one side, and a series of rocky heights on the other. In the small space, left between these heights and the Rhine, the road is formed. For the greater part of the way, it has been hollowed in the solid rock, which ascends almost perpendicularly above it, on one hand, and sinks as abruptly below it, to the river, on the other; a work worthy of Roman perseverance and design, and well known to be a monument of both. It was made during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus; and as the inscription, whose antiquity has not been doubted, dates its completion in the year 162, it must have been finished in one year, or little more, Marcus Aurelius having been raised to the purple in 161. The Elector Palatine having repaired this road, which the Electors of Cologne had neglected, in 1768, has caused his name to be joined with those of the Roman Emperors, in the following inscription upon an oblisk: ‘VIAM
SUB M.
AURELIO
ET L. VERO
I. M. P. P.
ANNO CHR.
CLXII
MUNITAM
CAROLUS
THEODORUS
ELECTOR PAL.

DUX BAV. JUL. CL. M.
REFECIT
ET AMPLIAVIT
AN. M. DCCLXVIII
CURANTE JO. LUD. COMITE
DE GOLDSTEIN
PRO PRINCIPE.’

We did not sufficiently observe the commencement and conclusion of this road, to be certain of its exact length; but it is probably about twelve miles. The rock above is, for the most part, naked to the summit, where it is thinly covered with earth; but sometimes it slopes so much as to permit patches of soil on its side, and these are carefully planted with vines. This shore of the Rhine may be said to be bounded, for many miles, by an immense wall of rock, through which the openings into the country behind are few; and these breaks shew only deep glens, seen and lost again so quickly, that a woody mountain, or a castle, or a convent, were the only objects we could ascertain.

This rock lies in oblique *strata,* and resembles marble in its brown and reddish tints, marked with veins of deeper red; but we are unable to mention it under its proper and scientific denomination. The colouring of the cliffs is beautiful, when mingled with the verdure of shrubs, that sometimes hang in rich drapery from their points, and with the mosses, and creeping vegetables of bright crimson, yellow, and purple, that emboss their fractured sides.

The road, which the Elector mentions himself to have widened, is now and then very narrow, and approaches near enough to the river, over which it has no parapet, to make a traveller anxious for the sobriety and skill of his postillion. It is sometimes elevated forty feet above the level of the Rhine, and seldom less than thirty; an elevation from whence the water and its scenery are viewed to great advantage; but to the variety and grandeur of these shores, and the ever changing form of the river, description cannot do justice.

Sometimes, as we approached a rocky point, we seemed going to plunge into the expanse of water beyond; when, turning the sharp angle of the promontory, the road swept along an ample bay, where the rocks, receding,

formed an amphitheatre, covered with *ilex* and dwarfwood, round a narrow, but cultivated level stripe: then, winding the furthest angle of this crescent, under huge cliffs, we saw the river beyond, shut in by the folding bases of more distant promontories, assume the form of a lake, amidst wild and romantic landscapes. Having doubled one of these capes, the prospect opened in long perspective, and the green waters of the Rhine appeared in all their majesty, flowing rapidly between ranges of marbled rocks, and a succession of woody steeps, and overlooked by a multitude of spiry summits, which distance had sweetly coloured with the blue and purple tints of air.

The retrospect of the river, too, was often enchanting, and the Seven Mountains long maintained their dignity in the scene, superior to many intervening heights; the dark summit of Lowenburg, in particular, appeared, for several leagues, overlooking the whole valley of the Rhine.

The eastern margin of the river sometimes exhibited as extensive a range of steep rocks as the western, and frequently the fitness of the salient angles on one side, to the recipient ones on the other, seemed to justify the speculation, that they had been divided by an earthquake, which let the river in between them. The general state of the eastern bank, though steep, is that of the thickest cultivation. The rock frequently peeps, in rugged projections, through the thin soil, which is scattered over its declivity, and every where appears at top; but the sides are covered with vines so abundantly, that the labour of cultivating them, and of expressing the wine, supports a village at least at every half mile. The green rows are led up the steeps to an height, which cannot be ascended without the help of steps cut in the rock: the soil itself is there supported by walls of loose stones, or it would fall either by its own weight, or with the first pressure of rain; and sometimes even this scanty mould appears to have been placed there by art, being in such small patches, that, perhaps, only twenty vines can be planted in each. But such excessive labour has been necessary only towards the summits, for, lower down, the soil is sufficiently deep to support the most luxuriant vegetation.

It might be supposed from so much produce and exertion, that this bank of the Rhine is the residence of an opulent, or, at least, a wellconditioned peasantry, and that the villages, of which seven or eight are frequently in sight at once, are as superior to the neighbouring towns by the state of

their inhabitants, as they are by their picturesque situation. On the contrary, the inhabitants of the wine country are said to be amongst the poorest in Germany. The value of every hill is exactly watched by the landlords, so that the tenants are very seldom benefited by any improvement of its produce. If the rent is paid in money, it leaves only so much in the hands of the farmer as will enable him to live, and pay his workmen; while the attention of a great number of stewards is supposed to supply what might be expected from his attention, had he a common interest with his landlord in the welfare of the estate. But the rent is frequently paid in kind, amounting to a settled proportion of the produce; and this proportion is so fixed, that, though the farmer is immoderately distressed by a bad vintage, the best will not afford him any means of approaching to independence. In other countries it might be asked, ‘“But, though we can suppose the ingenuity of the landlord to be greater than that of the tenant, at the commencement of a bargain, how happens it, that, since the result must be felt, the tenant will remain under his burthens, or can be succeeded by any other, on such terms?”’ Here, however, these questions are not applicable; they presume a choice of situations, which the country does not afford. The severity of the agricultural system continues itself by continuing the poverty, upon which it acts; and those, who would escape from it find few manufactures and little trade to employ them, had they the capital and the education necessary for either. The choice of such persons is between the being a master of day-labourers for their landlord, or a labourer under other masters.

Many of these estates belong immediately to Princes, or Chapters, whose stewards superintend the cultivation, and are themselves instead of the farmers, so that all other persons employed in such vineyards are ordinary servants. By one or other of these means it happens, that the bounteousness of nature to the country is very little felt by the body of the inhabitants. The payment of rents in kind is usual, wherever the vineyards are most celebrated; and, at such places, there is this sure proof of the wretchedness of the inhabitants, that, in a month after the wine is made, you cannot obtain one bottle of the true produce, except by favour of the proprietors, or their stewards. How much is the delight of looking upon plenteousness lessened by the belief, that it supplies the means of excess to a few, but denies those of competence to many!

Between this pass of cultivated steeps on one side of the river, and of romantic rocks on the other, the road continues for several miles. Being thus commanded on both sides, it must be one of the most difficult passages in Europe to an enemy, if resolutely defended. The Rhine, pent between these impenetrable boundaries, is considerably narrower here than in other parts of the valley, and so rapid, that a loaded vessel can seldom be drawn faster than at the rate of six English miles a day, against the stream. The passage down the river from Mentz to Cologne may be easily performed in two days; that from Cologne to Mentz requires a fortnight.

The view along this pass, though bounded, is various and changeful. Villages, vineyards and rocks alternately ornament the borders of the river, and every fifty yards enable the eye to double some massy projection that concealed the fruitful bay behind. An object at the end of the pass is presented singly to the sight as through an inverted telescope. The surface of the water, or the whole stillness of the scene, was very seldom interrupted by the passing of a boat; carriages were still fewer; and, indeed, throughout Germany, you will not meet more than one in twenty miles. Travelling is considered by the natives, who know the fatigue of going in carriages nearly without springs, and stopping at inns where there is little of either accommodation or civility, as productive of no pleasure; and they have seldom curiosity or business enough to recompense for its inconveniencies.

We passed through two or three small towns, whose ruined gates and walls told of their antiquity, and that they had once been held of some consequence in the defence of the valley. Their present desolation formed a melancholy contrast with the cheerful cultivation around them. These, however, with every village in our way, were decorated with green boughs, planted before the door of each cottage, for it was a day of festival. The little chapels at the road-side, and the image, which, every now and then, appeared under a spreading tree, were adorned with wreaths of fresh flowers; and though one might smile at the emblems of superstition, it was impossible not to reverence the sentiment of pious affection, which had adjusted these simple ornaments.

About halfway to Andernach, the western rocks suddenly recede from the river, and, rising to greater height, form a grand sweep round a plain

cultivated with orchards, garden-fields, corn and vineyards. The valley here spreads to a breadth of nearly a mile and an half, and exhibits grandeur, beauty and barren sublimity, united in a singular manner. The abrupt steeps, that rise over this plain, are entirely covered with wood, except that here and there the ravage of a winter torrent appeared, which could sometimes be traced from the very summit of the acclivity to the base. Near the centre, this noble amphitheatre opens to a glen, that shews only wooded mountains, point above point, in long perspective; such sylvan pomp we had seldom seen! But though the tuftings of the nearer woods were beautifully luxuriant, there seemed to be few timber trees amongst them. The opposite shore exhibited only a range of rocks, variegated like marble, of which purple was the predominating tint, and uniformly disposed in vast, oblique strata. But even here, little green patches of vines peeped among the cliffs, and were led up crevices where it seemed as if no human foot could rest. Along the base of this tremendous wall, and on the points above, villages, with each its tall, grey steeple, were thickly strewn, thus mingling in striking contrast the cheerfulness of populous inhabitation with the horrors of untamed nature. A few monasteries, resembling castles in their extent, and known from such only by their spires, were distinguishable; and, in the widening perspective of the Rhine, an old castle itself, now and then, appeared on the summit of a mountain somewhat remote from the shore; an object rendered sweetly picturesque, as the sun’s rays lighted up its towers and fortified terraees, while the shrubby steeps below were in shade.

We saw this landscape under the happiest circumstances of season and weather; the woods and plants were in their midsummer bloom, and the mellow light of evening heightened the richness of their hues, and gave exquisite effect to one half of the amphitheatre we were passing, while the other half was in shadow. The air was scented by bean-blossoms, and by lime-trees then in flower, that bordered the road. If this plain had mingled pasture with its groves, it would have been truly Arcadian; but neither here, nor through the whole of this delightful valley, did we see a single pasture or meadow, except now and then in an island on the Rhine; deficiencies which are here supplied, to the lover of landscape, by the verdure of the woods and vines. In other parts of Germany they are more to be regretted, where, frequently, only corn and rock colour the land.

Fatigued at length by such prodigality of beauty, we were glad to be shrouded awhile from the view of it, among close boughs, and to see only the wide rivulets, with their rustic bridges of faggots and earth, that, descending from among the mountains, frequently crossed our way; or the simple peasant-girl, leading her cows to feed on the narrow stripe of grass that margined the road. The little bells, that jingled at their necks, would not suffer them to stray beyond her hearing. If we had not long since dismissed our surprise at the scarcity and bad quality of cheese and butter in Germany, we should have done so now, on perceiving this scanty method of pasturing the cattle, which future observation convinced us was the frequent practice.

About sun-set we reached the little village of Namedy, seated near the foot of a rock, round which the Rhine makes a sudden sweep, and, contracted by the bold precipices of Hammerstein on the opposite shore, its green current passes with astonishing rapidity and sounding strength. These circumstances of scenery, with the tall masts of vessels lying below the shrubby bank, on which the village stands, and seeming to heighten by comparison the stupendous rocks, that rose around them; the moving figures of boatmen and horses employed in towing a barge against the stream, in the bay beyond; and a group of peasants on the high quay, in the fore ground, watching their progress; the ancient castle of Hammerstein overlooking the whole — these were a combination of images, that formed one of the most interesting pictures we had seen.

The valley again expanding, the walls and turrets of Andernach, with its Roman tower rising independently at the foot of a mountain, and the ruins of its castle above, appeared athwart the perspective of the river, terminating the pass; for there the rocky boundary opened to plains and remote mountains. The light vapour, that rose from the water, and was tinged by the setting rays, spread a purple haze over the town and the cliffs, which, at this distance appeared to impend over it; colouring extremely beautiful, contrasted as it was by the clearer and deeper tints of rocks, wood and water nearer to the eye.

As we approached Andernach, its situation seemed to be perpetually changing, with the winding bank. Now it appeared seated on a low peninsula, that nearly crossed the Rhine, overhung by romantic rocks; but this vision vanished as we advanced, and we perceived the town lying

along a curving shore, near the foot of the cliffs, which were finely fringed with wood, and at the entrance of extensive plains. Its towers seen afar, would be signs of a considerable place, to those who had not before been wearied of such symptoms by the towers of Neuss, and other German towns. From a wooded precipice over the river we had soon after a fine retrospective glimpse of the valley, its fantastic shores, and long mountainous distance, over which evening had drawn her sweetest colouring. As we pursued the pass, the heights on either hand gradually softened; the country beyond shewed remote mountains less wild and aspiring than those we had left, and the blooming tint, which had invested the distance, deepened to a dusky purple, and then vanished in the gloom of twilight. The progressive influence of the hour upon the landscape was interesting; and the shade of evening, under which we entered Andernach, harmonized with the desolation and silence of its old walls and the broken ground around them. We passed a drawbridge and a ruinous gateway, and were sufficiently fatigued to be somewhat anxious as to our accommodation. The English habit of considering, towards the end of the day's journey, that you are not far from the cheerful reception, the ready attendance, and the conveniences of a substantial inn, will soon be lost in Germany. There, instead of being in good spirits, during the last stage, from such a prospect, you have to consider, whether you shall find a room, not absolutely disgusting, or a house with any eatable provision, or a landlady, who will give it you, before the delay and the fatigue of an hundred requests have rendered you almost incapable of receiving it. When your carriage stops at the inn, you will perhaps perceive, instead of the alacrity of an English waiter, or the civility of an English landlord, a huge figure, wrapt in a great coat, with a red worsted cap on his head, and a pipe in his mouth, stalking before the door. This is the landlord. He makes no alteration in his pace on perceiving you, or, if he stops, it is to eye you with curiosity; he seldom speaks, never bows, or assists you to alight; and perhaps stands surrounded by a troop of slovenly girls, his daughters, whom the sound of wheels has brought to the door, and who, as they lean indolently against it, gaze at you with rude curiosity and surprise.

The drivers in Germany are all bribed by the innkeepers, and, either by affecting to misunderstand you, or otherwise, will constantly stop at the

door, where they are best paid. That this money comes out of your pocket the next morning is not the grievance; the evil is, that the worst inns give them the most, and a traveller, unless he exactly remembers his directions, is liable to be lodged in all the vilest rooms of a country, where the best hotels have no lodging so clean and no larder so wholesomely filled as those of every halfway house between London and Canterbury. When you are within the inn, the landlord, who is eager to keep, though not to accommodate you, will affirm, that his is the inn you ask for, or that the other sign is not in the place; and, as you soon learn to believe any thing of the wretchedness of the country, you are unwilling to give up one lodging, lest you should not find another.

Our driver, after passing a desolate, half filled place, into which the gate of Andernach opened, entered a narrow passage, which afterwards appeared to be one of the chief streets of the place. Here he found a miserable inn, and declared that there was no other; but, as we had seen one of a much better appearance, we were at length brought to that, and, though with some delay, were not ill accommodated, for the night.

Andernach is an ancient town, and it is believed, that a tower, which stands alone, at one end of the walls, was built by Drusus, of whom there are many traces in walls and castles, intended to defend the colonies, on this side of the Rhine, against the Germans, on the other. The fortifications can now be of little other use than to authorise the toll, which travellers pay, for entering a walled town; a tax, on account of which many of the walls are supported, though it is pretended, that the tax is to support the walls. By their means also, the Elector of Cologne collects here the last of four payments, which he demands for the privilege of passing the Rhine from Urdingen to Andernach; and this is the most Southern frontier town of his dominions on the western side of the Rhine, which soon after join those of the Elector of Treves. Their length from hence to Rheinberg is not less than ninety miles; the breadth probably never more than twenty.

There is some trade, at Andernach, in tiles, timber, and millstones, but the heaps of these commodities upon the beach are the only visible symptoms of the traffick; for you will not see one person in the place moving as if he had business to attract him, or one shop of a better appearance, than an English huckster’s, or one man in the dress of a creditable trader, or one house, which can be supposed to belong to

persons in easy circumstances. The port contains, perhaps, half a dozen vessels, clinker built, in shape between a barge and a sloop; on the quay, you may see two or three fellows, harnessing half a dozen horses to a tow line, while twenty more watch their lingering manoeuvres, and this may probably be the morning's business of the town. Those, who are concerned in it, say that they are engaged in *commerce*.

This, or something like it, is the condition, as to trade, of all the towns we saw in Germany, one or two excepted. They are so far from having well filled, or spacious repositories, that you can scarcely tell at what houses there are any, till you are led within the door; you may then wait long after you are heard, or seen, before the owner, if he has any other engagement, thinks it necessary to approach you: if he has what you ask for, which he probably has not, unless it is something very ordinary, he tells the price and takes it, with as much sullenness, as if you were forcing the goods from him: if he has not, and can shew you only something very different, he then considers your enquiry as an intrusion, and appears to think himself injured by having had the trouble to answer you. What seems unaccountable in the manners of a German trader, is, that, though he is so careless in attending you, he looks as much distressed, as vexed, if you do not leave some money with him; but he probably knows, that you can be supplied no where else in the town, and, therefore, will not deny himself the indulgence of his temper. Even when you are satisfied, his manner is so ill, that he appears to consider you his dependent, by wanting something which he can refuse. After perceiving, that this is nearly general, the pain of making continual discoveries of idleness and malignity becomes so much greater than the inconvenience of wanting any thing short of necessaries, that you decline going into shops, and wait for some easier opportunities of supplying whatever you may lose upon the road.

2.10. COBLENTZ .

IT is one post from Andernach hither, over a road, as good as any in England. Beyond the dominions of the Elector of Cologne, the face of the country, on this side of the Rhine, entirely changes its character. The rocks cease, at Andernach, and a rich plain commences, along which the road is led, at a greater distance from the Rhine, through corn lands and uninclosed orchards. About a mile from Andernach, on the other side of the river, the white town of Neuwiedt, the capital of a small Protestant principality, is seen; and the general report, that it is one of the most commercial places, on the Rhine, appeared to be true from the chearful neatness of the principal street, which faces towards the water. There were also about twenty small vessels, lying before it, and the quay seemed to be wide enough to serve as a spacious terrace to the houses. The Prince’s palace, an extensive stone building, with a lofty orangery along the shore, is at the end of this street, which, as well as the greatest part of the town, was built, or improved under the auspices of his father; a wise prince, distinguished by having negotiated, in 1735, a peace between the Empire and France, when the continuance of the war had seemed to be inevitable. The same benevolence led him to a voluntary surrender of many oppressive privileges over his subjects, as well as to the most careful protection of commerce and manufactures. Accordingly, the town of Neuwiedt has been continually increasing in prosperity and size, for the last fifty years, and the inhabitants of the whole principality are said to be as much more qualified in their characters as they are happier in their conditions than those of the neighbouring states. But then there is the *wretchedness* of a deficiency of game in the country, for the late Prince was guilty of such an innovation as to mitigate the severity of the laws respecting it.

The forest hills, that rise behind Neuwiedt and over the rocky margin of the river, extend themselves towards the more rugged mountains of Wetteravia, which are seen, a shapeless multitude, in the east.

The river is soon after lost to the view between high, sedgy banks; but, near Coblentz, the broad bay, which it makes in conjunction with the Moselle, is seen expanding between the walls of the city and the huge

pyramidal precipice, on which stands the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, or rather which is itself formed into that fortress. The Moselle is here a noble river, by which the streams of a thousand hills, covered with vines, pour themselves into the Rhine. The antient stone bridge over it leads to the northern gate of Coblentz, and the entrance into the city is ornamented by several large chateau-like mansions, erected to command a view of the two rivers. A narrow street of high, but antient houses then commences, and runs through the place. Those, which branch from it extend, on each side, towards the walls, immediately within which there are others, that nearly follow their course and encompass the city. Being built between two rivers, its form is triangular, and only one side is entirely open to the land; a situation so convenient both for the purposes of commerce and war, that it could not be overlooked by the Romans, and was not much neglected by the moderns, till the industry of maritime countries and the complicated constitution of the Empire reduced Germany in the scale of nations. This was accordingly the station of the first legion, and the union of the two rivers gave it a name; *Confluentia.* At the commencement of the modern division of nations, the successors of Charlemagne frequently resided here, for the convenience of an intercourse between the other parts of the Empire and France; but, in the eleventh century, the whole territory of Treves regained the distinction, as a separate country, which the Romans had given it, by calling the inhabitants *Treveri.*

Coblentz is a city of many spires, and has establishments of chapters and monasteries, which make the great pride of German capitals, and are sometimes the chief objects, that could distinguish them from the neglected villages of other countries. The streets are not all narrow, but few of them are straight; and the same pavement serves for the horses of the Elector and the feet of his subjects. The port, or beach, has the appearance of something more business than that of Andernach, being the resort of passage-vessels between Mentz and Cologne; but the broad quay, which has been raised above it, is chiefly useful as a promenade to the visitors of a close and gloomy town. Beyond the terrace stands the Elector’s palace, an elegant and spacious stone edifice, built to the height of three stories, and inclosing a court, which is large enough to be light as well as magnificent. The front towards the Rhine is simple, yet grand, the few ornaments being so well proportioned to its size, as neither to debase

it by minuteness, nor encumber it by vastness. An entablature, displaying some allegorical figures in bas relief, is supported by six Doric columns, which contribute much to the majestic simplicity of the edifice. The palace was built, about ten years since, by the reigning Elector, who mentions, in an inscription, his attention to the architectural art; and a fountain, between the building and the town, is inscribed with a few words, which seem to acknowledge his subjects as beings of the same species with himself; CLEMENS WINCESLAUS VICINIS SUIS.

But the most striking parts of the view from this quay are the rock and fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, that present themselves immediately before it, on the other side of the river; notwithstanding the breadth of which they appear to rise almost perpendicularly over Coblentz. At the base of the rock stands a large building, formerly the palace of the Electors, who chose to reside under the immediate protection of the fortress, rather than in the midst of their capital. Adjoining it is the village of Ehrenbreitstein, between which and Coblentz a flying bridge is continually passing, and, with its train of subordinate boats, forms a very picturesque object from the quay. The fortress itself consists of several tier of low walls, built wherever there was a projection in the rock capable of supporting them, or wherever the rock could be hewn so as to afford room for cannon and soldiers. The stone, taken out of the mass, served for the formation of the walls, which, in some places, can scarcely be distinguished from the living rock. Above these tier, which are divided into several small parts, according to the conveniences afforded by the cliff, is built the castle, or citadel, covering its summit, and surrounded by walls more regularly continued, as well as higher. Small towers, somewhat in the antient form, defend the castle, which would be of little value, except for its height, and for the gradations of batteries between it and the river. Thus protected, it seems impregnable on that side, and is said to be not much weaker on the other; so that the garrison, if they should be willing to fire upon Coblentz, might make it impossible for an enemy to remain within it, except under the cover of very high entrenchments. This is the real defence of the city, for its walls would presently fall before heavy artillery; and this, it is believed, might be preserved as long as the garrison could be supplied with stores.

We crossed the river from the quay to the fortress, by means of the very simple invention, a flying bridge. That, by which part of the passage of the Waal is made at Nimeguen, has been already mentioned; this is upon the same principle, but on a much larger scale. After the barges, upon which the platform is laid, are clear of the bank, the whole passage is effected with no other labour than that of the rudder. A strong cable, which is fastened to an anchor at each side of the river, is supported across it by a series of small boats; the bridge has two low masts, one on each barge, and these are connected at the top by a beam, over which the cable is passed, being confined so as that it cannot slip beyond them. When the bridge is launched, the rapidity of the current forces it down the Rhine as far as the cable will permit: having reached that point, the force, received from the current, gives it the only direction of which it is capable, that across the river, with the cable which holds it. The steersman manages two rudders, by which he assists in giving it this direction. The voyage requires nine or ten minutes, and the bridge is continually passing. The toll, which, for a foot passenger, is something less than a penny, is paid, for the benefit of the Elector, at an office, on the bank, and a sentinel always accompanies the bridge, to support his government, during the voyage.

The old palace of Ehrenbreitstein, deserted because of its dampness, and from the fear of its being overwhelmed by the rock, that sometimes scatters its fragments upon it, is now used as a barrack and hospital for soldiers. It is a large building, even more pleasantly situated than the new one, being opposite to the entrance of the Moselle into the Rhine; and its structure, which has been once magnificent, denotes scarcely any other decay, than all buildings will shew, after a few years' neglect. The rock has allowed little room for a garden, but there are some ridiculous ornaments upon a very narrow strip of ground, which was probably intended for one.

The only entrance into the fortress, on this side, is by a road, cut in the solid rock, under four gateways. It is so steep, that we were compelled to decline the honour of admission, but ascended it far enough to judge of the view, commanded from the summit, and to be behind the batteries, of which some were mounted with large brass cannon. Coblentz lies beneath it, as open to inspection as a model upon a table. The sweeps of the Rhine and the meanders of the Moselle, the one binding the plain, the other intersecting it, lead the eye towards distant hills, that encircle the

capacious level. The quay of the city, with the palace and the moving bridge, form an interesting picture immediately below, and we were unwilling to leave the rock for the dull and close streets of Coblentz. On our return, the extreme nakedness of the new palace, which is not sheltered by trees, on any side, withdrew our attention from the motley group of passengers, mingled with hay carts and other carriages, on the flying bridge.

The long residence of the emigrant princes and noblesse of France in this city is to be accounted for not by its general accommodations, or gaieties, of which it is nearly as deficient as the others of Germany; but first by the great hospitality of the Elector towards them, and then by the convenience of its situation for receiving intelligence from France, and for communicating with other countries. The Elector held frequent levies for the French nobility, and continued for them part of the splendour which they had enjoyed in their own country. The readiness for lending money upon property, or employments in France, was also so great, that those, who had not brought cash with them, were immediately supplied, and those, who had, were encouraged to continue their usual expences. We know it from some of the best possible authority, that, at the commencement of the march towards Longwy, money, at four per cent. was even pressed upon many, and that large sums were refused.

Here, and in the neighbourhood, between sixty and seventy squadrons of cavalry, consisting chiefly of those who had formerly enjoyed military, or other rank, were formed; each person being mounted and equipped chiefly at his own expence. We heard several anecdotes of the confidence, entertained in this army, of a speedy arrival in Paris; but, as the persons, to whom they relate, are now under the pressure of misfortune, there would be as little pleasure, as propriety in repeating them.

At Coblentz, we quitted, for a time, the left bank of the Rhine, in order to take the watering place of Selters, in our way to Mentz. Having crossed the river and ascended a steep road, near the fortress, we had fine glimpses of its walls, bastions and out-towers, and the heathy knolls, around them, with catches of distant country. The way continued to lie through the dominions of the Elector of Treves, which are here so distinguished for their wretchedness as to be named the *Siberia of Germany!* It is paved and called a *chaussée;* but those, who have not experienced its ruggedness, can

have no idea of it, except by supposing the pavement of a street torn up by a plough, and then suffered to fix itself, as it had fallen. Always steep, either in ascent, or descent, it is not only the roughness, that prevents your exceeding the usual post-pace of three English miles an hour. Sometimes it runs along edges of mountains, that might almost be called precipices, and commands short views of other mountains and of vallies entirely covered with thick, but not lofty forests; sometimes it buries itself in the depths of such forests and glens; sometimes the turrets of an old chateau peep above these, but rather confirm than contradict the notion of their desolateness, having been evidently built for the purposes of the chace; and sometimes a mud village surprises you with a few inhabitants, emblems of the misery and savageness of the country.

These are the mountains of Wetteravia, the boundaries of many a former and far-seen prospect, then picturesque, sublime, or graceful, but now desolate, shaggy, and almost hideous; as in life, that, which is so grand as to charm at a distance, is often found to be forlorn, disgustful and comfortless by those, who approach it.

2.11. MONTABAUR .

SIX hours after leaving Coblentz, we reached Montabaur, the first post-town on the road, and distant about eighteen miles. An ancient chateau, not strong enough to be a castle, nor light enough to be a good house, commands the town, and is probably the residence of the lord. The walls and gates shew the antiquity of Montabaur, but the ruggedness of its site should seem to prove, that there was no other place in the neighbourhood, on which a town could be built. Though it is situated in a valley, as to the nearer mountains, it is constructed chiefly on two sides of a narrow rock, the abrupt summit of which is in the centre of this very little place.

The appearance of Montabaur is adequate in gloominess to that of several before seen; but it would be endless to repeat, as often as they should be true, the descriptions of the squalidness and decay, that characterise German towns; nor should we have noticed these so often, if the negligence of others, in this respect, had not left us to form deceitful expectations, suitable to the supposed importance of several very conspicuous, but really very wretched cities.

2.12. LIMBOURG .

OVER a succession of forest mountains, similar to those just passed, we came, in the afternoon, to Limbourg, another post town, or, perhaps, city, and another collection of houses, like tombs, or forsaken hospitals. At an inn, called the Three Kings, we saw first the sullenness and then the ferocious malignity of a German landlord and his wife, exemplified much more fully than had before occurred. When we afterwards expressed our surprise, that the magistrates should permit persons of such conduct to keep an inn, especially where there was only one, we learned, that this fellow was himself the chief magistrate, or burgomaster of the place; and his authority appeared in the fearfulness of his neighbours to afford any sort of refreshment to those, who had left his inn. One of the Elector's ministers, with whom we had the pleasure to be acquainted, informed us, that he knew this man, and that he must have been intoxicated, for that, though civil when sober, he was madly turbulent and abusive, if otherwise. It appeared, therefore, that a person was permitted to be a magistrate, who, to the knowledge of government, was exposed by his situation to be intoxicated, and was outrageous, whenever he was so. So little is the order of society estimated here, when it is not connected with the order of politics.

Near Limbourg, the forest scenery, which had shut up the view, during the day, disappeared, and the country lost, at least, an uniformity of savageness. The hills continue, but they are partly cultivated. At a small distance from the town, a steep ascent leads to a plain, on which a battle was fought, during the short stay of the French in this district, in the campaign of 1792.

Four thousand French were advancing towards Limbourg; a small Prussian corps drew up to oppose them, and the engagement, though short, was vivid, for the Prussians did not perceive the superiority of the French in numbers, till the latter began to spread upon the plain, for the purpose of surrounding them. Being then compelled to retreat, they left several of the Elector's towns open to contribution, from which five-and-twenty thousand florins were demanded, but the remonstrances of the magistrates reduced this sum to 8000 florins, or about 700 l. The French then entered

Limbourg, and extended themselves over the neighbouring country. At Weilbourg, the residence of a Prince of the House of Nassau, they required 300,000 florins, or 25,000 l. which the Prince neither had, nor could collect, in two days, through his whole country. All his plate, horses, coaches, arms and six pieces of cannon, were brought together, for the purpose of removal; but afterwards two individuals were accepted as hostages, instead of the Prince himself, who had been at first demanded. The action near Limbourg took place on the 9th of November, and, before the conclusion of the month, the French had fallen back to Franckfort, upon the re-approach of the Prussian and Austrian troops.

2.13. SELTERS .

WE had a curiosity to see this place, which, under the name of Seltzer, is so celebrated throughout Europe, for its medicinal water. Though it is rather in the high road to Franckfort than to Mentz, there seemed no probability of inconvenience in making this short departure from our route, when it was to be joined again from a place of such public access as Selters appeared likely to be found.

About seven miles from Limbourg, a descent commences, at the bottom of which stands this village. What a reproof to the expectations of comfort, or convenience in Germany! Selters, a spot, to which a valetudinarian might be directed, with the prospect of his finding not only abundant accommodation, but many luxuries, Selters is literally and positively nothing more than an assemblage of miserable cottages, with one inn and two houses for officers of the Elector, stuck in a dirty pass, which more resembles a ditch than a road. The village may be said to be near half a mile long, because the huts, being mostly separated from each other, continue as far; and this length would increase its inconvenience to invalids, if such should ever stay there longer than to see it, for there is nothing like a swept pathway, and the road, in which they must walk, is probably always deeply covered with mud, being so when we were there in the beginning of July. There was then, however, not one stranger, besides ourselves, in the place, and we found, that very rarely any aggravate the miseries of sickness by a stay at Selters.

The only lodgings to be had are at the inn, and fortunately for travellers this is not such as might be expected from the appearance of the village. Finding there the novelty of an obliging host and hostess, we were very well contented to have reached it, at night, though we were to stay there also the next day, being Sunday. The rooms are as good as those in the inns of German cities, and three, which are called Court Chambers, having been used by the Elector and lately by the King of Prussia, are better. These are as open as the others to strangers.

The spring is at the foot of one of several hills, which immediately surround the village, and is separated from the road by a small court yard. An oaken covering, at the height of ten or twelve feet, prevents rain from

falling into the wooden bason, in which the stream rises; and two or three of the Elector's guards watch over it, that no considerable quantity may be taken, without payment of the duty, which forms a large part of his income. Many thousands of stone bottles are piled round this court, and, for the reputation of the spring, care is taken to fill them as immediately as possible, before their removal for exportation.

The policy of keeping this income intire is said to be a motive for neglecting the condition of the village. A duty could not well be demanded of those, who should drink at the spring, but is easily collected before the water is bottled for removal; it is, therefore, not wished, that there should be many visitors, at Selters. We did not hear this reason upon the spot, but it is difficult otherwise to account for a negligence, which prevents the inhabitants of the neighbouring country from being enriched at the expence of wanderers from others.

Nor is it only a duty, but the whole profit of the traffick, till the water leaves the place, which rewards the care of the Elector. His office for the sale of it is established here, and his agents alone transmit it into foreign countries. The business is sufficient to employ several clerks, and the number of bottles annually filled is so immense, that, having omitted to write it down, we will not venture to mention it from memory. The water is brought to table constantly and at an easy price in all the towns near the Rhine. Mixed with Rhenish wine and sugar it forms a delightful, but not always a safe beverage, in hot weather. The acid of the wine, expelling the fixed air of other ingredients, occasions an effervescence, like that of Champagne, but the liquor has not a fourth part of the obnoxious strength of the latter. The danger of drinking it is, that the acid may be too powerful for some constitutions.

After being surprised by the desolateness of the village, we were not less so to find amongst its few inhabitants one, whose manners and information, so far from bearing the character of the dreariness around him, were worthy of the best society in the most intelligent cities. This was the Commissary and Privy Counsellor of the Elector for the district, who, having heard, that there were some English visitors at the well, very frankly introduced himself to us by his civilities, and favoured us with his company in the afternoon. He had been in England, with many valuable introductions, and had formed from the talents and accomplishments of a

distinguished Marquis an high opinion of the national character; a circumstance, which probably united with his natural disposition, in inducing him to emulate towards us the general politeness of that truly honourable person.

When we enquired how the journey of the next day was to be performed, it appeared, that no other carriage could be hired in the place than a sort of one-horse chair, which would take us to the next post town, from whence we might proceed with the usual chaises. The driver walked at the side of this uncouth carriage, which had shafts and wheels strong enough for a waggon; and, either by the mistake or intention of his master in directing him, we were led, not to the post town, for a chaise, if it could be had, but entirely through a forest country to Mentz, by roads made only for the woodcutters, and, as it afterwards proved, known to few others, except to our ingenious voiturier. We did not pass a town, or village, at which it was possible to change the carriage, and had, therefore, no other alternative, when the mistake was discovered, than to return to Selters, or to proceed to Mentz, in this inconvenient and ludicrous vehicle. We chose to proceed, and had some reward for fatigue, by passing nearly an whole day under the shade of deep and delightful forests, little tamed by the hand of man, and appearing to acknowledge only ‘“the season’s difference.”’

Between Selters and these forests, the country is well cultivated, and frequently laid out in garden fields, in which there was the first appearance ofcheerful labour we had seen in Germany. After passing a small town, on the summit of a hill to the left, still surrounded by its antient fortifications, we entered a large plain, skirted, on one side, by villages; another town, at the end of which, was almost the last sign of an inhabited country, that appeared for several hours. The forest then commenced, and, with the exception of one hamlet, enveloped near the middle, we saw nothing but lofty oaks, elms and chesnuts, till we emerged from it in the afternoon, and came to a town of the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt. Roebucks are said to be numerous, and wild boars not very scarce, in this forest; but we saw none either here, or in those near Limbourg, which are much inferior to this in beauty. Upon the whole, it was a scene of perfect novelty; without which it now seems that we should have wanted many ideas of sylvan life and much of the delight, excited by Shakespeare’s exquisite description of it.

The country afterwards opens towards

2.14. MENTZ,

WHICH stands in a spacious plain, on the opposite edge of the Rhine, and is visible, at a considerable distance, with its massy towers and numerous spires. Within two or three miles of the city, the symptoms of ruin, occasioned by the siege in 1793, began to appear. A village, on the left, had scarcely one house entire; and the tower of the church was a mere wreck, blackened by flames, and with large chasms, that admitted the light. The road did not pass nearer to it than two miles, but the broken walls and roofs were distinguishable even at that distance, and sometimes a part, which had been repaired, contrasted its colour with the black and smoky hues of the remainder. This was the village of Kostheim, so often contended for in the course of the siege, being on the opposite bank of the Rhine to the city, and capable of obstructing the intercourse with it by water.

The country on the eastern side of the river was otherwise but little damaged, if we except the destruction of numerous orchards; for the allies were not strong enough to besiege the city on all sides at once, and contented themselves with occupying some posts in this quarter, capable of holding the garrison of Cassel in awe.

This Cassel is a small village exactly opposite to Mentz, and communicating with it by a bridge of boats. It was unfortified before the invasion of the French; but these had no sooner entered the city, than they perceived the importance of such a place, and prepared themselves to render it a regular fortress. In about two months they completely surrounded it with earthen works and outworks, ditched and pallisadoed. Some of the nearest orchards were cut down to be used in these fortifications. The fruit trees still remain with their branches upwards from the ditch, and serve instead of *chevaux de frise.*

The village of Hockheim, which is also on this side of the Rhine, is further to the left than Kostheim, and remains uninjured, at the top of the round and easy hill, the vines of which are so much celebrated for their flavour, as to give a name to great quantities of wine, produced in other districts. After the siege, the merchants of the neighbourhood enhanced the price of their stocks by reporting, that all the vineyards had been

destroyed; but the truth is, that Hockheim was not much contended for, and that little damage was done even to the crops then in bloom. The village is advantageously situated about the confluence of the Rhine and the Maine, and, if it had been nearer the city, would probably have been so important, as to have been contested, till it was destroyed.

This is the home ground of the scene, which spreads before the traveller, who approaches Mentz from the eastern shore of the Rhine. Furthest to the left is Hockheim, then the devastated village of Kostheim, then the fortifications of Cassel, which, with the river, are between him and the city. Beyond, the horizon is bounded on all sides by gradual hills, distant and apparently fruitful; but those to the north are preeminent, with gentle slopes at their feet, coloured sweetly by corn, dark wood and gleams of reddish earth.

The works of Cassel render the approach to the city very tedious, for they have been so contrived as that the road nearly follows them, in all their angles, for the purpose of being commanded by many points at once. The village was now garrisoned by Prussians, of whom, some were lying under the sheds of their guardhouse near the bridge, and others were riding over it, with just speed enough to give one an idea of military earnestness. Their horses shook the floor of the bridge of boats, which here crosses the Rhine, at its breadth of nearly eight hundred feet, and disturbed the promenade, for which it is usually frequented in an evening. We followed them, admiring the expanse, and rapidity of the river more than the appearance of the city, where gloominess is too much mingled with grandeur; till, at the end of the bridge, we were stopped at another guardhouse, to answer the usual enquiries. A soldier accompanied us thence to a large square filled with cannon and mortars, where the captain of the guard examined our passport. We were then very glad to pass the evening at an inn without further researches; but there were some symptoms of the late condition of the city to attract attention in the way.

The Elector’s palace, which forms one side of this square, having been converted into an hospital by the French, is still used as such, or as a barrack, by the Prussians; and the windows were crowded with the figures of half-dressed soldiers. Many of the cannon in the square remained with the fractures, made by the balls of the besiegers. This place communicates with a broad street, in which were many buildings, filled with soldiers, and

an handsome house, that, having belonged to one of the Clubbists, was destroyed immediately after the expulsion of the French. The walls still remain bare and open. Some greater ruins, occasioned by fire, during the siege, were visible at a distance, and, upon the whole, we had interest enough excited, as to the immediate history of the place, to take little notice of the narrow and difficult passages, through which we wound for half an hour, after leaving the principal street.

The next morning, the friends, to whom we had letters, began to conduct us through the melancholy curiosities, left in the city by the siege. These are chiefly in the southern quarter, against which the direct attack of the allies was made, and their approaches most advanced. Some entire streets have been destroyed here, and were still in ruins. A magnificent church, attached to a convent of Franciscan monks, is among the most lamentable spectacles; what was the roof now lies in heaps over the pavement; not a vestige of furniture, or decoration, has escaped the flames, and there are chasms in the walls larger than the noble windows, that once illuminated them. This church and convent were set on fire by a bomb; and of the sick soldiers, who were lodged in the latter, it is feared that but few were removed before the destruction of the building. We next saw the remains of a palace, built by the present Provost of the Chapter of Nobles; an institution, which is so rich, that their Superior had a more elegant residence than the Elector. It was of stone, and the principal front was in the Corinthian order, six columns of which supported a spacious open gallery, ornamented with statues, for its whole length. The wings formed two sides of a square, which separated the palace from the street. A profusion of the richest furniture and a valuable collection of paintings filled the interior. Of the whole edifice little now remains but the shattered walls of the centre, which have been so scorched as to lose all appearance of having belonged to a splendid structure. It was burnt the night before the fire of the Franciscan church, and two nights after the French had removed their head quarters and their municipality from it. On the day before the removal, a bomb had fallen upon the French General Blou, destroying him on the spot, and mortally wounding an officer, with whom he was conversing. The ruins are now so accumulated over the courtyard, that we could not discern it to have ever had that appendage of a distinguished residence.

But the church of Notre Dame was the most conspicuous of many ruined objects. The steeple of this had been one of the grandest ornaments of the city; a shower of bombs set fire to it; and, while it was thus rendered an easy mark for the besiegers, their cannon played upon and beat a great part of it to the ground. By its fall the roof of the church was shattered, but the body did not otherwise suffer any material injury. Wooden galleries have been raised round the remainder of the steeple, not for the purpose of repairing, but for that of entirely removing it; and, to save the trouble of letting down the stones on the outside, a wooden pipe, or channel has been made, through which they are lowered into the church. The appearance of this steeple, which was once very large and lofty, is rendered striking by these preparations for its total destruction.

The whole church is built of a stone, dug from the neighbouring hills, the colour of which is so delicate a pink, that it might be supposed to be given by art. The Elector’s palace and several other public buildings in the city are formed of this stone.

Passing through the gates on this side of Mentz, we came to a slope near the river, and beyond the glacis of the place, which was then partly covered with huge masses of stone scattered among the roots of broken trees and shrubs, that had begun again to shoot their verdure over the amputated trunks. This was the site of a palace of the Elector, called, both from the beauty of its situation, and the splendour of its structure, La Favorita. The apartments of the palace and the terraces of the garden commanded extensive views of the Rhine and the surrounding country ascending from its banks; and the gardens themselves were so beautifully disposed as to be thought worthy of the name of English. They were ornamented with pavilions, which had each its distinct prospect, and with one music room in the thickest part of the shrubbery. Of the building nothing is now visible but some disjointed stones; and of the garden, only the broken trunks of trees. The palace was burned and the gardens levelled by the French, that they might not afford shelter to the Prussians, during the siege.

From this spot we were shewn the positions of the allied forces, the course of their approaches and the chief outworks of the city. Hockheim, Kostheim and Cassel lay before us, on the other side of the river; a gentle rise, on this side, at the distance of nearly a mile, was the first station of

the allies, part of whose force was covered behind it; their last batteries were within two hundred and fifty paces of the city. The ground had been since levelled, and was now covered with standing corn, but the track of the trenches was, in some places, visible. On the other hand, the forts, in which the strength of the whole so much consists, were completely repaired, and had no appearance of having been so lately attacked. They are five in number, and, being raised at a considerable distance from the walls of the city, no near approaches can be made, till some of them are either taken, or destroyed; for they are said to be regular and strong fortifications, capable of containing numerous garrisons, and communicating with the city itself by passages, cut in the ground, through which they may be constantly reinforced.

Only one of these five forts, that nearest to the river, was destroyed in the late siege, which would have been much more tedious, but for the want of provisions and medicines, that began to be felt in the garrison. The walls of the city were almost uninjured, so that it has not been thought necessary to repair them in the few places, where balls may be perceived to have struck. The bombardment was the chief annoyance of the garrison, who were not sheltered in caserns, and whose magazines, both of ammunition and provision, were frequently destroyed by it. Their numbers were also greatly reduced by sallies and by engagements, on the other side of the Rhine, in defence of Cassel, or in attack of part of an island, called the Bleiau.

We walked round the city upon what is termed the *glacis*, that is upon the slope, which ascends from the plain towards the top of the ditch, and which is the furthest of the defensive works, being very gradually raised, that those, who are upon it, may be exposed, at every step, to the fire from the walls. The forts, which are formed of solid earthen works, covered with turf, would scarcely attract the notice of an unmilitary eye, if the channelled passages to them did not issue from this slope, and if the sentinels, stalking upon the parapets, did not seem of a gigantic size, by having their whole figures raised against the light.

Mentz was at this time the depôt of stores for the Prussian army on the Rhine, and there were persons employed upon the *glacis*, in counting heaps of cannon balls, which had been delivered from some neighbouring foundery. On the bank of the river, others were throwing waggon-loads of

hay into large barges, on which it was piled to such an height, that small passages were cut through it for the rowers to work in. There were nine or ten barges so filled; and in these labours more activity was apparent than in any other transactions we saw at Mentz.

Having passed round the city, between the walls and the forts, which protect them, to the north, west and south, we came, at this latter side, to some other signals of a theatre of war. Here had been a noble alley of at least a mile and a half long, formed of poplars as large and high as elms, and surrounded, on each side, by plantations, intersected by small and irregular walks. Being led along the banks of the Rhine, this alley, with its adjoining groves, afforded a most delightful promenade, and was classed amongst the best ornaments, given to the river, in its whole course. This also was destroyed upon the approach of the besiegers, that it might not afford them shelter. The trunks of the sturdy trees, cut at the height of one or two feet from the ground, shew, by their solidity and the abundance of their vigorous shoots, how long they might have flourished, but for this disaster.

An Englishman, walking amidst the ensigns of such artificial and premature desolation, cannot help considering the natural security of his country, and rejoicing, that, even if the strong and plain policy of neglecting all foreign consequence, and avoiding all foreign interests, except the commercial ones, which may be maintained by a navy, should for ever be rejected, still his home cannot be invaded; and, though the expence of wars should make poverty general, the immediate horrors of them cannot enter the cities, or the cottages of an island.

Great part of our time at Mentz was occupied by enquiries concerning the siege, which was not so much a topic as we had expected to find it. We probably heard, however, all that was to be told, and had a German pamphlet recommended, containing the history of the place from the first invasion of the French to their departure. The authenticity of this was assured to us; and it is partly from it, partly from the accounts given by our friends, that the following short narrative has been extracted.

OF MENTZ IN 1792 AND 1793 .

THE entrance of a French army into Worms, in the beginning of October 1792, had excited a considerable alarm in Mentz, before the inhabitants of the latter city received the accounts, which were not long wanting, of express and avowed preparations for a march towards them. Great numbers of French emigrants had been drawn to the city by the meeting of the Emperor and the King of Prussia there, a few months before; many had arrived since the dissolution of their army in Champagne; and, during the approach of the Republican troops to Spires and Worms, families were continually passing through the city, joining those, who began to take their flight from it. The narrow streets were filled with carriages, and the distressful haste of the travellers served to depress the spirits of the inhabitants, who saw how little their city was thought capable of defence. On the 15th of October, Baron d'Albini, a counsellor of the Court, called the Burgesses together, and admonished them to make preparations for their security; he also enquired, whether they thought it prudent, that the Elector should remain in the city with them? and, it being readily answered, that they did not, the Elector set out for Wurtzburg, a town about 100 miles distant, and was followed by the members of the government. At the same time, a considerable emigration of the other inhabitants took place.

The approach of the French had been so little foreseen, till within the few last weeks, that the garrison did not amount to a tenth part of the war complement. The inhabitants, however, having happily had little experience of sieges, did not know what this complement should be, and, after the first alarm, began to think the deficiency might be easily remedied. The Electoral troops, having sent some useless detachments to Spires, amounted to only 968 men, to whom an hundred were added, obtained from Nassau, Oranien, Weilburg, Bieberich and Fuld by the Elector's demands of assistance from his neighbours. Two hundred and seven Austrian hussars of Esterhazy had also arrived, on the 13th, and all the inhabitants of the Rheingau, a populous district, bordering upon the Rhine, were summoned to the assistance of the capital. The antient society of Archers of the city laid down their bows for musquets; the

Academicians formed themselves into a corps, and were placed, together with the Archers, at several outposts. The traders, though exempt from personal service, and unwilling to surrender that privilege, resolved to pay double watch-money for substitutes. It began to be thought, that the threatened progress of the French had been untruly reported; that the siege could not be commenced at that late season of the year; and lastly, that some promised reinforcements of Austrian troops could not be far off.

But, on the 19th of October, the French, in four columns, began to surround the place. They wore, at first, white cockades, expecting to be mistaken for the army of M. de Condé; they were, however, known, and fired upon. Though some days had been passed in preparation, it was now found, that there was little readiness for defence. The best artillerymen had been lost at Spires; there were, at first, no horses to draw the cannon, so that oxen were used for that purpose; the nearest balls to the batteries of twenty-four pound cannon were cast for twelve-pounders; and many of the musquet cartridges could not be fired. In a few hours, however, several of the artisans applied themselves to the making of cartridges; horses were supplied by the servants of the Court and the Nobility, and all hands were, in some way or other, employed. It was then reported, that a corps of Austrian troops was in the neighbourhood, and, on the 19th, 1800 men entered the city. These were recruits without ammunition, and, for the most part, without arms, being on their march to join the army of the Emperor. They were then under the command of two, or three subalterns; but some other Imperial officers came in from the neighbourhood, and arms were obtained from the Elector’s arsenal. After this reinforcement there were probably about four thousand men in arms in the city.

With this force, it is allowed, that a much longer defence than was made might have been expected; and, unless there was some failure of the commander’s attention, the treachery of an engineer, to whom the surrender is imputed, could certainly not have been so effectual. EIKENMAYER, this engineer, had, it seems, made known to the French the commander’s preparations for defence; intelligence, which, if the preparations had been greater, could have been but little serviceable to the assailants. His chief assistance was afforded to them by much more conspicuous means; for, as the inhabitants went frequently to a building called St. Stephen’s Tower, to observe the progress of the besiegers, he

assured them, that the army, which really amounted only to eleven thousand men, consisted of forty thousand; that they had with them two-and-twenty waggons, laden with scaling ladders, and that the city would presently be taken by storm. The same representations of the besiegers' force were also made by him to the Council of War; and these, it is said, determined them to the surrender, before the French had raised a battery against the works.

Many of the citizens, however, were surprised and enraged at this resolution; and the captain of the Austrian reinforcements expressed his displeasure, at the Council House, where he declared, that he would continue to defend the place, even without permission. In the mean time, the capitulation was signed, and he was induced to submit to it by the solicitations even of the citizens, by whom it was blamed, and by their representations, that, in the present agitated temper of the inhabitants, all attempts at defence must be useless.

Baron d'ALBINI carried news of the surrender to the Elector, at Wurtzburg, and, about five o'clock, on the 21st of October, two French officers came to the Council House, followed by two companies of grenadiers. On the 22d, eight thousand French entered the city, the other three thousand having marched, the preceding day, to Franckfort; the inhabitants, astonished to find themselves taken by so small a force, now saw, to their still greater surprise, that their conquerors had scarcely any heavy cannon. This day was passed in assigning quarters to the troops, and, on the next, Custine, the commander of the French, called the members of the City Council together, to whom, in a short speech, he promised the protection of persons and properties, inviting them, at the same time, to promote the fraternization of the inhabitants with the French nation. Professor BOHMER, who had accepted the office of his Secretary, translated this address into German, and it was circulated through the city.

It is remarkable, that the French had no sooner taken possession of this sudden prize, than they began to foresee the probability of being reduced to defensive measures and to prepare for them. They immediately collected contributions of forage and corn from the neighbouring villages; the streets were rendered almost impassable by the loads brought in; and, as the magazines were soon filled, great quantities were wasted by being exposed to the rain in gardens, and trodden under the feet of horses in the

streets. The garrison was soon increased to 20,000 men, of whom sometimes three hundred sometimes five hundred were lodged in each convent. The French soldiery having committed some excesses, Custine reproved their licentiousness, and began to habituate them to discipline by ordering a retirement to their quarters, at certain hours, by beat of drum.

The inhabitants soon began to suspect the contrivance and the persons, that had produced the surrender; for Eikenmayer lived in intimacy with Custine; Professor Metternich, of the Academy of Mentz, mounted the French cockade; and the Elector's physician, having left the city, upon a promise of assisting some peasants, whom he asserted to be seized with an infectious fever, had carried on a correspondence with the French, as had PATOKI, a merchant, born at Colmar, who had lately received the right of citizenship.

The palaces of the Elector and the Provost were now ransacked; and, though it had been published as a rule, that the property of private individuals should not be touched, the houses of the nobility were treated, as if they had belonged to the Prince. The profligacy and pride of Custine became every day more conspicuous, and were oppressive upon the garrison, as well as the inhabitants, though in a less degree. Johannesberg, a village upon the Rhine, at the distance of a few miles, is celebrated for its wines, which fell for three times the price of those of Hockheim. Custine sent a part of the garrison solely to bring him the wines from the cellars of the Prince of Fuld, who has a palace there; but, a compromise being proposed, the negotiation was protracted so long, that a Prussian corps, for which the Prince had sent, carried Johannesberg, before the terms were concluded. The Prince saved his money, and lost only eighteen barrels of wine, of which part was sent to Paris, and the rest supplied the entertainments given by Custine.

Those of the Germans, who attached themselves to Custine, supplied him with information of the state of the whole country. His Secretary, Professor Bohmer, had begun the institution of a Club so early as the 22d of October; but this society is thought to have become inconvenient, and they soon after began to prepare for a National Convention in Mentz.

In the mean time, Cassel was surveyed, and the fortifications, for which Eikenmayer is said to have furnished the design, were commenced. The neighbouring peasants were summoned to work at these, at the price of

fifteen French sous, or about seven pence halfpenny a day; and intrenchments were thrown round Kostheim.

On the 17th of December, Custine published a proclamation, in which he stated, that, whereas some persons had supposed the King of Prussia to have so little respect for his character as to have invited him to a surrender, none should presume, on pain of death, to speak of such a measure, in future. This proclamation gave the inhabitants of Mentz information, that the Prussians were approaching. Some German troops had, indeed, begun by degrees to occupy the ground about Coblentz, but in a condition, which did not promise active measures, being weakened by a long march and by sickness; the Hessians posted themselves between Hanau and Franckfort; and the Prussians advanced so near to the latter city, that the scattered parties of the French retired to, and at length lost it.

About this time, an Electoral Professor of Philosophy and a Canon of Mentz, named Dorsel, who had left his posts, in the preceding year, to be naturalized, at Strasbourg, returned with a design for an union of Spires, Worms and Mentz into one territory, under the protection of the French. He procured the substitution of a Municipality for the City Council. He obtained considerable influence in the city; and, on the 1st of January 1793, when the three commissioners of the Convention, Reubell, Merlin and Haussman entered Mentz, and were received by Custine with military honours, they shewed more attention to the Professor than to the General.

The Prussian head quarters had been established within a short distance of Mentz; but, during all December, there had been only affairs of advanced posts, so that some tranquillity prevailed in the city. On the 6th of January, Hockheim was assailed by six thousand Prussians; the French, however, had been informed of the preparations for attack, and had time to retire to Kostheim and Cassel, leaving 112 prisoners and twelve pieces of cannon. Some French, who had concealed themselves in the church tower, were thrown headlong from it, for having shouted, or thrown stones at the King of Prussia, as he passed.

After this, another month passed, without hostile attempts on either side. The Prussian troops were refreshed by rest; the French passed the same time, partly in balls, to which all the ladies of Mentz were invited, and partly in preparations for defence. On the 17th of January, a small tree of liberty, which had been planted in November, was removed, and a fir,

seventy feet high, placed in its stead, with much ceremony. All the inhabitants were pressingly invited, upon this occasion; Messrs. Reubell, Merlin, Haussman and Custine attended; the Mayor, Municipality, and the Members of the Clubs followed; the ensigns of the former government were burned; Custine called upon the music of the garrison for French airs, which occupied the rest of the day; and the evening concluded with entertainments and dancing. Soon after, the Commissioners left the city, and proceeded on a journey to the Moselle.

On the 16th of February, Custine published a proclamation, and two new Commissioners, who had just arrived, issued another, founded upon a decree of the French Convention, relative to the union of other countries with France. The Council House was full from morning till night; the assembled traders declared their adherence to the Germanic system; and the new Commissioners seemed inclined to listen to their remonstrances. But, when the three former Commissioners returned, they treated the Deputies of the trades with great haughtiness, and refused them permission to send agents to Paris. A second deputation, on the 22d of February, was no better received, and they were informed, that the 24th was the day for the commencement of the new form. The traders are described to have been much affected, at the return of their Deputies. On the 23d of February, early in the morning, the author of a remonstrance, which had been presented, was arrested and carried into banishment, being accompanied by guards to the advanced posts of the Prussians, at Hockheim.

The inhabitants now began to leave the city by passports, which were, however, not easily procured, or used. A proclamation by the Municipality divided Mentz into sections, and directed the manner, in which each section should elect a representative, on the 24th. On that day, the streets were unusually silent, all the former burgesses having resolved to remain in their houses, except one, and only 266 persons met to take the new oath and to make the new elections. On the 25th, another proclamation came out, and several banishments succeeded; but the burgesses still adhered to their resolution. The Municipality, on the 1st of March, again invited them to take the new oaths, and gave notice of an order of the Commissioners to the Mayor, to publish a list of the sworn and unsworn, on the Monday or

Tuesday following. Notwithstanding this, the number of sworn did not equal 350.

Some of the neighbouring villages, which were visited by the French Commissioners, accepted their terms; the greater part refused them.

At Worms, where clubs, similar to those at Mentz, had been formed, 1051 persons took the oaths. The inhabitants of Bingen refused them.

In the mean time, some expeditions were made into the Palatinate, and corn, to the amount of sixty thousand florins, was taken away, before the reiterated remonstrances of the Palatine Resident at Mentz, upon the subject of his master's neutrality, could restrain them. In the first days of February, the French had also entered Deux Ponts, where the Duke relied so much upon his having supplied only his contingent to the treasure of the Empire, that he had not left his palace, though he knew of their approaches to his country. On the 9th, at eleven at night, the Duke and Duchess fled, with the utmost precipitation, to Manheim, having left the palace only one hour before the French entered it. Great quantities of forage were swept away from this country, and brought to Mentz, which the allies now approached so nearly, that the garrison hastily completed the fortifications of Cassel, and filled the magazines with stores, left the communication should be cut off by the destruction of the bridge.

On the 15th of February, they had begun to destroy the palace of *La Favorita*, and to erect a battery upon its ruins. Though the carriage of provisions now occupied so much of their attention, a great number of large and small cannon were brought from Landau; fresh troops arrived, and General Wimpfen, who had defended Thionville against the King of Prussia, was declared the first in command. By banishments and emigration, the number of persons in the city was reduced fifteen thousand.

The new National Assembly met in Mentz, on the 10th of March, that city having chosen six deputies, Spires two, Worms two, and some other places one each. On the 17th, they had their first sitting, and, on the 18th, declared all the country between Landau and Bingen, which places were then the limits of the French posts near the Rhine, united in one independent state. On the 19th, was agitated the great question relative to the connections of this state, and it was not till the 21st, that they declared their incorporation with the French. Three deputies, FORSTER, PATOKI

and LUCKS were appointed, the next day, to carry this resolution to Paris; and several decrees, relative to the interior administration of this state, were passed, in consequence of which many persons were conducted over the bridge into banishment, on the 30th.

Accounts now arrived, that the siege would shortly commence, and orders were issued, relative to the prevention of fires, to the collection of stores of provisions by each family, and to several other domestic particulars. All the inhabitants, those especially in the neighbourhood of the granaries, were directed to preserve large quantities of water; and the proprietors of gardens within the city were ordered to plant them with herbs. Officers were sent round to examine these gardens. Already each family had been admonished to provide subsistence for seven months; and the richer class were now directed to furnish a loan to the burgesses, that the latter might be enabled to provide for the poor. In consequence of this order, 38,646 florins 10 creitzers, or about 3200 l. were collected, and expended for provisions. The gardens and walks round the city were now dismantled of their trees, of which those in the *Rheinallee*, before mentioned, were an hundred years old. All the summer-houses and villas, within cannon-shot of the city, were destroyed.

On the 8th of March, the French garrison in the fortress of Konigstein, which the Prussians had blockaded for some months, surrendered. In this month also other advances were made towards Mentz. The Prussian General Schonfield brought 12,000 men into the neighbourhood of Hockheim, near which the Saxons were posted; the King of Prussia, his son and the Duke of Brunswick, who had passed part of the winter at Franckfort, left it, on the 23d of March; a bridge was laid, at St. Goar, over which numerous bodies of Prussian troops passed the Rhine; the French fell back towards Bingen, and the Prussians occupied a hill, not far from it. On the 28th, they were closer pressed, and left all the villages in the neighbourhood of Bingen, from which place they were driven, the next day, by a bombardment.

At the same time, a similar retreat towards Mentz also took place from the southward. At Worms, during the abandonment, great quantities of hay and straw were burned, and the burgesses kept watch, all night, dreading the conflagration of the whole city by the flames, rising from the magazines. Immense masses of hay and straw were also burned at

Frankenthal, where there had been a garrison, during the whole winter; but the corn was carried away. At Spires, early on the 31st of March, the burgesses and troops were employed in throwing the hay and straw from the magazines into the ditch; but it appeared that even this mode would not be expeditious enough, and fire was at length set to the whole store at once.

In the retreat from Oppenheim, though the French were under considerable difficulties, they were upon the point of obtaining what they would have thought an abundant reward for them. It was on the 30th of March, that their cavalry and flying artillery took the road by Alsheim. As this was a place capable of making some defence, and there were Prussian troops visible at the gates, they began the attack by planting cannon, and directing a vigorous fire upon it. The King of Prussia, who was at dinner in the town, and had not an hundred men with him, received his first intelligence of their approach from this fire. He immediately rode out, on the opposite side, and, sending some hussars to the spot, the French did not continue the contest, but made their retreat by another road. If they had known how few troops were in the town, they would, of course, have entered it without commencing this fire; and the Prussian officers agree, that, if they had done so, there would have been little chance of saving their monarch. Had they been aware also, that his Prussian Majesty was there, they might have reduced this slight chance to an impossibility; for they were sufficiently numerous to have surrounded the town, and had approached so quietly, that they were not known to be near it. The Prussians had no cannon, and the French were otherwise greatly superior; though, having no other purpose for entering the town, than to continue their retreat, they did not wait to contest it, but retired by another road. That a circumstance, which would have had such an effect upon the affairs of Europe, should have depended upon so slight a chance as this, we could not have believed, if the story had not been confirmed to us by ample authority.

The garrison of Mentz was increased by these retreats to 23,000 men; General Kalkreuth, who commanded the blockade from Laubenheim to Budenheim, a distance of twelve miles, had only 16,000 men. General Schonfield, with his corps of observation, was at Hockheim. The besiegers, however, presently amounted to 30,000 men. It is remarkable,

that, though the French retreated from several quarters, at once, and in many small columns, not one of these was effectually interrupted by the Prussian commander.

Upon intelligence of these advances, the Elector of Mentz paid a visit to the King of Prussia, at his head quarters, and left his minister, the Baron d'ALBINI, to attend to the affairs of the recovered places.

In the beginning of April, the blockade was more closely pressed, and the preparations for the siege seriously commenced. General d'OYRE was made commander in the city, with a Council of sixteen persons, to assist him in restoring the means of its defence. A person was placed at the top of an high building, called Stephen's Tower, with glasses, which enabled him to overlook the country for nine miles round. He had a secretary with him, that his view might never be unnecessarily diverted, and was obliged to make a daily report of his observations. The beating of drums and ringing of bells were forbidden throughout the whole city, that the besiegers might not know in what quarters the corps de garde were placed, or what churches were left without the military. All prospect houses and trees within the walls, which could serve as marks to the fire without, were ordered to be demolished. Many days were passed in bringing further stores of provisions into the city; after which an account of the stock was taken, and there were found to be

· 24,090 sacks of wheat.
· 1,465 of other corn.
· 996 of mixed grain.

Of which 26,551 sacks, it was stated, that 23,070 sacks of meal could be made. To this was to be added in sifted meal of wheat 109 sacks, of other corn 45 sacks, of mixed grain 10,076 sacks; making in all 33,300 sacks of meal. There were besides

· 43,960 rations of biscuit.
· 7,275 pounds of rice.
· 13,045 of dried herbs.
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Of forage there were 10,820 quintals of hay.

· 54,270 of straw.
· 1,518 sacks of oats.
· 2,503 of barley.

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The Council estimated, that the garrison had corn enough for nine months, rice for seven, and herbs for six. There were fifteen hundred horses, and it was reckoned, that the straw was enough for ten months, the oats for four-and-twenty days, and the barley for eighty days. The garrison was numbered, and found to consist of 22,653 persons; of whom to each soldier was allotted, for the future, 24 ounces of bread, per day, in lieu of 28, and 4 ounces of fresh meat, or 3 ounces of salt, in lieu of 8 ounces of fresh. The allowance of the sick in the hospitals was changed from twelve to eight ounces.

During these preparations for a long siege, the diminution of the number of inhabitants, by means of the clubs, was pursued. On the 8th of April, all persons, not useful to the army, were ordered to leave the city, unless they would take the new oath; at the same time, it was said, that, on account of the foreseen want of money, the soldiers, employed on the works, would be no longer paid, but the other workmen would continue to receive their salaries.

The garrison made their first sortie, on the night of the 10th and 11th, proceeding towards the Rhine. Kostheim was immediately taken, and the attack upon the Hessians succeeded, at first, but a reinforcement compelled the French to retire. About this time, the Commissioner Reubell went to Oppenheim, where he delivered a proposal for peace to the King of Prussia.

The village of Weissenau was contended for, on the 15th, 16th and 17th, and finally destroyed, the French soldiers, who remained upon the spot, subscribing 460 livres for the inhabitants.

On the 18th, nearly the whole of a French convoy of 90 waggons was taken by the Prussians. On the 20th the Imperialists erected a small fort on a point of land, near the Main, and the French, on the other hand, perfected a battery, at Kostheim, with which they set on fire some stables.

The price of provisions was already so much increased in the city, that salt butter cost 48 creitzers, or 16d. pence per pound.

In the night of the 28th and 29th, the French landed in three vessels, and destroyed a battery, erected near the Main. On the 1st of May, at one in the morning, they attacked the Prussians, at Hockheim, and set the village of Kostheim on fire. The Prussians repulsed them with loss, but they

remained in Kostheim, notwithstanding the fire, which continued for three days; they were then expelled by the Prussians, but soon returned with reinforcements, and a sanguinary contest commenced, at the end of which they continued to be masters of the village. A numerous garrison was placed in it, which, on the 8th, was again attacked by the Prussians, but without effect. Thus the greatest part of May was spent in contests for villages and posts, in which the French were generally the assailants. In the night of the 30th, they beat up, in three columns, the Prussian head quarters, at Marienborn. Having marched barefooted and with such exact information, that they passed all the batteries unperceived, they entered the village itself, without resistance, and, it is supposed, would have surprised the commander, if they had not fired at his windows, beat their drums, and begun to shout *Vive la nation!* Three balls, which entered the apartment of General KALKREUTH, admonished him to quit it, and a sentinel stepped up just in time to shoot a French soldier, who had seized him. Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia immediately arrived with some troops, and the French began to retire, leaving thirty prisoners and twenty killed of 6000, engaged in the enterprise. The loss of the Prussians was considerable; amongst the rest Captain Voss, a relative of Mademoiselle Voss, well known in the Court of Prussia.

On the 4th of June, the allowance to the garrison was ordered to be two pounds of bread and one bottle of wine for each soldier, per day.

In the night of the 6th and 7th, the cannonade was very fierce, on both sides; in Mentz a powder magazine was fired by a bomb, and blew up with a dreadful explosion.

The scarceness of provisions increased, so that a pound of fresh butter cost six shillings. Horseflesh began to be consumed in many families.

On the night of the 9th and 10th of June, the garrison made four sorties, which ended in considerable loss, on both sides, and in the retirement of the French into the city. On the 10th, they attacked, at eight in the morning, a post near Gonsenheim, retreating without loss, after killing an officer and several men. This was their first sally in open daylight.

General Meusnier, who had been wounded near Cassel, on the 7th, died on the 13th, and was buried the next day, within the new fortifications, all the officers of the garrison, with the members of the convention and clubs, attending.

Some fire ships were now completed, which a Dutch engineer had conducted from Holland, to be employed by the besiegers in burning the bridge of boats over the Rhine. It was thought, however, that their explosion would damage the city unnecessarily, and they were rejected. In the night of the 15th, one of these floated down the river, whether by accident, or by the connivance of the inventor, is not known; the inhabitants were in the utmost terror, but it struck against the quay, and, being immediately boarded, did no damage.

The trenches were opened, in the night of the 16th and 17th, but, the workmen having been ill conducted, were not covered in, at daylight, and were compelled to retire, leaving their implements behind them. Two nights afterwards, the work was renewed in good order and without loss, the King of Prussia, his sons and the Duke of Brunswick surveying them from a neighbouring height. The first balls fell in a street near one of the gates, and all that part of the town was presently deserted.

The 24th was a distressful day for the inhabitants. Four days before, the King of Prussia had sent a general passport for such as chose to come out, and 1500 persons, chiefly women and children, had accepted his offer. A short time after the gate had been opened, dismay was spread through the whole city by an account, that the Prussians would suffer no more to pass and the French none to return. The bridge was covered with these unhappy fugitives, who had no food, or shelter, and who thought themselves within reach of the Hockheim batteries, that played furiously upon the city. Two children lost their senses through fright. At length, the French soldiers took compassion upon them; they carried several persons into the city under their cloaks, and, the next day, their remonstrances against the inhumanity of the German clubbists, who had shut the gates against this defenceless crowd, obliged them to permit the return of the whole number.

For several succeeding nights, the garrison made sorties, with various effect, interrupting, but not preventing the completion of the parallel.

At sunset, on the 27th, the besiegers began a dreadful cannonade and bombardment. On this night, the steeple of the church of Notre Dame caught fire; and during the alarm, excited by an immense volume of flame, arising in the midst of the city, the Austrians completely carried the French posts, near Weissenau. The next night was equally terrible to the inhabitants; the flames caught several parts of the city, amongst others the

cathedral; some of the magazines took fire, and eleven hundred sacks of corn were burned. The church, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, was much injured. The French, intending to retaliate their last surprise upon the Austrians, made a fruitless attack upon the Weissenau redoubt.

On the 29th of June, at mid-day, the French were driven from a point of land, near the Main, called the Bleiau. In this affair, a vessel, with 78 Prussians on board, drove from her anchor, owing to the unskilfulness of the crew, and, during a fire, by which eight men were killed, made towards the city. The Prussians were taken prisoners, and exchanged the next day. At night, the bombardment was renewed; the *Domprobstei,* or palace of the Provost, was burned and several of the neighbouring residences; in other parts of the city, some houses were reduced to ashes.

The next night, the church of the Franciscans and several other public buildings were destroyed. A dreadful fire, on the night of the 2d and 4th of June, consumed the chapel of St. Alban. Families in the southern part of the city now constantly passed the night in their cellars; in the daytime, they ventured into their usual apartments; for the batteries of the besiegers were by far the most terrible, at night, when the whole city was a sufficient mark for them, though their works could scarcely be discerned by the garrison. In the daytime, the exactness of the French gunners frequently did great injury to the batteries, which, at night, were repaired and used with equal effect against the city.

St. Alban’s fort was now demolished, so that the besieged withdrew their cannon from it. Elizabeth fort was also much damaged. A strong work, which the French had raised, in prolongation of the *glacis,* divided the opinions of the Prussian engineers. Some thought it should be preserved, when taken, because it would command part of the town; others, that it should be demolished. The latter opinion prevailed, and, in the night of the 5th and 6th, General MANSTEIN was ordered to make the attack with three battalions. He perfectly succeeded, as to the nearest part of the work, but the other, on account of its solid foundation, could not be entirely destroyed. In the mean time, two battalions were sent, under cover of the darkness, to attack the Zahlbach fort, a part of which they carried by storm; but the reinforcements, immediately supplied by the garrison, obliged them to retire. Two Prussian officers were killed; one wounded,

and another, with one-and-thirty men, taken. The Prussians lost in all [...]83 men; the French had twelve killed and forty-seven wounded.

On the 6th of July, the French repaired the damaged fort, the distance of it from the Prussians preventing the latter from hindering them.

At night, General Kleist carried the fort, at Zahlbach, by a second attack, and demolished it; at the same time, some batteries of the second parallel were perfected. The French could not support the loss of this fort; on the 7th, they attacked the scite; carried it, after a severe contest; and rebuilt it. At night, they were driven back again and the fort entirely destroyed. In the same night they were driven from Kostheim, after a furious battle, by the Prussian General Schonfield. During this engagement, the rapid succession of flashes and explosion of bombs seemed to fill the air with flame. A Prussian detachment having been posted on the road to Cassel, in order to prevent the garrison of that place from sending succour to Kostheim, this road was so strongly bombarded by the French, that seven bombs were frequently seen in the air at once. The loss was great, on both sides, in this engagement, after which the Council in the city resolved, to make no more attempts upon Kostheim, on account of the distance.

The following night, the fire was less than usual, but a few bombs and grenades fell in the city, where the inhabitants had now learned to extinguish such as grounded, before their *fusees* were consumed. They also formed themselves into parties for the ready suppression of fires. The next morning, the garrison saw the works of the besiegers brought to within two hundred and fifty paces of the walls.

About this time, the sickliness of the garrison became apparent, and General d’Oyré informed the Council, that, on account of this and of the fatiguing service of the works, he feared the defence could not be much longer continued. He lamented, that the troops of the line were so few, and the others so inexperienced.

For several nights, the works of the besiegers were eagerly pushed, but still they were not so forward, as had been expected. Some of the besieging corps began to be sickly; the King of Prussia having resolved to employ no more labourers, it was reckoned, that the soldiers, for eight-and-forty hours of work, had only eighteen of rest. On the other hand, they were assured, that the garrison must be equally fatigued, since, in such an extensive fortification, none could be left long unemployed.

The French had been, for some time, busied in forming what is called a Fleche at the head of one of their forts, and this was thought necessary to be destroyed. It was attacked in the night of the 12th and 13th by the Austrians; but so much time was passed in their operations, that the French fell upon them, in great force, about two in the morning, and beat them away, with loss. The Austrians were as little employed as possible in services of this sort.

On the 13th of July, another battery was stormed by the Prussians; but, as the officer, unlike the Austrians, advanced with too little caution, his party was much hurt by some pieces of concealed cannon, and the enterprise failed.

The night of the 13th and 14th was passed in much agitation by the garrison and inhabitants. Several of the public buildings were set fire to and burned by grenades. The works of the besiegers were now greatly advanced. The garrison made five sorties in this night, and were repulsed in all, losing an hundred men, while the besiegers lost eight killed and one-and-thirty wounded.

On the 14th of July, a cessation of arms took place from seven o'clock in the morning till one. In the city, the French celebrated their annual fête; General d'OYRE and the troops took the oath, and MERLIN delivered an address to them. In the Austrian camp, the Prince de CONDE was received with a *feu de joye*. During this cessation, the soldiers upon the different outposts entered into conversation with each other, and the French boasted of the difficulties they laboured under from the length of the siege.

At night, an affair at the Fleche cost the allies, who succeeded in part, ninety men; the French confessed, that this work cost them in all three hundred. The inhabitants of the city were again greatly alarmed, their streets being covered with a shower of grenades. The laboratory and a part of the Benedictine abbey were burned, and two explosions took place at the former. The whole city shook with each report, and, in the nearer parts, all the windows were broken and the doors burst open. The remainder of the hay and straw was consumed in this fire; the whole stock of other forage was reduced to a sufficiency for four days; and the surgeon's stores were much damaged.

Still the Fleche prevented the besiegers from completing their second parallel. It was, therefore, again attacked, on the night of the 16th and

17th, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia commanding at the assault, in which he was one of twelve officers wounded. The Fleche was then completely carried.

The next night was very industriously spent by the besiegers in forming new batteries, and those of the second parallel were raised, before there were cannon enough at hand to place upon them. The French took advantage of this, and brought a part of theirs to bear, so as to enfilade the parallel, with great effect; the Prussians almost immediately losing an officer and forty men.

In the city, the sick had now increased so much, that six hundred men were brought from Cassel, on the 17th, to reinforce the garrison. On the 18th, the commandant informed the Council, that there was a want of fodder and such a loss of horses, by desertion, that there were not cavalry enough left for service. The soldiers, who knew the deficiency of medicines and other means of relief for the wounded, were unwilling to be led to sorties. Though corn had not failed, flour, it appeared, soon would, for some of the mills had been rendered unserviceable, for the present, by shot, and others were deserted by the millers.

At night, after an unsuccessful attempt upon the Fleche, it was resolved, that the garrison, which had hitherto scarcely suffered a night to pass, without making some sorties, should, for the future, adhere solely to defensive measures. Some engineers proposed to abandon the whole line of forts, and others, that two of the largest should be blown up. The General and Council, at length, confessed, that they could not continue the defence, and assured the inhabitants, who had declared themselves in their favour, that a longer delay of the surrender would produce a more severe disposition of the besiegers towards them, without increasing the chance of escaping it.

A negotiation, relative to the surrender, was now begun by D’OYRE, in a letter, which partly replied to one from the Prussian commander KALKREUTH, upon the subject of the departure of aged persons and children from the city. Their correspondence continued till the 20th, and several letters were exchanged, chiefly upon the question of the removal, or detention of the inhabitants, who had attached themselves to the French; it was then broken off, upon a disagreement, as to this and some other points. The firing, on both sides, had in the mean time continued, and the

besiegers carried on the trenches, though these were now such an easy mark for the garrison, that they lost an officer and five-and-twenty men, in the night of the 19th and 20th. The next night, the Dominicans' church in the city took fire, and six French soldiers were buried under its ruins.

Upon a renewal of the intercourse, the fire slackened, on the 21st; but, on some delays in the negotiation, was threatened to be recommenced. At length, the conditions of the surrender were settled, and the negotiation signed, on the 22d of July, by the two Generals Kalkreut hand D'Oyré; the former having rendered the capitulation somewhat easier than was expected for the garrison, because the Duke of Brunswick had only nineteen thousand men to cover the siege, and Custine had forty thousand, which were near enough to attack him. General KALKREUTH'S orders are supposed to have been to obtain possession of the place, upon any terms, that would give it him quickly.

At this time, the garrison, which, at the commencement of the siege, had consisted of 22,653 men, was reduced to 17,038, having had 1959 killed, 3334 wounded, or rendered unserviceable by sickness, and having lost 322 by desertion.

The loss of the besiegers is stated at about 3000 men.

The consumption of ammunition, on the part of the French, was found to have been

- 681,850 pounds of powder,
- 106,152 cannon balls,
- 10,278 bombs,
- 6592 grenades,
- 44,500 pounds of iron,
- 300,340 musquet cartridges;

and, during the siege, 107 cannon either burst, or were rendered unserviceable by the besiegers' shot. Towards the conclusion, sixty cannon also became useless by the failure of balls of the proper calibre.

On the 24th and 25th, the garrison marched out, MERLIN leading the first column of 7500 men. The members of the Clubs, who would have gone out with the troops, were pointed out by the other inhabitants and detained; but the Elector had the magnanimity to think of no other

retaliation, than their imprisonment in a tower, near the Rhine, where they have since remained.

There was now leisure to examine the city, and it was found, that six churches were in ruins; that seven mansions of the nobility had been burned, and that very few houses had escaped, without some damage. The surrounding grounds were torn up by balls and batteries. The works of Cassel were surrendered entire to the conquerors, and are an important addition to the strength of Mentz, already reckoned one of the strongest and largest fortifications in Europe. Between Cassel and the ruins of Kostheim not a tree was to be seen. All the neighbouring villages were more, or less, injured, being contended for, as posts, at the commencement of the siege; and the country was so much disfigured, that the proprietors of lands had some difficulty to ascertain their boundaries.

2.15. MENTZ .

SOMETHING has been already said of the present condition of this city: upon a review it appears, that from the mention of churches, palaces, burgesses, quays and streets, we might be supposed to represent it as a considerable place, either for splendour, or commerce, or for having its middle classes numerously filled. Any such opinion of Mentz will be very incorrect. After two broad and somewhat handsome streets, all the other passages in the city are narrow lanes, and into these many of the best houses open, having, for the most part, their lower windows barricadoed, like those of Cologne. The disadvantage, with which any buildings must appear in such situations, is increased by the neglected condition of these; for a German has no notion, that the outside of his house should be clean, even if the inside is so. An Englishman, who spends a few hundred pounds in a year, has his house in better condition, as to neatness, than any German nobleman’s we saw; a Dutchman, with fifty pounds a year, exceeds both.

The Elector’s palace is a large turretted building of reddish stone, with one front towards the Rhine, which it commands in a delightful point of view; but we did not hear, that it was so much altered, by being now used as a barrack, as that its appearance can formerly have been much less suitable than at present to such a purpose.

On the quay there is some appearance of traffic, but not much in the city; so that the transfer of commodities from vessels of other districts to those of the Electorate may be supposed to contribute great part of the show near the river. The commerce is not sufficient to encourage the building of warehouses over the quay. The vessels are ill rigged, and the hulls are entirely covered with pitch, without paint. About thirty of these, apparently from forty to seventy tons burthen, were lying near the quay; and the war could scarcely have diminished their usual number, so many being employed in carrying stores for the armies.

The burgesses are numerous, and have some privileges, which render their political condition enviable to the other inhabitants of the Electorate. But, though these have invited manufacturers, and somewhat encouraged commerce, there is not wealth enough in the neighbouring country, to

make such a consumption, as shall render many traders prosperous. In point of wealth, activity and address, the burgesses of Mentz are much below the opinion, which must be formed, while German cities are described and estimated by their importance in their own country, rather than by a comparison of their condition with that of others. A trader, it will be allowed, is at least as likely to appear to advantage in his business as in any other state. His intelligence may surely be, in some degree, judged of by those, who deal with him; and that we might know something of those of Mentz, we passed some of the little time we were left to ourselves in endeavouring to buy trifles at their shops.

The idleness and inadvertence we generally saw are difficult to be conceived; perhaps, the trouble, experienced in purchasing a book, may give an idea of them. We wanted the German pamphlet, from which most of the above-mentioned particulars of the siege are extracted; and, as it related to a topic so general within the place, we smiled, when our friends said they would *assist* us to procure it, during a walk. Two booksellers, to whom we applied, knew nothing of it; and one supposed, that an engraved view of the works would do quite as well. Passing another shop, a young German gentleman enquired for it of the master, who was at the door, and heard, that we might have it, upon our return, in half an hour. The door, when we came back, was shut, and no knocking could procure it to be opened; so that we were obliged to send into the dwelling-house. When the shopman came, he knew nothing of the book; but, being assured that his master had promised it, went away, and returned with a copy in sheets. We paid for this, and left it to be sewed, which was agreed to be done, in three hours. At that time, it was not finished, but might be had in another hour; and, after that hour, it was again promised, within two. Finally, it could not be had, that night, but would be ready in the morning, and, in the morning, it was still unfinished; we then went to Franckfort without it, and it was sent after us by a friend. This was the most aggravated instance we saw of a German trader’s manners; but something like it may be almost every where met with.

From such symptoms and from the infrequency of wealth among the middle classes it is apparent, that Mentz could not have been important, as to commerce, even if there had been no siege, which is here mentioned as the cause of all deficiencies, and certainly is so of many. The destruction

of property, occasioned by it, will not be soon remedied. The nobility have almost forsaken a place, where their palaces have been either destroyed, or ransacked; the Prince has no residence there; some of the Germans, who emigrated on account of the last siege, fled into France; the war-taxes, as well as the partial maintenance of the garrison, diminish what property remains; and all expenditure is upon a reduced footing.

The contribution of the inhabitants towards a support of the garrison is made by the very irksome means of affording them lodging. At the best houses, the doors are chalked over with the names of officers, lodged in them; which the servants dare not efface, for the soldiers must know where to find their officers. In a family, whom we visited, four officers and their servants were quartered; but it must be acknowledged, that the former, so far from adding to this inconvenience by any negligent conduct, were constantly and carefully polite. We, indeed, never saw Prussian officers otherwise; and can testify, that they are as much superior to those Austrians in manners and intelligence, as they are usually said to be in military qualities.

Another obstruction, which the siege has given to the prosperity of Mentz, consists in the absence of many members of the Noble Chapter; an institution, which, however useless, or injurious to the country occasions the expenditure of considerable sums in the capital. That of Mentz is said to be one of the richest of many similar Chapters in Germany. From such foundations the younger sons of noble families derive sometimes very ample incomes, and are but little restricted by their regulations from any enjoyment of temporal splendour. Their carriages and liveries vie with those of the other attendants at Court; they are not prohibited from wearing the ornaments of orders of knighthood; are very little enjoined to residence; are received in the environs of the Court with military honours, and allowed to reside in their separate houses. They may wear embroidery of gold, and cloths of any colours, except scarlet, or green, which, as well as silver lace, are thought too gay. Being thus permitted and enabled to become examples of luxury, their residence in any city diffuses some appearance of prosperity over it.

One of the largest buildings in Mentz is the arsenal, which fronts towards the river, and attracts the attention of those, who walk upon the quay, by having armed heads placed at the windows of the first floor,

which seem to frown, with Roman sternness, upon the passenger. In one of the principal rooms within, a party of figures in similar armour are placed at a council-board. We did not hear who contrived them; but the heads in the windows may be mistaken for real ones, at the distance of fifty yards.

The Elector of Mentz, who is chosen by a Chapter of twenty-four Canons, and is usually one of their number, is the first ecclesiastical Prince in the empire, of which he is also the Arch-chancellor and Director of the Electoral College. In the Diet, he sits on the right hand of the Emperor, affixes the seal of the Empire to its decrees, and has afterwards the custody of them among the archives. His revenues, in a time of peace, are nearly 200,000 l. annually; but, during a war, they are much less, a third part of them arising from tolls, imposed upon the navigation of the Rhine. The vineyards supply another large part; and his subjects, not interested in them, are but little taxed, except when military preparations are to be made; the taxes are then as direct as possible, that money may be immediately collected.

The fortifications of his chief city are as much a misfortune to his country as they are an advantage to the rest of the Empire. Being always one of the first objects, on this side of the Rhine, since an enemy cannot cross the river, while so considerable a fortress and so large a garrison as it may contain, might, perhaps, check their return, the Electorate has been often the scene of a tedious warfare. From the first raising of the works by Louis the Fourteenth, their strength has never been fully tried. The surrender in 1792 was partly for the want of a proper garrison, and partly by contrivance; even in 1793, when the defence was so furious and long, the garrison, it is thought, might have held out further, if their stores had been secured in bombproof buildings. A German garrison, supported by an army, which should occupy the opposite bank of the Rhine, might be continually reinforced and supplied, so as to be conquered by nothing but the absolute demolition of the walls.

The bridge of boats over the Rhine, which, both in peace and war, is so important to the city, is now in a much better state than the French found it, being guarded, at the eastern end, by the fortifications of Cassel. Notwithstanding its great length and the rapidity of the river, it is so well constructed, as to be much less liable to injury, than might be supposed, and would probably sustain batteries, which might defeat every attempt at

destroying it by fireships. It is 766 feet long, and wide enough for the passage of two carriages at once. Various repairs, and the care of a daily survey, have continued it, since 1661, when it was thrown over the river.

The practice of modifying the names of towns so as to incorporate them separately with every language, is no where more remarkable than with respect to those of Germany, where a stranger, unless he is aware of them, might find the variations very inconvenient. The German name for what we call Mentz, is *Maynz;* the French, which is most used, *Mayence;* and the Italian *Magontio,* by descent from the Roman *Magontiacum.* The German synonym for Liege is *Luttich;* for Aix la Chapelle, *Achen;* for Bois le Duc, *Herzogenbusch;* and for Cologne, *Cöln*, which is pronounced *Keln.* The name, borne by every town in the nation to which it belongs, should surely be its name, wherever it is mentioned; for the same reason, that words, derived into one language from another, are pronounced according to the authority of their roots, because the use of the primary term is already established, and there can never be a decision between subsequent varieties, which are cotemporary among themselves, and are each produced by the same arrogance of invention.

2.16. FRANCKFORT .

WE came hither by means of a passage boat, which we were told would shew something of the German populace, but which displayed nothing so much as the unskilfulness of the German sailors. Though they make this voyage, every day, they went aground in the even stream of the Maine, and during the calmest weather; fixing the vessel so fast by their ill-directed struggle to get off, that they were compelled to bring the towing horses to the side and tug backward with the stream. There were an hundred people in the boat; but the expedient of desiring them to remove from the part, which was aground, was never used. We heard, that they seldom make the voyage, without a similar stoppage, not against any shifting sand, but upon the permanent shelves of the river.

The distance is about four-and-twenty miles, but we were nine hours in reaching Franckfort, the environs of which afford some symptoms of a commercial and opulent city, the banks of the Maine being covered for nearly the last mile with country seats, separated from each other by small pleasure grounds.

There are gates and walls to Franckfort, but the magistrates do not oppress travellers by a military examination at their entrance. Having seen the worthlessness of many places, which bear ostentatious characters either for splendour or trade, we were surprised to find in this as much of both as had been reported. The quays were well covered with goods and labourers; the streets nearest to the water are lined with shops, and those in the middle of the city with the houses of merchants, of which nearly all are spacious, and many magnificent. Some, indeed, might be called palaces, if they had nobility for their tenants; but, though the independence, which commerce spreads among the middle classes, does not entirely deter the German nobility from a residence here, the finest houses are the property of merchants.

In our way to the *Cigne Blanc*, which is one of the best inns, we passed many of so good an appearance, that it was difficult to believe there could be better in a German city. But Franckfort, which is the pride of Germany, in this respect, has probably a greater number of large inns than any other place of equal extent in Europe. The fairs fill these, twice in a year, for

three weeks, at each time; and the order, which is indispensible then, continues at other periods, to the surprise and comfort of strangers.

This city has been justly described by many travellers; and Doctor MOORE has treated of its inhabitants with the ease and elegant animation of his peculiar manner. We shall not assume the disadvantage of entering upon the same subject after him. The inhabitants of Franckfort are very distinct, as to manners and information, from the other Germans; but they are so far like to those of our own commercial cities, that one able account leaves scarcely any thing new to be seen, or told, concerning them.

All their blessings of liberty, intelligence, and wealth are observed with the more attention, because they cannot be approached, except through countries afflicted by arbitrary power, ignorance and poverty. The existence of such a city, in such a situation, is little less than a *phenomenon;* the causes of which are so various and minute as to make the effect, at first sight, appear almost accidental. The jealousy of the neighbouring Princes towards each other, is the known, and, certainly, the chief cause of its exterior protection against each; the continuance of its interior liberties is probably owing to the circumstance, which, but for that jealousy, would expose it to subjection from without, — the smallness of its territory. Where the departments of government must be very few, very difficult to be rendered expensive to the public, and very near to their inspection, the ambition of individuals can be but little tempted to contrive encroachments upon the community. So complexly are the chief causes of its exterior and interior independence connected with each other.

As to the first of these, it may, perhaps, be replied, that a similar jealousy has not always been sufficient to protect similar cities; and Dantzick is the recent instance of its insufficiency. But the jealousy, [...]s to Dantzick, though similar, was not equal to this, and the temptation to oppose it was considerably greater. What would the most capable of the neighbouring Princes gain by the seizure of Franckfort? A place of strength? No. A place capable of paying taxes? Yes; but taxes, which would be re-imposed upon commodities, consumed partly by his own subjects, whose property is his own already, and partly by those of his neighbours, to whose jealousy they would afford an additional and an unappeasable provocation. Dantzick, on the contrary, being a seaport, was, if not strong, capable of supplying strength, and might pay taxes, which

should not fall entirely upon its neighbours, but upon the distant countries, that traffick with it. And even to these considerations it is unnecessary to resort, unless we can suppose, that despotism would have no effect upon commerce; a supposition which does not require to be refuted. If a severe taxation was introduced here, and, in so small a district, taxation must be severe to be productive; if such a taxation was to be introduced, and if the other advantage of conquest, that of a forcible levy of soldiers, was attempted, commerce would vanish in silence before the oppressor, and the Prince, that should seize the liberties of Franckfort, would find nothing but those liberties in his grasp.

On the other hand, what are the advantages of permitting the independence of such a city to the sovereigns, who have the power of violating it? Those of a neutral barrier are well known, but apply only to military, or political circumstances. The others are the market, which Franckfort affords, for the produce and manufactures of all the neighbouring states; its value as a banking *depôt* and *emporium*, in which Princes may place their money, without rendering it liable to the orders of each other, or from which they may derive loans, by negotiating solely and directly with the lenders; its incapacity for offensive measures; and its usefulness as a place of meeting to themselves, or their ministers, when political connections are to be discussed.

That the inhabitants do enjoy this independence without and freedom within, we believe, not because they are asserted by treaties, or political forms; of which the former might not have survived the temporary interests, that concluded them, and the latter might be subdued by corruption, if there were the means of it; but because they were acknowledged to us by many temperate and discerning persons, as much aloof from faction, as they were from the affectation, or servility, that sometimes makes men boast themselves free, only because they have, or would be thought to have, a little share in oppressing others. Many such persons declared to us, that they had a substantial, practical freedom; and we thought a testimony to their actual enjoyments more valuable than any formal acknowledgments of their rights. As to these latter securities, indeed, Franckfort is no better provided than other imperial cities, which have proved their inutility. It stands in the same list with Cologne, but is as superior to it in government as in wealth.

The inhabitants having had the good sense to foresee, that fortifications might render them a more desirable prize to their neighbours, at the same time that their real protection must depend upon other means, have done little more than sustain their antient walls, which are sufficient to defend them against a surprise by small parties. They maintain no troops, except a few companies of city-guards, and make their contributions to the army of the Empire in specie. These companies are filled chiefly with middleaged men, whose appearance bespeaks the plenty and peacefulness of the city. Their uniforms, blue and white, are of the cut of those in the prints of MARLBOROUGH'S days; and their grenadiers' caps are of the same peaked sort, with tin facings, impressed with the city arms.

In wars with France, the fate of Franckfort has usually depended upon that of Mentz, which is properly called the key of Germany, on the western frontier. In the campaign of 1792, Custine detached 3000 troops of the 11,000, with which he had besieged Mentz, and these reached Franckfort, early in the morning of the 22d of October. NEUWINGER, their commander, sent a letter to the magistrates from Custine, demanding a contribution of two millions of florins, which, by a negotiation at Mentz, was reduced to a million and a half, for the present. Notice was accordingly given in the city, that the magistrates would receive money at four per cent. interest, and, on the 23d, at break of day, it began to flow in to the Council-house from all quarters. Part was immediately given to NEUWINGER, but payment of the rest was delayed; so that Custine came himself on the 27th, and, by throwing the hostages into prison, obtained, on the 31st of October, the remainder of the first million. For the second, the magistrates gave security to NEUWINGER, but it was never paid; the Convention disavowed great part of the proceedings of Custine, and the money was not again demanded.

The French, during the whole of their stay, were very eager to spread exaggerated accounts of their numbers. Troops were accordingly marched out at one gate of the city, with very little parade, that they might enter with much pomp and in a longer column, at the other. The inhabitants, who were not expert at military numeration, easily believed, that the first party had joined other troops, and that the whole amounted to treble their real number. After the entry of the Prussians, this contrivance was related by prisoners.

The number of troops, left in the city by Custine, on his retirement from the neighbouring posts, in the latter end of November, was 1800 men, with two pieces of cannon. On the 28th, when the Prussian Lieutenant Pellet brought a summons to surrender, Helden, the commander, having sent to Custine for reinforcements and cannon, was answered, that no men could be spared; and that, as to cannon, he might use the city artillery. Helden endeavoured to remove this from the arsenal; but the populace, encouraged by the neighbourhood of the Prussians, rose to prevent him; and there might have been a considerable tumult, if Custine had not arrived, on the 29th, and assured the magistrates, that the garrison should retire, rather than expose the place to a siege. The city then became tranquil, and remained so till the 2d of December, when the inhabitants, being in church, first knew by the noise of cannon, that the place was attacked.

General Helden would then have taken his two cannon to the gate, which was contended for, but the inhabitants, remembering Custine's promise, would permit no resistance; they cut the harness of the horses, broke the cannon wheels, and themselves opened the gates to the Prussians, or rather to the Hessians, for the advanced corps of the assailants was chiefly formed of them. About 100 fell in this attack. Of the French 41 were killed; 139 wounded; and 800 taken prisoners. The remainder of the 1800 reached Custine's army. A monument, erected without the northern gate of the city, commemorates the loss of the 100 assailants, on the spot, on which they fell.

Thus Franckfort, having happily but few fortifications, was lost and regained, without a siege; while Mentz, in a period of six more months, had nearly all its best buildings destroyed, by a similar change of masters.

We stayed here almost a week, which was well occupied by visits, but shewed nothing in addition to what is already known of the society of the place. Manners, customs, the topics of conversation and even dress, differ very slightly from those of London, in similar ranks; the merchants of Franckfort have more generally the advantages of travel, than those of England, but they have not that minute knowledge of modern events and characters, which an attention to public transactions renders common in our island. Those, who have been in England, or who speak English, seem desirous to discuss the state of parliamentary transactions and interests,

and to remedy the thinness of their own public topics, by introducing ours. In such discussions one error is very general from their want of experience. The faculty of making a speech is taken for the standard of intellectual power in every sort of exertion; though there is nothing better known in countries, where public speakers are numerous enough to be often observed, than that persons may be educated to oratory, so as to have a facility, elegance and force in it, distinct from the endowments of deliberative wisdom; may be taught to speak in terms remote from common use, to combine them with an unfailing dexterity of arrangement, and to invest every thought with its portion of artificial dignity, who, through the chaos of benefits and evils, which the agitation of difficult times throws up before the eye of the politician, shall be able to see no gleam of light, to describe no direct path, to discern no difference between greater and lesser evils, nor to think one wholesome truth for a confiding and an honest country. To estimate the general intellectual powers of men, tutored to oratory, from their success in the practice of it, is as absurd as to judge of corporeal strength from that of one arm, which may have been rendered unusually strong by exercise and art.

Of the society at Franckfort, Messrs. Bethman, the chief bankers, seem able to collect a valuable part; and their politeness to strangers induces them to do it often. A traveller, who misses their table, loses, both as to conversation and elegant hospitality, a welcome proof of what freedom and commerce can do against the mental and physical desolation otherwise spread over the country.

The assistance, which the mutual use of languages gives to a connection between distant places, we were happy to see existing and increasing, to the advantage of England, at Franckfort. At the Messrs. Bethmans', one day, French was nearly excluded, the majority being able to converse with nine or ten English, who were there, in their own language. Of the merchants, who have not been in England, several speak English, without difficulty, and the rising generation, it is said, will be generally accomplished in it.

One of the luxuries of Franckfort is a *Cabinet Literaire,* which is open to strangers by the introduction of members. There the best periodical publications of the Continent are received, and their titles immediately entered in a book, so that the reading is not disturbed by conversation with

the librarian. It excited our shame to hear, that some contrivance had, for several months, prevented the society from receiving a very valuable English publication.

After this, the Theatre may seem to require some notice. It is a modern, but not an elegant building, standing in an area, that renders it convenient of access, and nearly in the middle of the city. The interior, which has been gaudily decorated, contains a pit, three rows of boxes, that surround the audience part, and a gallery over them in the centre. It is larger than the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, and, in form, resembles that of Covent Garden, except that six or seven of the central boxes, in each tier, encroach upon the oval figure by a projection over the pit. The boxes are let by the year; the price of admission for non-subscribers, is a florin, for which they may find places in the boxes, engaged by their friends, or in the pit, which is in the same proportion of esteem as that at an Opera-house.

The performances are plays and operas alternately; both in German; and the music of the latter chiefly by German composers. The players are very far beneath mediocrity; but the orchestra, when we heard it, accorded with the fame of German musicians, for spirit and precision. In these qualities even the wandering parties, that play at inns, are very seldom deficient.

The stage was well lighted, but the other parts of the theatre were left in duskiness, which scarcely permitted us to see the diamonds, profusely worn by several ladies. Six o’clock is the hour of beginning, and the performances conclude soon after nine.

The Cabinet Literaire and the Theatre are the only permanent places of public amusement at Franckfort, which is, however, in want of no more, the inhabitants being accustomed to pass much of their time in friendly parties, at their houses. Though wealth is, of course, earnestly and universally sought for in a place purely mercantile, we were assured, that the richest persons, and there are some, who have above half a million sterling, find no more attention in these parties than others. This was acknowledged and separately boasted of by some of the very rich, and by those who were comparatively poor. We are so far able to report it for true, as that we could never discern the least traces of the officiousness, or subserviency that, in a corrupt and debased state of society, frequently point to the wealthiest individuals in every private party.

These and many other circumstances would probably render Franckfort a place of residence for foreigners, if the magistrates, either dreading the increase of luxury, or the interference of strangers with their commerce, did not prevent this by prohibiting them from being lodged otherwise than at inns. It was with difficulty, that an English officer, acting as Commissary to some of the German regiments, lately raised upon our pay, could obtain an exemption from this rule, at the request of the Hanoverian Minister.

Round the city, are several well-disposed walks, as pleasant as the flatness of the nearer country will permit; and, at intervals, along these, are the country houses of the merchants, who do not choose to go beyond the city territories, for a residence. Saxenhausen, a small town, on the other side of the Maine, though incorporated with Franckfort, as to jurisdiction, and connected with it by a bridge, is chiefly inhabited by watermen and other labourers.

We left Franckfort, after a stay of six days, fortified by a German passport from M. de Swartzhoff, the Hanoverian Minister, who obligingly advised us to be prepared with one in the native language of the Austrian officers. At Mentz, the ceremonies of examination were rendered much more troublesome than before, the Governor, General Kalkreuth, happening to be in the great square, who chose to make several travellers wait as if for a sort of review before him, though, after all, nothing was to be said but ‘“Go to the Commandant, who will look at your passports.”’ This Commandant was M. de Lucadou, a gentleman of considerate and polite manners, who, knowing our friends in Mentz, added to his confirmation of M. de Swartzhoff’s passport an address to M. de Wilde, the Intendant of some salt mines in Switzerland, which he recommended to us to see. These circumstances are necessary to be mentioned here, because they soon led to a disagreeable and very contradictory event in our journey.

The next morning, we set out from Mentz, and were conducted by our voiturier over a summer road, on the left bank of the Rhine, then flowing with the melted snows of Switzerland.

2.17. OPPENHEIM .

THIS is the first town of the Palatinate, on arriving from the north; and it bears marks of the devastation, inflicted upon that country, in the last century, more flagrant than could be expected, when the length of the intervening time, and the complete recovery of other cities from similar disasters, are considered. Louis the Fourteenth's fury has converted it from a populous city into little more than a picturesque ruin. It was burned in 1668; and the walls, which remain in double, or sometimes in treble circles, are more visible, at a distance, than the streets, which have been thinly erected within them. Above all, is the *Landscroon,* or crown of the country, a castle erected on an eminence, which commands the Rhine, and dignisies the view from it, for several miles. The whole city, or rather ruin, stands on a brow, over this majestic river.

The gates do not now open directly into streets, but into lanes of stone walls between vineyards and gardens, formed on the site of houses, never restored, since the fire. The town itself has shrunk from its antient limits into a few streets in the centre. In some of the interstices, corn grows up to the walls of the present houses. In others, the ruins of former buildings remain, which the owners have not been tempted to remove, for the sake of cultivating their sites. Of the cathedral, said to have been once the finest on the Rhine, nearly all the walls and the tower still exist; but these are the only remains of grandeur in a city, which seems entirely incapable of overcoming in this century the wretchedness it inherits from the last.

Had the walls been as strong as they are extensive, this place might not improbably have endured a siege in the present age, having been several times lost and regained. It was surrendered to the French, without a contest, in the campaign of 1792. After their retreat from Worms, and during the siege of Mentz, it was occupied by the Prussians; and, in December 1793, when the allies retired from Alsace, the Duke of Brunswick established his headquarters in it, for the purpose of covering the fortress. His army ovens remained near the northern gate, in July 1794, when we passed through it. In October of the fame year it fell again into the hands of the French.

No city on the banks of the Rhine is so well seated for affording a view of it as this, which, to the north, overlooks all its windings as far as Mentz, and, southward, commands them towards Worms. The river is also here of a noble breadth and force, beating so vehemently against the water-mills, moored near the side, that they seem likely to be borne away with the current. A city might be built on the site of Oppenheim, which should faintly rival the castle of Goodesberg, in the richness, though not in the sublimity of its prospect.

From hence the road leads through a fertile country of corn and vines, but at a greater distance from the river, to Worms, five or six miles from which it becomes broad, straight, and bordered with regularly-planted trees, that form an avenue to the city. Soon after leaving Oppenheim, we had the first symptom of an approach to the immediate theatre of the war, meeting a waggon, loaded with wounded soldiers. On this road, there was a long train of carriages, taking stores to some military *depôt*. The defacement of the Elector’s arms, on posts near the road, shewed also, that the country had been lately occupied by the French; as the delay in cutting the ripe corn did, that there was little expectation of their return.

2.18. WORMS .

THE condition of Worms is an aggravated repetition of the wretchedness of Oppenheim. It suffered something in the war, which the unfortunate Elector, son-in-law of our James the First, provoked by accepting the kingdom of Bohemia. Louis the Fourteenth came upon it next, and, in 1669, burned every thing that could be consumed. Nothing was restored, but on that part, which was the centre of the antient city; and the walls include, as at Oppenheim, corn and vineyards upon the ground, which was once covered with houses, and which plainly appears to have been so, from the lanes that pass between, and doors that open into the inclosures. A much larger space is so covered, than at Oppenheim, for you are some time in driving from the northern gate of the old city to the first street of the present one.

On the right of the road stands the skeleton of the Electoral palace, which the French burned in one of the late campaigns; and it is as curious as melancholy to observe how the signs of antient and modern desolation mingle with each other. On one hand is a palace, burned by the present French; on the other, the walls of a church, laid open by Louis the Fourteenth.

The first and principal street of theplace leads through these mingled ruins, and through rows of dirty houses, miserably tenanted, to the other end of the city. A few others branch from it, chiefly towards the Rhine, including sometimes the ruins, and sometimes the repaired parts of churches; of which streets, narrow, ill-paved and gloomy, consists the city of Worms. The French General, that lately wrote to Paris, ‘“We entered the fair episcopal city of Worms,”’ may be supposed to have derived his terms from a geographical dictionary, rather than from a view of his conquest.

We were now in a place, occupied by part of the acting army of the allies, which, if not immediately liable to be attacked, was to be defended by the maintenance of posts, at a very short distance. Troops passed through it daily, for the service of these posts. The noise of every cannonade was audible, and the result of every engagement was immediately known, for it might make an advance, or a retreat necessary from Worms. The wounded men arrived, soon after the intelligence, to the

military hospitals of the Prussians. A city, so circumstanced, seemed to differ but little from a camp; and we were aware, for a few hours, of a departure from the security and order of civil life.

The inn, which was not otherwise a mean building, was nearly destitute of furniture; so that the owner was prepared to receive any sort of guests, or masters. The only provision, which we could obtain was bread, the commonest sort of wine, and one piece of cold veal; for the city was under military jurisdiction, and no guests were allowed to have more than one dish at their table.

In the afternoon, we saw, for the first time, a crowd in a German city. A narrow waggon, of which nearly all but the wheels was basket-work, had arrived from the army, with a wounded officer, who lay upon the floor, supported by his servant, but occasionally rose to return the salutes of passengers. This was the Prince of Anhalt Plessis, who had been wounded, in the morning, when the French attacked all the neighbouring lines of the allies, and an indecisive engagement ensued, the noise of which had been distinctly heard, at Worms. He was hurt in the leg, and descended, with much difficulty, from the waggon; but did not, for an instant, lose the elegance of his address, and continued bowing through the passage to his apartment. No doubt was entertained of his recovery, but there seemed to be a considerable degree of sympathy, attending this young man.

We had not time to look into the churches, or numerous monasteries, that yet remain, at Worms; the war appeared to have depopulated the latter, for not a monk was to be seen. The cathedral, or church of St. Mary and St. Peter, is one of the most antient sacred buildings in Germany, having been founded at least as early as the commencement of the seventh century. One of the prebends was established in 1033, another in 1058. The Dominicans, Carmelites, Capuchins and Augustines have each a monastery, at Worms; as have the Cistercians and the Augustines a nunnery. A Protestant church was also consecrated, on the 9th of June 1744; something more than two hundred years, after the ineffectual conference held here of Protestant and Catholic divines, which Charles the Fifth interrupted, when Melancthon, on one side, and Echius, on the other, had engaged in it, ordering them to resume their arguments, in his presence, at Ratisbon. This meeting was five years previous to the celebrated diet of Worms, at which Charles, having then estimated the temporal strength of the two parties, openly

shewed his animosity to the Protestants, as Maurice of Saxony did his intriguing ambition, by referring the question to the Council of Trent.

The Jews, at Worms, inhabit a separate street, and have a synagogue, of great antiquity, their numbers having been once such as to endanger the peace of the city; but, in 1689, when the French turned their synagogue into a stable, they fled with the rest of the opulent inhabitants to Holland. Those of the present day can have very few articles of traffic, except money, the changing of which may have been frequent, on account of the neighbourhood of France.

Worms is somewhat connected with English history, having been occupied by the troops, which James the First uselessly sent to the assistance of the proscribed Elector Palatine, when his just abhorrence of continental wars was once, though tardily, overcome by the entreaties of his daughter. Here too George the Second held his headquarters, from the 7th to the 20th of September 1743; on the 14th of which month, Lord Carteret concluded, in his name, an offensive and defensive treaty with the Ministers of Hungary and Sardinia.

This city, like Cologne, retains some affectation of the Roman form of government, to which it was rendered subject by Caesar, with the title of *Augusta Vangionum.* The STADTMEISTER is sometimes called the CONSUL, and the SCHULTHEIS, or Mayor, the PRAETOR. But, in 1703, some trivial tumult afforded a pretence for abolishing its little remains of liberty, and the Elector Palatine was declared its protector. This blow completed the desolation, which the disasters of the preceding century had commenced; and a city, that was once called the market of the Palatinate, as the Palatinate was reputed the market of Germany, continues to exhibit nothing more than the ruins of its antient prosperity.

Few of the present inhabitants can be the descendants of those, who witnessed its destruction in 1689; for we could not find, that the particulars of that event were much known, or commemorated by them, dreadful and impressive as they must have been. A column of Louis the Fourteenth’s army had entered the city, in September of the preceding year, under the command of the Marquis de Bonfleur, who soon distressed the inhabitants by preparations for blowing up the walls with gunpowder. The mines were so numerous and large, as to threaten nothing less than the entire overwhelming of the city; but, being fired at different times, the

walls of the houses were left standing, though they shook with almost every explosion. The artillery and balls had been previously carried away to Landau, or Mentz, then possessed by Louis. At length, on the 12th of May 1689, the Intendant sent the melancholy news to the magistracy, that he had received orders from his monarch to burn the whole city. Six days were allowed for the departure of the inhabitants and the removal of their property; which period was prolonged by their entreaties to nineteen. At the expiration of these, on Ascension Day, the 31st of May, the French grenadiers were employed from twelve o'clock, till four, in placing combustibles about the houses and public buildings, against several of which large heaps of hay and straw were raised. The word being then given, fire was set to almost every house at once, and, in a few hours, the city was reduced to ashes; the conflagration being so general and strong as to be visible in daylight at the distance of more than thirty English miles. Such was one of the calamities of a city, so unfortunately situated, that the chapter of the cathedral alone proved a loss by wars, previous to the year 1743, amounting to 1,262,749 florins.

The attention, due to so memorable a place, detained us at Worms, till the voiturier talked of being unable to reach Manheim, before the gates would be shut, and we let him drive vehemently towards

2.19. FRANCKENTHAL,

ANOTHER place, destroyed by Louis the Fourteenth, but restored upon a plan so uniform and convenient, that nothing but a fuller population is necessary to confirm its title of a flourishing city. The streets, which intersect each other at right angles, are wide and exactly straight; the houses are handsomely built, but the poverty, or indolence of the owners suffers them to partake of the air of neglect, which is general in German habitations; and the streets, though spacious and not ill-paved, had so few passengers, that the depopulation of the place seemed to be rendered the more observable by its grandeur.

Yet it would be unfair to estimate the general prosperity of Franckenthal by its present circumstances, even had we stayed long enough to know them more accurately. This place had been occupied but a few weeks before by the French army, who had plundered it, as well as several other towns of the Palatinate, after the retreat of the allies from Alsace, at the latter end of 1793. The inhabitants had, for the most part, returned to their houses; but their commerce, which is said to have been not contemptible, could not be so easily restored. The manufactures of porcelain, cloths, silks, spangles, vinegar and soap, of which some were established and all are protected by the wise liberality of the Elector, though far from being answerable, either in their capitals, or produce, to the English idea of similar enterprises, command some share with England and France in supplying the rest of Germany. One method of facilitating the operations of trade the Elector has advantageously adopted here; that of instituting a court upon the spot for the decision of all causes, in which the traders are interested; and at his expence a navigable canal has been formed from the town to the Rhine. Artists and merchants have also some privileges, at Franckenthal, of which that of being exempt from the military press is not the least.

This press, or levy, is the method, by which all the German Princes return their contingents to the army of the Empire. The population of every town and district in their dominions is known with sufficient accuracy, and a settled number of recruits is supplied by each. When these are wanted, notice is given, that the men of a certain age must assemble

and cast lots for the service. Those, who are drawn, may find substitutes, but with this condition, that the deputy must be at least as tall as his principal; a regulation, which makes the price of substitutes depend upon their height, and frequently renders it impossible for the principals to avail themselves of the permission. A farmer in this neighbourhood, who was considerably above six feet in height, could not obtain a substitute for less than a hundred louis d’ors.

Another unpleasant condition is attached to this exchange: if the substitute is disabled, or deserts, another must be supplied; and, if he carries his arms, or accoutrements, away, these must be paid for by the person, who sent him.

After a ride of a few miles, we reached

2.20. OGGERSHEIM,

A SMALL town, on the west bank of the Rhine, rebuilt in uniform streets, like Franckenthal, having been destroyed by the same exertion of Louis the Fourteenth’s cruelty. Here also the modern French had very lately been, and some of the ruins, left near the road by Louis, appeared to have served them for kitchens in their excursion.

At the east end of the town, towards the Rhine, stands a chateau of the Elector, built with modern, but not very admirable taste, and commanding the distant river in several fine points of view. We could not be admitted to see the inside, which is said to have been splendidly decorated; for the French had just dismantled it of the furniture.

The road from hence to Manheim was bordered for its whole length, of at least two miles, by rows of poplars, of which some still remain near Oggersheim; but those within a mile and a half of Manheim, have been felled at one or two feet from the ground. This was done in December 1793, when the French began to advance from Landau, and were expected to besiege Manheim, their operations against which might have been covered, in some measure, by this noble alley.

Near the Rhine, the road is now commanded by two forts, of which one was thrown up during the approach of the French, and completed in the middle of the summer, with great care. These contribute much to the present security of the city, which might otherwise be bombarded from the opposite bank of the river, even by an enemy, who should not be able and should not propose to attempt the conquest of the place. They are ditched and pallisadoed, but, being divided from the body of the city, by the Rhine, are, of course, without the communication, which renders such works capable of a long defence. Round one of these forts, the road now winds, entering a part of the works, near the bridge, where there is a guardhouse for the troops of the Elector.

2.21. MANHEIM .

IT was twilight, when we approached Manheim; and the palace, the numerous turrets and the fortisications had their grandeur probably increased by the obscurity. The bridge of boats is not so long as that at Mentz; but we had time enough in passing it to observe the extent of the city, on the left of which the Neckar pours itself into the Rhine, so that two sides are entirely washed by their streams. At the next guardhouse, where we were detained by the usual enquiries, the troops were more numerous; and surely no military figures ever accorded so well with the gloomy gates, and walls they guarded. The uniform of the Palatine light troops is a close jacket of motley brown, and pantaloons of the same that reach to their half-boots. They have black helmets, with crests and fronts of brass, large whiskers, and their faces, by constant exposure to the sun, are of the deepest brown that can be, without approaching to black. As they stood singly on the ramparts, or in groups at the gates, their bronze faces and Roman helmets seemed of a deeper hue, than the gloom, that partly concealed their figures.

The entrance into Manheim, from the Rhine, is by a spacious street, which leads directly into the centre of the city, and to a large square, planted with limes, consisting, on one side, of public buildings, and, on the other, of several noble houses, one of which is the chief inn, called the *Cour Palatine*. This is the first city in Germany, that can answer, by its appearance, the expectations of a foreigner, who has formed them from books. Its aspect is truly that of a capital and of the residence of a Court; except that in the daytime a traveller may be somewhat surprised at the fewness of passengers and the small shew of traffic, amidst such public buildings, and in streets of such convenience and extent. The fairness, the grandeur and the stateliness, which he may have seen attributed to other German cities, till he is as much disgusted as deceived by every idea derived from description, may be perceived in several parts of Manheim, and the justness of disposition in all.

Nor is the beauty of the present city solely owing to the destruction of the antient one by Louis the Fourteenth, in 1689, the year of general devastation in the Palatinate. It was laid out in right lines, though to a less

extent, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Frederic the Fifth laid the foundation of the fortifications, behind which a town was built, that adopted the antient name of Manheim, from a neighbouring one then in decay. These were the fortifications and the town destroyed by the French in 1689. The plan of both was but extended, when the present works were formed upon the system of Cohorn, and the city by degrees restored, with streets, which, intersecting each other at right angles, divide it into an hundred and seven square portions. The number of the inhabitants, exclusive of the garrison, was, in 1784, 21,858.

Some of the streets are planted with rows of trees, and there are five or six open places, suitable for promenades, or markets. The customhouse, which forms a side to one of these, is a noble stone building, rather appearing to be a palace, than an office, except that under the colonnades, which surround it, are shops for jewellery and other commodities.

The Electoral palace, which opens, on one side, to the city, and, on the other, to the ramparts, was built by the Elector Charles-Philippe, who, in the year 1721, removed his residence hither from Heidelberg, on account of some difference with the magistrates, or, as is said, of the prevalence of religious disputes in that city. He began to erect it in 1720; but the edisice was not completed, till the right wing was added by the present Elector, not to be used as a residence, but to contain a gallery of paintings, cabinets of antiquities and natural history, a library, treasury and *manege*. We passed a morning in viewing the apartments in the other wing, all the paintings and books having been removed from this, as well as great part of the furniture from the whole palace, in the dread of an approaching bombardment. The person, who shewed them, took care to keep the credit of each room safe, by assuring us at the door, that it was not in its usual condition. The Elector had been, for some months, at Munich, but the Duke and Duchess of Deux Ponts and their family have resided in this palace, since their retirement from Deux Ponts, in the latter end of the campaign of 1792.

The rooms are all lofty, and floored with inlaid work of oak and chesnut; the ceilings, for the most part, painted; and the walls covered with tapestry, finely wrought, both as to colour and design. Some of this came from a manufactory, established by the Elector, at Franckenthal.

The furniture, left in several of the rooms, was grand and antient, but could never have been so costly as those, who have seen the mansions of wealthy individuals in England, would expect to find in a palace. The Elector’s state-bed was inclosed not only by a railing, but by a glass case to the height of the ceiling, with windows, that could be opened at pleasure, to permit a conversation with his courtiers, when compliments were paid literally at a levee. In the court of France, this practice continued even to very late years, and there were three distinct privileges of entrée, denoting the time, at which persons of different classes were permitted to enter the chamber. In the Earl of Portland’s embassy for King William to Louis the Fourteenth, it was thought a signal mark of honour, that he was admitted to his audience, not only in the chamber, but within the rails; and there the French Monarch stood with the three young Princes, his grandsons, the Count de Tholouse, the Duke d’Aumont and the Mareschal de Noailles. The Duke made his speech covered, after which the King entered into conversation with him, for several minutes.

One room, at Manheim, was called the Silver Chamber, from the quantity of solid silver, used about the furniture. Such articles as could be carried away entire, had been removed, but the walls were disfigured by the loss of the ornaments torn from them, on account of their value. In several rooms, the furniture, that remained, was partly packed, to be carried away upon the next alarm. The contents of the wardrobe were in this state, and the interior of these now desolated apartments seemed like the skeleton of grandeur. The beauty of the painted ceilings, however, the richness of the various prospects, commanded by the windows, and the great extent of the building sufficiently accounted for the reputation, which this palace has, of being the finest in Germany.

It is built of stone, which has somewhat the reddish hue of that used at Mentz, and, though several parts are positively disapproved by persons of skill in architecture, the whole is certainly a grand and sumptuous building.

The situation of Manheim and the scenery around it are viewed to great advantage from the tower of the Observatory, in which strangers are politely received by the Professor of Astronomy, whose residence is established in it. From this are seen the fruitful plains of the Palatinate, spreading, on all sides, to bold mountains, of which those of Lorrain, that

extend on the west, lose in distance the variety of their colouring, and, assuming a blue tint, retain only the dignity of their form. Among these, the vast and round headland, called the *Tonnesberg,* which is in sight, during the greatest part of the journey from Mentz to Manheim, is preeminent.

But the chain, that binds the horizon on the east, and is known by the name of the *Bergstrasse,* or road of mountains, is near enough to display all their wild irregularity of shape, the forest glens, to which they open, and the various tints of rock and soil, of red and purple, that mingle with the corn and wood on their lower steeps. These mountains are seen in the north from their commencement near Franckfort, and this line is never interrupted from thence southward into Switzerland. The rivals to them, on the south west, are the mountains of Alsace, which extend in long perspective, and at a distance appear to unite with those of the Bergstrasse. Among the numerous towns and villages that throng the Palatinate, the spires of Oppenheim and Worms are distinctly visible to the north; almost beneath the eye are those of Franckenthal, and Oggersheim, and to the southward Spires shews its many towers.

In the nearer scene the Neckar, after tumbling from among the forests of the Bergstrasse, falls into the Rhine, a little below the walls of Manheim; and the gardens of a summer chateau belonging to the Elector occupy the angle between the two rivers.

These gardens were now surrendered by the Prince to be the camp of three thousand of his troops, detached from the garrison of the city, which, at this time, consisted of nearly ten thousand men. In several places, on the banks of the two rivers, batteries were thrown up, and, near the camp, a regular fort, for the purpose of commanding both; so that Manheim, by its natural and artificial means of defence, was supposed to be rendered nearly unassailable, on two sides. On that of Heidelberg, it was not so secure; nor could the others be defended by a garrison of less than 15,000 men. It was on this account, that the Elector detained ten thousand of his troops from actual service, contrary, as is said, to the remonstrances of the Emperor, who offered, but without success, to garrison his capital with Austrians. From the observatory, the camp and the works were easily seen, and, by the help of a Dollond telescope, the only optical instrument remaining, the order of both was so exactly pointed out by our guide, that

it was not difficult to comprehend the uses of them. Military preparations, indeed, occurred very frequently in Manheim. In the gardens of the chief Electoral palace, extending to the ramparts over the Rhine, cannon were planted, which were as regularly guarded by sentinels as in the other parts of the fortifications.

All the gates of Manheim appear to be defended by fortifications of unusual strength. Besides two broad ditches, there are batteries, which play directly upon the bridges, and might destroy them in a few minutes. The gates are guarded, with the utmost strictness, and no person is suffered to enter them, after ten at night, without the express permission of the governor. When a courier arrives, who wishes to use his privilege of passing, at all hours, he puts some token of his office into a small tin box, which is kept on the outside of the ditch, to be drawn across it by a cord, that runs upon a roller on each bank. The officer of the guard carries this to the governor, and obtains the keys; but so much time is passed in this sort of application, that couriers, when the nights are short, usually wait the opening of the gates, which is soon after daylight, in summer, and at six, or seven, in winter.

The absence of the Elector, we were assured, had much altered the appearance of Manheim, where scarcely a carriage was now to be seen, though there were traces enough of the gaiety and general splendour of this little Court. Here are an Opera House, a German Comedy, an Amateur Concert, an Electoral Lottery, an Academy of Sculpture and Design, and an Academy of Sciences. The Opera performances are held in a wing of the palace, and were established in 1742, but have not attained much celebrity, being supported chiefly by performers from the other Theatre. This last is called a national establishment, the players being Germans, and the Theatre founded in 1779 at the expence of the Elector. The Baron de Dahlberg, one of his Ministers, has the superintendance of it. The Amateur Concert is held, every Friday, during the winter, and is much frequented.

The Electoral Lotteries, for there are two, are drawn in the presence of the Minister of Finances, and one of them is less disadvantageous for the gamesters than is usual with such undertakings. That, which consists of chances determined in the customary way, gives the Elector an advantage of only five to four over the subscribers. The other, which is formed upon the more intricate model of that of Genoa, entitles the subscribers to

prizes, proportioned to the number of times a certain ticket issues from the wheel, five numbers being drawn out of ninety, or rather five drawings of one number each being successively made out of ninety tickets. A ticket, which issues once in these five drawings, wins fifteen times the value of the stake; one, that should be drawn each of the five times, would entitle the owner to have his original stake multiplied by sixty thousand, and the product would be his prize. The undertaker of this latter Lottery has the chances immensely in his favour.

From the very large income, to which these Lotteries contribute a part, the present Elector has certainly made considerable disbursements, with useful purposes, if not to useful effects. Of his foundation are the Academy of Sciences, which was opened in 1763, for weekly sittings, and has proceeded to some correspondence with other Academies; the German Society, established for the easy purpose of purifying and the difficult one of fixing language; the Cabinet of Physics, or rather of experimental philosophy, celebrated for the variety and magnitude of its instruments, among which are two burning glasses of three feet diameter, said to be capable of liquefying bodies, even bottles filled with water, at 10 feet distance; the Observatory, of 108 feet high, in which all the chief instruments were English; a Botanical Garden and Directorship; an Academy of Sculpture, and a Cabinet of Engravings and Drawings, formed under the direction of M. Krahe of Dusseldorff, in 400 folio volumes.

Of all these establishments, none of the ornaments, or materials, that were portable, now remain at Manheim. The astronomical instruments, the celebrated collection of statues, the paintings and the prints have been removed, together with the Electoral treasure of diamonds and jewels, some to Munich and some to other places of security. But, though we missed a sight, which even its rarity would have rendered welcome, it seems proper, after such frequent notice of the barrenness of Germany, to mention what has been collected in one of its chief cities.

The expectation of an attack had dismantled other houses, besides the Elector’s, of their furniture; for, in the Cour Palatine, a very spacious, and really a good inn, not a curtain and scarcely a spoon was left. *A cause de la guerre* was, indeed, the general excuse for every deficiency, used by those, who had civility enough to offer one; but, in truth, the war had not often incroached upon the ordinary stock of conveniencies in Germany, which

was previously too low to be capable of much reduction. The places, which the French had actually entered, are, of course, to be excepted; but it may otherwise be believed, that Germany can lose little by a war, more than the unfortunate labourers, whom it forces to become soldiers. The loss of wealth must come chiefly from other countries. A rich nation may give present treasure; a commercial nation may give both present treasure and the means of future competence.

The land near Manheim is chiefly planted with tobacco and madder, and the landscape is enlivened with small, but neat countryhouses, scattered along the margin of the Neckar. The neighbourhood abounds in pleasant rides, and, whether you wind the high banks of the majestic Rhine, or the borders of the more tranquil Neckar, the mountains of the Bergstrasse, tumbled upon each other in wild confusion, generally form the magnificent back ground of the scene.

On returning from an excursion of this kind at the close of evening, the soldiers at the gates are frequently heard chanting martial songs in parts and chorus; a fonorous music in severe unison with the solemnity of the hour and the imperfect forms, that meet the eye, of sentinels keeping watch beneath the dusky gateways, while their brethren, reposing on the benches without, mingle their voices in the deep chorus. Rude and simple as are these strains, they are often singularly impressive, and touch the imagination with something approaching to horror, when the circumstances of the place are remembered, and it is considered how soon these men, sent to inflict death on others, may themselves be thrown into the unnumbered heap of the military slain.

2.22. SCHWEZINGEN .

AN excellent road, sheltered for nine English miles by rows of high poplars, conducted us through richly cultivated plains from Manheim to Schwezingen, a small village, distinguished by an Electoral chateau and gardens. This was one of the pleasantest rides we had found in Germany, for the road, though it exhibited little of either the wild or picturesque, frequently opened towards the mountains, bright with a variety of colouring, and then again was shrouded among woods and plantations, that bordered the neighbouring fields, and brought faintly to remembrance the style and mingled verdure of our native landscape.

Schwezingen had been very lately the Austrian headquarters, for the army of the Upper Rhine, and some soldiers were still stationed near the road to guard an immense magazine of wood; but there were otherwise no military symptoms about the place.

The chateau is an old and inelegant building, not large enough to have been ever used as a formal residence. The present Elector has added to it two wings, each of six hundred feet long, but so low, that the apartments are all on the ground floor. Somewhat of that air of neglect, which can sadden even the most delightful scenes, is visible here; several of the windows are broken, and the theatre, music-room, and ball-room, which have been laid out in one of the wings, are abandoned to dust and lumber.

The gardens, however, are preserved in better order. Before the palace, a long vista of lawn and wood, with numerous and spacious fountains, guarded by statues, display something of the old French manner; other parts shew charming scenery, and deep sylvan recesses, where nature is again at liberty; in a bay formed by the woods is an amphitheatre of fragrant orange trees, placed in front of a light semicircular green-house, and crowned with lofty groves. Near this delicious spot, extends a bending arcade of lattice-work, interwoven with vines and many beautifully flowering plants; a sort of structure, the filagree lightness of which it is impossible not to admire, against precept, and perhaps, when general effect is considered, against necessary taste. In another part, sheltered by the woods, is an edifice in the style of a Turkish mosque, with its light cloistered courts, slender minarets, and painted entrances, inscribed with

Arabic mottos, which by the German translations appear to express the pleasure of friendly conversation and of indolence in summer. The gardens have this result of a judicious arrangement, that they seem to extend much beyond their real limits, which we discovered only by ascending one of the minarets. They are open to the public, during great part of every day, under certain rules for their preservation, of which copies are pasted up in several places.

2.23. CARLSRUHE .

AT Schwezingen the fine Electoral road concludes, and we began to wind along the skirts of a forest on the left, having on the right an open corn country, beyond which appeared the towers of Spires and Philipsburg, of which the former was then the headquarters of the Austrian army, and the latter is memorable for having given birth to Melancthon in 1491. Waghausel and Bruchsal are small posting places in this route, at a village between which we had another instance of the little attention paid to travellers in Germany. At a small inn, noxious with some fumigation used against bugs, we were detained a quarter of an hour, because the landlord, who had gone out after our arrival, had not left word how much we should pay, and the poor old woman, who, without shoes or stockings, attended us, was terrified when we talked of leaving what was proper, and proceeding before his return.

About a mile beyond Bruchsal our postillion quitted the chaussée, and entered a summer road, through the deep and extensive forest of Carlsruhe, preserved by the Margrave of Baden for the shelter of game. Avenues cut through this forest for nine or ten miles in every direction, converge at his palace and city of Carlsruhe, as at a point. Other cruelties than those of the chase sometimes take place in these delightful scenes, for an amphitheatre has been formed in the woods, where imitations of a Spanish bull feast have been exhibited; to such horrid means of preventing vacuity of mind has a prince had recourse, who is otherwise distinguished for the elegance of his taste, and the suavity of his manners!

The scenery of this forest is very various. Sometimes we found our way through groves of ancient pine and fir, so thickly planted that their lower branches were withered for want of air, and it seemed as if the carriage could not proceed between them; at others we passed under the spreading shade of chesnuts, oak and walnut, and crossed many a cool stream, green with the impending foliage, on whose sequestered bank one almost expected to see the moralizing Jacques; so exactly did the scene accord with Shakespeare’s description. The woods again opening, we found ourselves in a noble avenue, and saw the stag gracefully bounding across it ‘“to more profound repose;”’ while now and then a hut, formed of rude

green planks under some old oak, seemed, by its smoked sides, to have often afforded a sheltered repast to hunting parties.

Near Carlsruhe the gardens of the Prince and then the palace become visible, the road winding along them, on the edge of the forest, till it enters the northern gate of the city, the uniformity of which has the same date as its completion, the ground plot having been entirely laid out between January and June 1715, on the 17th of which month the Margrave Charles William laid the foundation stone.

The streets are accordingly spacious, light, and exactly straight; but not so magnificent as those of Manheim, and still less enlivened with passengers. Since the commencement of the war, the gaieties of the Court, which afforded some occupation to the inhabitants, have ceased; the nobility have left their houses; and the Margrave is contented with the amusements of his library, in which English literature is said to fill a considerable space.

Carlsruhe has the advantage of not being fortified; so that the inhabitants are not oppressed by a numerous garrison, and strangers pass through it, though so near the seat of war, without interruption. It is less than Manheim by at least half, and has no considerable public building, except the palace, from the spacious area before which, all the streets proceed as *radii*, till their furthest ends fill up the figure of a semicircle. The houses in the area, which immediately front the palace, are built over a piazza interrupted only by the commencement of the streets. The palace has, of course, an unexampled advantage in the mixture of town and rural scenery in its prospects, looking on one side through all the streets of the city, and on the other through thirty-two forest alleys, cut to various lengths of from ten to fifteen English miles each; few, however, of the latter prospects are now commanded except from the upper windows, the present Elector having entirely changed the style of the intervening gardens, and permitted them to be laid out in the English taste, without respect to the thirty-two intersections, that rendered them conformable with the forest.

We passed part of two days at Carlsruhe, and were chiefly in these gardens, which are of the most enchanting beauty and richness. The warmth of the climate draws up colours for the shrubs and plants, which we thought could not be equalled in more northern latitudes; two thousand

and seven hundred orange and lemon trees, loaded with fruit and blossoms, perfumed the air; and choice shrubs, marked with the Linnean distinctions, composed the thickets. The gardens, being limited only by the forests, appear to unite with them; and the deep verdure and luxuriance of the latter are contrasted sweetly with the tender green of the lawns and plants, and with the variety of scarce and majestic trees, mingled with the garden groves.

The palace is a large and sumptuous, though not an elegant edisice, built of stone like all the rest of the city, and at the same period. The Margrave generally resides in it, and has rendered it a valuable home, by adding greatly to the library, filling an observatory with excellent instruments, and preserving the whole structure in a condition not usual in Germany. The spot, compared with the surrounding country, appeared like Milton's Eden — like Paradise opened in the wild.

Beyond Carlsruhe the road begins to approach the Rhine, which we had lost sight of near Manheim; and, though the river is never within view, the country is considered as a military frontier, being constantly patrolled by troops. Some of these were of the Prince of Condé's army of emigrants, who have no uniform, and are distinguished only by the white cockade, and by a bandage of white linen, impressed with black *fleurs de lis,* upon the right arm. They were chiefly on foot, and then wore only their swords, without firearms.

Near the road, a small party of Austrians were guarding a magazine, before a tent, marked, like their regimentals, with green upon white. Soon afterwards, our postillion drew up on one side, to permit a train of carriages to pass, and immediately announced the *Prinz von Condé,* who was in an open landau, followed by two covered waggons for his kitchen and laundry, and by a coach with attendants.

He appeared to be between fifty and sixty; tall, not corpulent, and of an air, which might have announced the French courtier, if his rank had been unknown. A star was embroidered upon his military surtout, but he had no guards, though travelling within the jurisdiction allotted to him as a general officer. So little was the road frequented at this period, that his was the second or third carriage we had met, except military waggons, since leaving Mentz; a distance of more than eighty English miles.

The road for the whole stage between Carlsruhe and Rastadt, about fifteen miles, is planted, as seems customary in Germany between the palaces of sovereigns, with lofty trees, of which the shade was extremely refreshing at this season; the clouds of sand, that rose from the road, would otherwise have made the heat intolerable.

The first house in Rastadt is the palace of the Margrave of Baden Baden, brother of the Margrave of Baden Durlach, whose residence is at Carlsruhe, a small and heavy building, that fronts the avenue, and is surrounded with stone walls. The interior is said to be splendidly decorated, and a chamber is preserved in the state, in which Prince Eugene and Marshal Villars left it in 1714, after concluding the peace between the Emperor and Louis the Fourteenth. The Prince of Baden, being then a general in the service of the Emperor, had not been able to escape the vengeance of Louis, whose troops in 1688 first plundered, and then burnt, the palace and city, and in the war of the Succession they had a camp on the adjoining plain. The Prince is therefore supposed to have lent the palace, which he had rebuilt, with the more readiness, that the Marshal might see how perfectly he could overcome his loss. The plunder of the city in 1688 had continued for five days, and it is mentioned in its history that the French carried away fifteen waggon loads of wine of the vintage of 1572.

Rastadt, like Carlsruhe, is built upon one plan, but is as inferior to it in beauty, as in size. The chief street is, however, uncommonly broad, so much so, that the upper end is used as a marketplace, and the statue of the founder, Prince Louis, in the centre, is seen with all the advantages of space and perspective. There is, notwithstanding, little appearance of traffic, and the inhabitants seemed to be much less numerous than the emigrant corps, which was then stationed there, the head quarters of the Prince of Condé being established in the city. We passed an hour at an inn, which was nearly filled by part of this corps, and were compelled to witness the distress and disappointment, excited by intelligence just then received of the state of affairs in the Low Countries.

A small park of artillery was kept on the southern side of Rastadt, where there is a handsome stone bridge over the river Murg, that falls into the Rhine, at the distance of a league from the city. Soon after, the road passes by the groves of the *Favorita,* a summer palace built by a dowager

Margravine. We now drew nearer to the mountains of the Bergstrasse, which had disappeared near Schwezingen, and had risen again partially through the morning mists, soon after our quitting Carlsruhe. They are here of more awful height, and abrupt steepness than in the neighbourhood of Manheim, and, on their pointed brows, are frequently the ruins of castles, placed sometimes where it seems as if no human foot could climb. The nearer we approached these mountains the more we had occasion to admire the various tints of their granites. Sometimes the precipices were of a faint pink, then of a deep red, a dull purple, or a blush approaching to lilac, and sometimes gleams of a pale yellow mingled with the low shrubs, that grew upon their sides. The day was cloudless and bright, and we were too near these heights to be deceived by the illusions of aerial colouring; the real hues of their features were as beautiful, as their magnitude was sublime. The plains, that extend along their feet to the Rhine, are richly cultivated with corn, and, beyond the river, others, which appear to be equally fruitful, spread towards the mountains of Alsace, a corresponding chain with the Bergstrasse, vast and now blue with distance.

The manners of the people from Manheim downwards, are more civilized than in the upper parts of Germany; an improvement, which may with great probability be imputed to the superior fruitfulness of the country, that amends their condition, and with it the social qualities. The farms are more numerous, the labourers less dejected, and the women, who still work barefooted in the fields, have somewhat of a ruddy brown in their complexion, instead of the sallowness, that renders the ferocious, or sullen air of the others more striking. They are also better dressed; for, though they retain the slouched woollen hat, they have caps; and towards the borders of Switzerland their appearance becomes picturesque. Here they frequently wear a blue petticoat with a cherry-coloured boddice, full white sleeves fastened above the elbow, and a muslin handkerchief thrown gracefully round the neck in a sort of roll; the hair sometimes platted round the head, and held on the crown with a large bodkin. On holidays, the girls have often a flat straw hat, with bows of ribband hanging behind. Higher up, the women wear their long black hair platted, but falling in a queue down the back.

The cottages are also somewhat better, and the sides entirely covered with vines, on which, in the beginning of July, were grapes bigger than

capers, and in immense quantities. Sometimes Turkey corn is put to dry under the projections of the first floor, and the gardens are ornamented with a short alley of hops. Meat is however bad and scarce; the appearance so disgusting before it is dressed, that those, who can accommodate their palates to the cooking, must endeavour to forget what they have seen. Butter is still more scarce, and the little cheese that appears, is only a new white curd, made up in rolls, scarcely bigger than an egg. A sort of beer is here made for servants, the taste of which affords no symptom of either malt or hops; it is often nearly white, and appears to have been brewed but a few hours; what is somewhat browner is bottled, and sold at about three-pence a quart.

Our road, this day, was feldom more than two leagues distant from the Rhine, and we expected to have heard the fire, which the Austrian and French posts, who have their batteries on the two banks of the river, frequently exchange with each other. The tranquillity was, however, as sound as in any other country, and nothing but the continuance of patroles and convoys reminded us of our nearness to the war. The peasants were as leisurely cutting their harvest, and all the other business of rural life was proceeding as uninterruptedly, as if there was no possibility of an attack. Yet we afterwards learned, that the French had, very early on the morning of this day, ineffectually attempted the passage of the Rhine, about fifteen miles higher up; and the firing had been distinctly heard at a little village where we dined.

One road, as short as this, lies immediately upon the margin of the river; and, as we were assured that none but military parties were fired at, we wished to pass it, for the purpose of observing the ingenious methods, by which a country so circumstanced is defended; but our postillion, who dreaded, that he might be pressed by the Austrians, for the intrusion, refused to venture upon it, and, instead of proceeding to Kehl, which is directly opposite to Strasbourg, we took the road for Offenburg, about three leagues from the Rhine.

The country through which our route now lay, better as it is than more northern parts, has suffered some positive injuries by the war. Before this, all the little towns, from Carlsruhe downwards, maintained some commerce with France, on their own account, and supplied carriage for that of others. In return for provisions and coarse commodities for

manufacture, carried to Strasbourg, they received the silks and woollens of France, to be dispersed at Franckfort, or Manheim. The intercourse between the two countries was so frequent, that nearly all the tradesmen, and many of the labouring persons in this part of Germany speak a little French. The landlord of the house, where we dined, assured us that, though his village was so small, he had sufficient business before the war; now he was upon the point of removing to Offenburg, being unable to pay his rent, during the interruption of travelling.

A little before sun-set, we came to Appenweyer, one of these towns, from the entrance of which the spires of Strasbourg were so plainly visible that we could see the fanes glittering against the light, and even the forms of the fortifications near the water could be traced. In the midst of the straggling town of Appenweyer the loud sounds of martial music and then the appearance of troops, entering at the opposite end, surprised us. This was the advanced guard of several Austrian regiments, on their march to reinforce the allied army in the Low Countries. Our postillion had drawn up, to surrender as much of the road as possible to them, but their march was so irregular, that they frequently thronged round the carriage; affording us sufficient opportunity to observe how far their air corresponded with what has been so often said of the Austrian soldiery.

Except as to their dress and arms, their appearance is not military, according to any notion, which an Englishman is likely to have formed; that is, there is nothing of activity, nothing of spirit, of cheerfulness, of the correctness of discipline, or of the eagerness of the youthful in it. There is much of ferocity, much of timid cruelty, of sullenness, indolence and awkwardness. They dress up their faces with mustachios, and seem extremely desirous to impress terror. How far this may be effectual against other troops we cannot know; but they certainly are, by their ferocious manners, and by the traits, which a nearer view of them discloses, very terrible to the peaceful traveller. Though now immediately under the eyes of their officers they could scarcely refrain from petty insults, and from wishfully laying their hands upon our baggage.

About a thousand men passed in two divisions, which had commenced their march a few hours before, for the purpose of avoiding the heat of the day. As we proceeded, the trodden corn in the sields shewed where they had rested.

It was night before we reached Offenburg, where we were compelled to lodge at a wretched inn called the Post-house, the master of the other having that day removed to admit a new tenant; but the condition of the lodging was of little importance, for, all night, the heavy trampling of feet along the road below prevented sleep, and with the first dawn the sound of martial music drew us to the windows. It seemed like a dream, when the Austrian bands played *ça ira,* with double drums, and cymbals thrown almost up to our casements, louder than any we had ever heard before. This was the main body of the army, of which we had met the advanced party. Each regiment was followed by a long train of baggage carriages, of various and curious descriptions, some of the cabriolets having a woman nearly in man's apparel in the front, and behind, a large basket higher than the carriage, filled with hay. This '"tide of human existence"' continued to pass for several hours. But the whole army did not consist of more than three regiments of infantry, among which were those of D'Arcy, and Pellegrini, and one of horse; for each of the Austrian regiments of foot contains, when complete, two thousand three hundred men. They had with them a small train of artillery, and were to proceed to the Low Countries as quick as they could march; but, so uniform are the expedients of the councils of Vienna, that the opportunity of carrying these troops down the Rhine in barges from Phillipsburg, where it was practicable, was not adopted, though this method would have saved two weeks out of three, and have landed the army unfatigued at its post.

All their regimentals were white, faced either with light blue, or pompadour, and seemed unsuitably delicate for figures so large and heavy. The cavalry were loaded with many articles of baggage, but their horses appeared to be of the strongest and most serviceable kind. This was a grand military show, which it was impossible to see without many reflections on human nature and human misery.

Offenburg is a small town, in the Margraviate of Baden Baden, pleasantly seated at the feet of the Bergstrasse, which the road again approaches so near as to be somewhat obstructed by its acclivities. Our way lay along the base of these steeps, during the whole day; and as we drew nearer to Switzerland, their height became still more stupendous, and the mountains of Alsace seemed advancing to meet them in the long perspective; the plains between, through which the Rhine gleamed in long

sweeps, appeared to be entirely covered with corn, and in the nearer scene joyous groups were loading the waggons with the harvest. An harvest of another kind was ripening among the lower rocks of the Bergstrasse, where the light green of the vines enlivened every cliff, and sometimes overspread the ruinous walls of what had once been fortresses.

We passed many villages, shaded with noble trees, which had more appearance of comfort than any we had seen, and which were enviable for the pleasantness of their situation; their spacious street generally opening to the grandeur of the mountain vista, that extended to the south. In these landscapes the peasant girl, in the simple dress of the country, and balancing on her large straw hat an harvest keg, was a very picturesque figure.

It was evening when we came within view of Friburg, the last city of Germany on the borders of Switzerland, and found ourselves among mountains, which partook of the immensity and sublimity of those of that enchanting country. But what was our emotion, when, from an eminence, we discovered the pointed summits of what we believed to be the Swiss mountains themselves, a multitudinous assemblage rolled in the far-distant prospect! This glimpse of a country of all others in Europe the most astonishing and grand, awakened a thousand interesting recollections and delightful expectations; while we watched with regret even this partial vision vanishing from our eyes as we descended towards Friburg. The mountains, that encompass this city, have so much the character of the great, that we immediately recollect the line of separation between Germany and Switzerland to be merely artificial, not marked even by a river. Yet while we yield to the awful pleasure which this eternal vastness inspires, we feel the insignificance of our temporary nature, and, seeming more than ever conscious by what a slender system our existence is upheld, somewhat of dejection and anxiety mingle with our admiration.

2.24. FRIBUR G

IS an ancient Imperial city and the capital of the Brisgau. Its name alludes to the privileges granted to such cities; but its present condition, like that of many others, is a proof of the virtual discontinuance of the rights, by which the Sovereign intended to invite to one part of his dominions the advantages of commerce. Its appearance is that, which we have so often described; better than Cologne, and worse than Mentz; its size is about a third part of the latter city. On descending to it, the first distinct object is the spire of the great church, a remarkable structure, the stones of which are laid with open interstices, so that the light appears through its tapering sides. Of this sort of stone fillagree work there are said to be other specimens in Germany. The city was once strongly fortified, and has endured some celebrated sieges. In 1677, 1713, and 1745 is was taken by the French, who, in the latter year, destroyed all the fortifications, which had rendered it formidable, and left nothing but the present walls.

Being, however, a frontier place towards Switzerland, it is provided with a small Austrian garrison; and the business of permitting, or preventing the passage of travellers into that country is entrusted to its officers. The malignity, or ignorance of one of these, called the Lieutenant de Place, prevented us from reaching it, after a journey of more than six hundred miles; a disappointment, which no person could bear without severe regret, but which was alloyed to us by the reports we daily heard of some approaching change in Switzerland unfavourable to England, and by a consciousness of the deduction which, in spite of all endeavours at abstraction, encroachments upon physical comfort and upon the assurance of peacefulness make from the disposition to enquiry, or fancy.

We had delivered at the gate the German passport, recommended to us by M. de Schwartzkoff, and which had been signed by the Commandant at Mentz; the man, who took it, promising to bring it properly attested to our inn. He returned without the passport, and, as we afterwards found, carried our voiturier to be examined by an officer. We endeavoured in vain to obtain an explanation, as to this delay and appearance of suspicion, till, at supper, the Lieutenant de Place announced himself, and presently shewed, that he was not come to offer apologies. This man, an illiterate

Piedmontese in the Austrian service, either believed, or affected to do so, that our name was not Radcliffe, but something like it, with a German termination, and that we were not English, but Germans. Neither my Lord Grenville's, or M. de Schwartzkoff's passports, our letters from London to families in Switzerland, nor one of credit from the Messrs. Hopes of Amsterdam to the Banking-house of Porta at Lausanne, all of which he pretended to examine, could remove this discerning suspicion as to our country. While we were considering, as much as vexation would permit, what circumstance could have afforded a pretext for any part of this intrusion, it came out incidentally, that the confirmation given to our passport at Mentz, which we had never examined, expressed '"returning to England,"' though the pass itself was for Basil, to which place we were upon our route.

Such a contradiction might certainly have justified some delay, if we had not been enabled to prove it accidental to the satisfaction of any person desirous of being right. The passport had been produced at Mentz, together with those of two English artists, then on their return from Rome, whom we had the pleasure to see at Franckfort. The Secretary inscribed all the passports alike for England, and M. de Lucadou, the Commandant, hastily signed ours, without observing the mistake, though he so well knew us to be upon the road to Switzerland, that he politely endeavoured to render us some service there. Our friends in Mentz being known to him, he desired us to accept an address from himself to M. de Wilde, Intendant of salt mines near Bec. We produced to Mr. Lieutenant this address, as a proof, that the Commandant both knew us, and where we were going; but it soon appeared, that, though the former might have honestly fallen into his suspicions at first, he had a malignant obstinacy in refusing to abandon them. He left us, with notice that we could not quit the town without receiving the Commandant's permission by his means; and it was with some terror, that we perceived ourselves to be so much in his power, in a place where there was a pretext for military authority, and where the least expression of just indignation seemed to provoke a disposition for further injustice.

The only relief, which could be hinted to us, was to write to the Commandant at Mentz, who might re-testify his knowledge of our destination; yet, as an answer could not be received in less than eight days,

and, as imagination suggested not only all the possible horrors of oppression, during that period, but all the contrivances, by which the malignant disposition we had already experienced, might even then be prevented from disappointment, we looked upon this resource as little better than the worst, and resolved in the morning to demand leave for an immediate return to Mentz.

There being then some witnesses to the application, the Lieutenant conducted himself with more propriety, and even proposed an introduction to the Commandant, to whom we could not before hear of any direct means of access; there being a possibility, he said, that a passage into Switzerland might be permitted. But the disgust of Austrian authority was now so complete, that we were not disposed to risk the mockery of an appeal. The Lieutenant expressed his readiness to allow our passage, if we should choose to return from Mentz with another passport; but we had no intention to be ever again in his power, and, assuring him that we should not return, left Friburg without the hope of penetrating through the experienced, and present difficulties of Germany, into the far-seen delights of Switzerland.

As those, who leave one home for another, think, in the first part of their journey, of the friends they have left, and, in the last, of those, to whom they are going; so we, in quitting the borders of Switzerland, thought only of that country; and, when we regained the eminence from whence the tops of its mountains had been so lately viewed with enthusiastic hope, all this delightful expectation occurred again to the mind, only to torture it with the certainty of our loss; but, as the distance from Switzerland increased, the attractions of home gathered strength, and the inconveniences of Germany, which had been so readily felt before, could scarcely be noticed when we knew them to lie in the road to England.

We passed Offenburg, on the first day of our return, and, travelling till midnight, as is customary in Germany during the summer, traversed the unusual space of fifty miles in fourteen hours. Soon after passing Appenweyer we overtook the rear-guard of the army, the advanced party of which we had met at that place three nights before. The troops were then quartered in the villages near the road, and their narrow waggons were sometimes drawn up on both sides of it. They had probably but lately separated, for there were parties of French ladies and gentlemen, who

seemed to have taken the benefit of moonlight to be spectators, and some of the glowworms, that had been numerous on the banks, now glittered very prettily in the hair of the former.

At Biel, a small town, which we reached about midnight, the street was rendered nearly impassable by military carriages, and we were surprised to find, that every room in the inn was not occupied by troops; but one must have been very fastidious to have complained of any part of our reception here. As to lodging, though the apartment was as bare as is usual in Germany, there was the inscription of ‘“Chambre de Monsieur”’ over the door, and on another near it ‘“Chambre de Condé le Grand;”’ personages, who, it appeared, had once been accommodated there, for the honour of which the landlord chose to retain their inscriptions. Their meeting here was probably in 1791, soon after the departure of the former from France.

The second day’s journey brought us again to Schwetzingen, from whence we hoped to have reached Manheim, that night; but the post horses were all out, and none others could be hired, the village being obliged to furnish a certain number for the carriage of stores to the Austrian army. Eighteen of these we had met, an hour before, drawing slowly in one waggon, laden with cannon balls. We stayed the following day at Manheim, and, on the next, reached Mentz, where our statement of the obstruction at Friburg excited less surprise than indignation, the want of agreement between the Austrian and Prussian officers being such, that the former, who are frequently persons of the lowest education, are said to neglect no opportunity of preying upon accidental mistakes in passports, or other business, committed by the Prussians. Before our departure we were, however, assured, that a proper representation of the affair had been sent by the first estaffette to the Commandant at Friburg.

Further intelligence of the course of affairs in Flanders was now made known in Germany; and our regrets, relative to Switzerland, were lessened by the apparent probability, that a return homeward might in a few months be rendered difficult by some still more unfortunate events to the allies. Several effects of the late reverses and symptoms of the general alarm were indeed already apparent at Mentz. Our inn was filled with refugees not only from Flanders, but from Liege, which the French had not then threatened. Some of the emigrants of the latter nation, in quitting the places where they had temporarily settled, abandoned their only means of

livelihood, and several parties arrived in a state almost too distressful to be repeated. Ladies and children, who had passed the night in fields, came with so little property, and so little appearance of any, that they were refused admittance at many inns; for some others, it seemed, after resting a day or two, could offer only tears and lamentations, instead of payment. Our good landlord, Philip Bolz, relieved several, and others had a little charity from individuals; but, as far as we saw and heard, the Germans very seldom afforded them even the consolations of compassion and tender manners.

Mentz is the usual place of embarkment for a voyage down the Rhine, the celebrated scenery of whose banks we determined to view, as some compensation for the loss of Switzerland. We were also glad to escape a repetition of the fatigues of travel by land, now that these were to be attended with the uncertainties occasioned by any unusual influx of travellers upon the roads.

The business of supplying post-horses is here not the private undertaking of the innkeepers; so that the emulation and civility, which might be excited by their views of profit, are entirely wanting. The Prince de la Tour Taxis is the Hereditary Grand Postmaster of the Empire, an office, which has raised his family from the station of private Counts, to a seat in the College of Princes. He has a monopoly of the profits arising from this concern, for which he is obliged to forward all the Imperial packets gratis. A settled number of horses and a postmaster are kept at every stage; where the arms of the Prince, and some line entreating a blessing upon the post, distinguish the door of his office. The postmaster determines, according to the number of travellers and the quantity of baggage, how many horses must be hired; three persons cannot be allowed to proceed with less than three horses, and he will generally endeavour to send out as many horses as there are persons.

The price for each horse was established at one florin, or twenty pence per post, but, on account of the war, a florin and an half is now paid; half a florin is also due for the carriage; and the postillion is entitled to a trinkgeld, or drink-money, of another half florin; but, unless he is promised more than this at the beginning of the stage, he will proceed only at the regulated pace of four hours for each post, which may be reckoned at ten or twelve English miles. We soon learned the way of quickening

him, and, in the Palatinate and the Brisgau, where the roads are good, could proceed nearly as fast as we wished, amounting to about five miles an hour.

If the postmaster supplies a carriage, he demands half a florin per stage for it; but the whole expence of a chaise and two horses, including the tolls and the *trinkgeld,* which word the postillions accommodate to English ears by pronouncing it *drinkhealth,* does not exceed eight pence per mile. We are, however, to caution all persons against supposing, as we did, that the chaises of the post must be proper ones, and that the necessity of buying a carriage, which may be urged to them, is merely that of shew; these chaises are more inconvenient and filthy, than any travelling carriage, seen in England, can give an idea of, and a stranger should not enter Germany, before he has purchased a carriage, which will probably cost twenty pounds in Holland and sell for fifteen, at his return. Having neglected this, we escaped from the *chaises de poste* as often as possible, by hiring those of voituriers, whose price is about half as much again as that of the post.

The regular drivers wear a sort of uniform, consisting of a yellow coat, with black cuffs and cape, a small bugle horn, slung over the shoulders, and a yellow sash. At the entrance of towns and narrow passes, they sometimes sound the horn, playing upon it a perfect and not unpleasant tune, the music of their order. All other carriages give way to theirs, and persons travelling with them are considered to be under the protection of the Empire; so that, if they were robbed, information would be forwarded from one post-house to another throughout all Germany, and it would become a common cause to detect the aggressors. On this account, and because there can be no concealment in a country so little populous, highway robberies are almost unknown in it, and the fear of them is never mentioned. The Germans, who, in summer, travel chiefly by night, are seldom armed, and are so far from thinking even watchfulness necessary, that most of their carriages, though open in front, during the daytime, are contrived with curtains and benches, in order to promote rest. The postmasters also assure you, that, if there were robbers, they would content themselves with attacking private voituriers, without violating the sacredness of the post; and the security of the postillions is so strictly attended to, that no man dare strike them, while they have the yellow coat on. In disputes with their passengers they have, therefore, sometimes been

known to put off this coat, in order to shew, that they do not claim the extraordinary protection of the laws.

These postillions acknowledge no obligation to travellers, who usually give double what can be demanded, and seem to consider them only as so many bales of goods, which they are under a contract with the postmaster to deliver at a certain place and within a certain time. Knowing, that their slowness, if there is no addition to their *trinkgeld,* is of itself sufficient to compel some gratuity, they do not depart from the German luxury of incivility, and frequently return no answer, when they are questioned, as to distance, or desired to call the servant of an inn, or to quit the worst part of a road. When you tell them, that they shall have a good *drinkhealth* for speed, they reply, ‘“Yaw, yaw;”’ and, after that, think it unnecessary to reply to any enquiry till they ask you for the money at the end of a stage. They are all provided with tobacco boxes and combustible bark, on which they stop to strike with a slint and steel, immediately after leaving their town; in the hottest day and on the most dusty road, they will begin to smoke, though every whiff flies into the faces of the passengers behind; and it must be some very positive interference, that prevents them from continuing it.

As long as there are horses not engaged at any post-house, the people are bound to supply travellers, within half an hour after their arrival; but all the German Princes and many of their Ministers are permitted to engage the whole stock on the road they intend to pass; and it frequently happens, that individuals may be detained a day, or even two, by such an order, if there should be no voiturier to furnish them with others. At Cologne and Bonn, when we were first there, all the horses were ordered for the Emperor, who passed through, however, with only one carriage, accompanied by an Aide-de-camp and followed by two servants, on horseback. It happens also frequently, that a sudden throng of private travellers has employed the whole stock of the postmasters; and the present emigrations from Liege and Juliers, we were assured, had filled the roads so much, that we might be frequently detained in small towns, and should find even the best overwhelmed with crowds of fugitives.

During a stay of five days at Mentz, we often wandered amidst the ruins of the late siege, especially on the site of the Favorita, from whence the majestic Rhine is seen rolling from one chain of mountains to another.

Near this spot, and not less fortunately situated, stood a Carthusian convent, known in English history for having been the headquarters of George the Second, in the year 1743, soon after the battle of Dettingen. The apartments, used by this monarch, were preserved in the state, in which he left them, till a short time before the late siege, when the whole building was demolished, so that scarcely a trace of it now remains.

By our enquiries for a passage vessel we discovered the unpleasant truth, that the dread of another invasion began now to be felt at Mentz, where, a fortnight before, not a symptom of it was discernible. Several of the inhabitants had hired boats to be in readiness for transporting their effects to Franckfort, if the French should approach much nearer to the Rhine; and our friends, when we mentioned the circumstance, confessed, that they were preparing for a removal to Saxony. The state of the arsenal had been lately enquired into, and a deficiency, which was whispered to have been discovered in the gunpowder, was imputed to the want of cordiality between the Austrians and Prussians, of whom the latter, being uncertain that they should stay in the place, had refused to replenish the stores, at their own expence, and the former would not spare their ammunition, till the departure of the Prussians should leave it to be guarded by themselves. The communication with the other shore of the Rhine, by the bridge and the fortifications of Cassel, secured, however, to a German garrison the opportunity of receiving supplies, even if the French should occupy all the western bank of the river.

2.25. VOYAGE DOWN THE RHINE .

THE boats, to be hired at Mentz, are awkward imitations of the Dutch trechtschuyts, or what, upon the Thames, would be called House-boats; but, for the sake of being allowed to dispose of one as the varieties of the voyage should seem to tempt, we gave four louis for the use of a cabin, between Mentz and Cologne; the boatmen being permitted to take passengers in the other part of the vessel. In this we embarked at six o'clock, on a delightful morning in the latter end of July, and, as we left the shore, had leisure to observe the city in a new point of view, the most picturesque we had seen. Its principal features were the high quays called the Rheinstrasse, the castellated palace, with its gothic turrets, of pale red stone, the arsenal, the lofty ramparts, far extended along the river, and the northern gate; the long bridge of boats completed the foreground, and some forest hills the picture.

We soon passed the wooded island, called *Peters-au*, of so much consequence, during the siege, for its command of the bridge; and, approaching the mountains of the Rheingau to the north, the most sublime in this horizon, saw their summits veiled in clouds, while the sun soon melted the mists, that dimmed their lower sides, and brought out their various colouring of wood, corn and soils. It was, however, nearly two hours before the windings of the Rhine permitted us to reach any of their bases. Meanwhile the river flowed through highly cultivated plains, chiefly of corn, with villages thickly scattered on its banks, in which are the country houses of the richer inhabitants of Mentz, among pleasant orchards and vineyards. Those on the right bank are in the dominions of the Prince of Nassau Usingen, who has a large chateau in the midst of them, once tenanted, for a night, by George the Second, and the Duke of Cumberland.

The Rhine is here, and for several leagues downward, of a very noble breadth, perhaps wider than in any other part of its German course; and its surface is animated by many islands covered with poplars and low wood. The western shore, often fringed with pine and elms, is flat; but the eastern begins to swell into hillocks near Wallauf, the last village of Nassau Usingen, and once somewhat fortified.

Here the *Rheingau,* or the country of the vines, commences, and we approached the northern mountains, which rise on the right in sine sweeping undulations. These increased in dignity as we advanced, and their summits then appeared to be darkened with heath and woods, which form part of the extensive forest of *Landeswald,* or *Woodland.* Hitherto the scenery had been open and pleasant only, but now the eastern shore began to be romantic, starting into heights, so abrupt, that the vineyards almost overhung the river, and opening to forest glens, among the mountains. Still, however, towns and villages perpetually occurred, and the banks of the river were populous, though not a vessel besides our own appeared upon it.

On the eastern margin are two small towns, Oder and Niederingelheim, which, in the midst of the dominions of Mentz, belong to the Elector Palatine. On this shore also is made one of the celebrated wines of the Rhine, called Markerbrunner, which ranks next to those of Johannesberg and Hockheim. At no great distance on the same shore, but beneath a bank somewhat more abrupt, is the former of these places, alienated in the sixteenth century from the dominions of Mentz, to those of the Abbot, now Prince Bishop of Fulde.

The wine of the neighbouring steeps is the highest priced of all the numerous sorts of Rhenish; a bottle selling upon the spot, where it is least likely to be pure, for three, four, or five shillings, according to the vintages, the merits and distinctions of which are in the memory of almost every German. That of 1786 was the most celebrated since 1779; but we continually heard that the heat of 1794 would render this year equal in fame to any of the others.

Behind the village is the large and well-built abbey of Johannesberg, rich with all this produce, for the security of which there are immense cellars, cut in the rock below, said to be capable of containing several thousand tons of wine. The abbey was founded in 1105; and there is a long history of changes pertaining to it, till it came into the possession of the Abbot of Fulde, who rebuilt it in its present state. This part of the Rheingau is, indeed, thickly set with similar edisices, having, in a short space, the nunnery of Marienthal, and the monasteries of Nothgottes, Aulenhausen, and Eibingen.

Further on is the large modern chateau of Count Ostein, a nobleman of great wealth, and, as it appears, of not less taste. Having disposed all his nearer grounds in a style for the most part English, he has had recourse to the ridge of precipices, that rise over the river, for sublimity and grandeur of prospect. On the brink of these woody heights, several pavilions have been erected, from the most conspicuous of which Coblentz, it is said, may be distinguished, at the distance of forty miles. The view must be astonishingly grand, for to the south-east the eye overlooks all the fine country of the Rheingau to Mentz; to the west, the course of the Moselle towards. France; and, to the north, the chaos of wild mountains, that screen the Rhine in its progress to Coblentz.

So general was the alarm of invasion, that Count Ostein had already withdrawn into the interior of Germany, and was endeavouring to dispose of this charming residence, partly protected as it is by the river, at the very disadvantageous price now paid for estates on the western frontier of the Empire.

The vineyards, that succeed, are proofs of the industry and skill to which the Germans are accustomed in this part of their labours, the seanty soil being prevented from falling down the almost perpendicular rocks, by walls that frequently require some new toil from the careful farmer. Every addition, made to the mould, must be carried in baskets up the steep paths, or rather staircases, cut in the solid rock. At the time of the vintage, when these precipices are thronged with people, and the sounds of merriment are echoed along them, the spectacle must here be as striking and gay as can be painted by fancy.

2.26. BINGEN .

ABOUT eleven o’clock, we reached Bingen, a town of which the antiquity is so clear, that one of its gates is still called Drusithor, or, the gate of Drusus. Its appearance, however, is neither rendered venerable by age, or neat by novelty. The present buildings were all raised in the distress and confusion produced in 1689, after Louis the Fourteenth had blown up the fortifications, that endured a tedious siege in the beginning of the century, and had destroyed the city, in which Drusus is said to have died.

It has now the appearance, which we have often mentioned is characteristic of most German towns, nearly every house being covered with symptoms of decay and neglect, and the streets abandoned to a few idle passengers. Yet Bingen has the advantage of standing at the conflux of two rivers, the Nahe making there its junction with the Rhine; and an antient German book mentions it as the central place of an hundred villages, or chateaux, the inhabitants of which might come to its market and return between sunrise and sun-set.

Since the revolution in France, it has occasionally been much the residence of emigrants; and, in a plain behind the town, which was pointed out to us, the King of Prussia reviewed their army before the entrance into France in 1792. A part of his speech was repeated to us by a gentleman who bore a high commission in it; ‘“Gentlemen, be tranquil and happy; in a little time I shall conduct you to your homes and your property.”’

Our companion, as he remembered the hopes excited by this speech, was deeply affected; an emigrant officer, of whom, as well as of an Ex-Nobleman of the same nation, with the latter of whom we parted here, we must pause to say, that had the old system in France, oppressive as it was, and injurious as Englishmen were once justly taught to believe it, been universally administered by men of their mildness, integrity and benevolence, it could not have been entirely overthrown by all the theories, or all the eloquence in the world.

Soon after this review, the march commenced; the general effect of which it is unnecessary to repeat. When the retreat was ordered, the emigrant army, comprising seventy squadrons of cavalry, was declared by the King of Prussia to be disbanded, and not any person was allowed to

retain an horse, or arms. No other purchasers were present but the Prussians, and, in consequence of this order, the sinest horses, many of which had cost forty louis each, were now sold for four or five, some even for one! It resulted accidentally, no doubt, from this measure, that the Prussian army was thus reprovided with horses almost as cheaply as if they had seized them from Dumourier.

Bingen was taken by the French in the latter end of the campaign of 1792, and was then nearly the northernmost of their posts on the Rhine. It was regained by the Prussians in their advances to Mentz, at the commencement of the next campaign, and has since occasionally served them as a depôt of stores.

This town, seated on the low western margin, surrounded with its old walls, and overtopped by its ruined castle, harmonizes well with the gloomy grandeur near it; and here the aspect of the country changes to a character awfully wild. The Rhine, after expanding to a great breadth, at its conflux with the Nahe, suddenly contracts itself, and winds with an abrupt and rapid sweep among the dark and tremendous rocks, that close the perspective. Then, disappearing beyond them, it leaves the imagination to paint the dangers of its course. Near the entrance of this close pass, stands the town of Bingen, immediately opposite to which appear the ruins of the castle of Ehrenfels, on a cliff highly elevated above the water, broken, craggy and impending, but with vines crawling in narrow crevices, and other rocks still aspiring above it. On an island between these shores, is a third ruined castle, very antient, and of which little more than one tower remains. This is called Mausthurm, or, The Tower of the Rats, from a marvellous tradition, that, in the tenth century, an Archbishop Statto was devoured there by these animals, after many cruelties to the poor, whom he called Rats, that eat the bread of the rich.

2.27. EHRENFELS .

EHRENFELS is synonymous to Majestic, or Noble Rock; and Fels, which is the present term for rock in all the northern counties of England, as well as in Germany, is among several instances of exact similarity, as there are many of resemblance, between the present British and German languages. A German of the southern districts, meaning to enquire what you would have, says, ‘“*Was woll zu haben? ”’* and in the north there is a sort of Patois, called *Plat Deutsche,* which brings the words much nearer to our own. In both parts the accent, or rather tone, is that, which prevails in Scotland and the adjoining counties of England. To express a temperate approbation of what they hear, the Germans say, ‘“So — so;”’ pronouncing the words slowly and long; exactly as our brethren of Scotland would. In a printed narrative of the siege of Mentz there is this passage, ‘“*Funfzehn hundert menschen, meistens weiber und kinder — wanderten mit dem bundel under dem arm uber die brucke; ”’* — Fifteen hundred persons, mostly wives and children, wandered, with their bundles under their arms, upon the bridge. So permanent has been the influence over our language, which the Saxons acquired by their establishment of more than five centuries amongst us; exiling the antient British tongue to the mountains of Scotland and Wales; and afterwards, when incorporated with this, resisting the persecution of the Normans; rather improving than yielding under their endeavours to extirpate it. The injuries of the Bishop of Winchester, who, in Henry the Second’s time, was deprived of his see for being ‘“*an English idcot, that could not speak French, ”’* one would fondly imagine had the effect due to all persecutions, that of strengthening, not subduing their objects.

After parting with some of the friends, who had accompanied us from Mentz, and taking in provision for the voyage, our oars were again plyed, and we approached Bingerloch, the commencement of that tremendous pass of rocky mountains, which enclose the Rhine nearly as far as Coblentz. Bingerloch is one of the most dangerous parts of the river; that, being here at once impelled by the waters of the Nahe, compressed by the projection of its boundaries, and irritated by hidden rocks in its current, makes an abrupt descent, frequently rendered further dangerous by

whirlpools. Several German authors assert, that a part of the Rhine here takes a channel beneath its general bed, from which it does not issue, till it reaches St. Goar, a distance of probably twenty miles. The sorce and rapidity of the stream, the aspect of the dark disjointed cliffs, under which we passed, and the strength of the wind, opposing our entrance among their chasms, and uniting with the sounding force of the waters to baffle the dexterity of the boatmen, who struggled hard to prevent the vessel from being whirled round, were circumstances of the true sublime, inspiring terror in some and admiration in a high degree.

Reviewing this now, in the leisure of recollection, these nervous lines of Thomson appear to describe much of the scene:

The rous'd up river pours along;
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
— again constrain'd
Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

Having doubled the sharp promontory, that alters the course of the river, we saw in perspective sometimes perpendicular rocks, and then mountains dark with dwarfwoods, shooting their precipices over the margin of the water; a boundary which, for many leagues, was not broken, on either margin, except where, by some slight receding, the rocks embosomed villages, lying on the edge of the river, and once guarded them by the antient castles on their points. A stormy day, with frequent showers, obscured the scenery, making it appear dreary, without increasing its gloomy grandeur; but we had leisure to observe every venerable ruin, that seemed to tell the religious, or military history of the country. The first of these beyond Bingen, is the old castle of Bauzberg, and, next, the church of St. Clement, built in a place once greatly infested by robbers. There are then the modern castle of Konigstein, in which the French were besieged in 1793, and the remains of the old one, deserted for more than two hundred years. Opposite to these is the village of Assmans, or Hasemanshausen, celebrated for the flavour of its wines; and near them

was formerly a warm bath, supplied by a spring, now lost from its source to the Rhine, notwithstanding many expensive searches to regain it. About a mile farther, is the antient castle of Falkenburg, and below it the village of Drechsen; then the ruins of an extensive chateau, called Sonneck, beneath which the Rhine expands, and encircles two small islands, that conclude the district of the Rheingau.

After passing the small town of Lorrich, on the eastern bank, the Rhine is again straightened by rocky precipices, and rolls hastily past the antient castle of Furstenberg, which gives its name to one of the dearest wines of the Rhine.

We now reached Bacharach, a town on the left bank of the river, sorming part of the widely scattered dominions of the Elector Palatine, who has attended to its prosperity by permitting the Calvinists and Lutherans to establish their forms of worship there, under equal privileges with the Roman Catholics.

It has a considerable commerce in Rhenish wine; and its tollhouse, near which all vessels are compelled to stop, adds considerably to the revenues of the Palatinate. For the purpose of enforcing these, the antient castle called Stahleck, founded in 1190, was probably built; for Bacharach is the oldest town of the Palatinate, and has scarcely any history between the period when it was annexed to that dominion and the departure of the Romans, who are supposed to have given it the name of *Bacchi ara,* and to have performed some ceremonies to that deity upon a stone, said to be still concealed in the Rhine. In the year 1654, 1695, 1719, and 1750, when the river was remarkably low, this stone is recorded to have been seen near the opposite island of Worth, and the country people have given it the name of the *Aelterstein.* As this extreme lowness of the waters never happens but in the hottest years, the sight of the Aelterstein is earnestly desired, as the symptom of a prosperous vintage. The river was unusually low when we passed the island, but we looked in vain for this stone, which is said to be so large, that five-and-twenty persons may stand upon its surface.

Bacharach is in the list of places, ruined by Louis the Fourteenth in 1689. The whole town was then so carefully and methodically plundered that the French commander, during the last night of his stay, had nothing to sleep on but straw; and, the next day, this bedding was employed in assisting to set fire to the town, which was presently reduced to ashes.

2.28. PFALTZ .

ABOUT a mile lower is the island of Pfaltz, or Pfalzgrafenstein, a place of such antient importance in the history of the Palatinate, that it has given its name to the whole territory in Germany called Pfaltz. It was probably the first residence of the Counts, the peaceable possession of which was one means of attesting the right to the Palatinate; for, as a sign of such possession, it was antiently necessary, that the heir apparent should be born in a castle, which still subsists in a repaired state upon it. This melancholy fortress is now provided with a garrison of invalids, who are chiefly employed in guarding state prisoners, and in giving notice to the neighbouring tollhouse of Kaub, of the approach of vessels on the Rhine. Being much smaller than is suitable to the value placed upon it, it is secured from surprise by having no entrance, except by a ladder, which is drawn up at night.

2.29. KAUB .

KAUB, a Palatine town on the right bank of the river, is also fortified, and claims a toll upon the Rhine, notwithstanding its neighbourhood to Bacharach; an oppression, of which the expence is almost the least inconvenience, for the toll-gatherers do not come to the boats, but demand, that each should stop, while one at least of the crew goes on shore, and tells the number of his passengers, who are also sometimes required to appear. The officers do not even think it necessary to wait at home for this information, and our boatmen had frequently to search for them throughout the towns. So familiar, however, is this injustice, that it never appeared to excite surprise, or anger. The boatman dares not proceed till he has found and satisfied the officers; nor has he any means of compelling them to be punctual. Ours was astonished when we enquired, whether the merchants, to whom such delays might be important, could not have redress for them.

The stay we made at Kaub enabled us, however, to perceive that fine slate made a considerable part of its traffic.

The Rhine, at Bacharach and Kaub, is of great breadth; and the dark mountains, that ascend from its margin, form a grand vista, with antient chateaux still appearing on the heights, and frequent villages edging the stream, or studded among the cliffs.

Though the district of the Rheingau, the vines of which are the most celebrated, terminated some miles past, the vineyards are scarcely less abundant here, covering the lower rocks of the mountains, and creeping along the fractures of their upper crags. These, however, sometimes exhibit huge projecting masses and walls of granite, so entire and perpendicular, that not an handful of soil can lodge for the nourishment of any plant. They lie in vast oblique strata; and, as in the valley of Andernach, the angles of the promontories on one shore of the river frequently correspond with the recesses on the other.

2.30. OBERWESE L

IS another town, supported by the manufacture and trade of wines, which are, however, here shared by too many places to bestow much wealth singly upon any. Wine is also so important a production, that all the Germans have some degree of connoisseurship in it, and can distinguish its quantities and value so readily, that the advantage of dealing in it cannot be great, except to those, who supply foreign countries. The merits of the different vineyards form a frequent topic of conversation, and almost every person has his own scale of their rank; running over with familiar fluency the uncouth names of Johannesberg, Ammanshausen, Hauptberg, Fuldische Schossberg, Rudesheim, Hockheim, Rodtland, Hinterhauser, Markerbrunner, Grafenberg, Laubenheim, Bischeim, Nierstein, Harscheim and Kapellgarren; all celebrated vineyards in the Rheingau. The growth and manufacture of these wines are treated of in many books, from one of which we translate an account, that seems to be the most comprehensive and simple.

OF THE RHENISH VINEYARDS AND WINES .

THE strongest and, as they are termed, fullest-bodied wines, those, of course, which are best for keeping, are produced upon mountains of a cold and strong soil; the most brisk and spirited on a warm and gravelly situation. Those produced near the middle of an ascent are esteemed the most wholesome, the soil being there sufficiently watered, without becoming too moist; and, on this account, the vineyards of Hockheim are more esteemed than some, whose produce is better flavoured; on the contrary, those at the feet of hills are thought so unwholesome, on account of their extreme humidity, that the wine is directed to be kept for several years, before it is brought to table. The finest flavour is communicated by soils either argillaceous, or marly. Of this sort is a mountain near Bacharach, the wines of which are said to have a Muscadine flavour and to be so highly valued, that an Emperor, in the fourteenth century, demanded four large barrels of them, instead of 10,000 florins, which the city of Nuremberg would have paid for its privileges.

A vineyard, newly manured, produces a strong, spirited and wellflavoured, but usually an unwholesome wine; because the manure contains a corrosive salt and a fat sulphur, which, being dissolved, passes with the juices of the earth into the vines. A manure, consisting of street mud, old earth, the ruins of houses well broken, and whatever has been much exposed to the elements, is, however, laid on, once in five or six years, between the vintage and winter.

The sorts of vines, cultivated in the *Rheingau*, are the low ones, called the *Reistinge*, which are the most common and ripen the first; those of *Klebroth*, or red Burgundy, the wine of which is nearly purple; of Orleans and of Lambert; and lastly the tall vine, raised against houses, or supported by bowers in gardens. The wines of the two first classes are wholesome; those of the latter are reputed dangerous, or, at least, unfit to be preserved.

The vintagers do not pluck the branches by hand, but carefully cut them, that the grapes may not fall off; in the Rheingau and about Worms the cultivators afterwards bruise them with clubs, but those of Franckfort with their feet; after which the grapes are carried to the press, and the wine

flows from them by wooden pipes into barrels in the cellar. That, which flows upon the first pressure, is the most delicately flavoured, but the weakest; the next is strongest and most brisk; the third is four; but the mixture of all forms a good wine. The skins are sometimes pressed a fourth time, and a bad brandy is obtained from the fermented juice; lastly, in the scarcity of pasturage in this part of Germany, they are given for food to oxen, but not to cows, their heat being destructive of milk.

To these particulars it may be useful to add, that one of the surest proofs of the purity of Rhenish is the quick rising and disappearance of the froth, on pouring it into a glass: when the beads are formed slowly and remain long, the wine is mixed and factitious.

2.31. OBERWESEL,

THE account of which has been interrupted by this digression, is the first town of the Electorate of Treves, on this side, to which it has belonged since 1312, when its freedom as an imperial city, granted by the Emperor, Frederic the Second, was persidiously seized by Henry the Seventh, and the town given to him by his brother Baldwin, the then Elector. The new Sovereign enriched it with a fine collegiate church, which still dignifies the shore of the river. If he used any other endeavours to make the prosperity of the place survive its liberties, they appear to have failed; for Oberwesel now resembles the other towns of the Electorate, except that the great number of towers and steeples tell what it was before its declension into that territory. The Townhouse, rendered unnecessary by the power of Baldwin, does not exist to insult the inhabitants with the memory of its former use; but is in ruins, and thus serves for an emblem of the effects, produced by the change.

Between Oberwesel and St. Goar, the river is of extraordinary breadth, and the majestic mountains are covered with forests, which leave space for little more than a road between their feet and the water. A group of peasants, with baskets on their heads, appeared now and then along the winding path, and their diminutive figures, as they passed under the cliffs, seemed to make the heights shew more tremendous. When they disappeared for a moment in the copses, their voices, echoing with several repetitions among the rocks, were heard at intervals, and with good effect, as our oars were suspended.

Soon after passing the island of Sand, we had a perspective view of St. Goar, of the strong fortress of Rhinfels, on the rocks beyond, and of the small fortified town of Goarhausen, on the opposite bank. The mountains now become still more stupendous, and many rivulets, or *becks*, which latter is a German, as well as an English term, descend from them into the river, on either hand, some of which, in a season less dry than the present, roar with angry torrents. But the extreme violence, with which the Rhine passes in this district, left us less leisure than in others to observe its scenery.

2.32. ST. GOAR .

WE soon reached St. Goar, lying at the feet of rocks on the western shore, with its ramparts and fortifications spreading far along the water, and mounting in several lines among the surrounding cliffs, so as to have a very striking and romantic appearance. The Rhine no where, perhaps, presents grander objects either of nature, or of art, than in the northern perspective from St. Goar. There, expanding with a bold sweep, the river exhibits, at one coup d'oeil, on its mountainous shores, six fortresses or towns, many of them placed in the most wild and tremendous situations; their antient and gloomy structures giving ideas of the sullen tyranny of former times. The height and fantastic shapes of the rocks, upon which they are perched, or by which they are overhung, and the width and rapidity of the river, that, unchanged by the vicissitudes of ages and the contentions on its shores, has rolled at their feet, while generations, that made its mountains roar, have passed away into the silence of eternity, — these were objects, which, combined, formed one of the sublimest scenes we had viewed.

The chief of the fortresses is that of Rhinsels, impending over St. Goar, on the west shore, its high round tower rising above massy buildings, that crown two rocks, of such enormous bulk and threatening power, that, as we glided under them, it was necessary to remember their fixed foundations, to soften the awe they inspired. Other fortifications extend down the precipices, and margin the river, at their base. Further on in the perspective, and where the east bank of the Rhine makes its boldest sweep, is the very striking and singular castle of Platz, a cluster of towers, overtopped by one of immense height, that, perched upon the summit of a pyramidal rock, seems ready to precipitate itself into the water below. Wherever the cliffs beneath will admit of a footing, the sharp angles of fortifications appear.

On another rock, still further in the perspective, is the castle of Thumberg, and, at its foot, on the edge of the water, the walled tower of Welmick. Here the Rhine winds from the eye among heights, that close the scene.

Nearly opposite to St. Goar, is Goarshaussen, behind which the rocks rise so suddenly, as scarcely to leave space for the town to lie between them and the river. A flying bridge maintains a communication between the two places, which, as well as the fortress of Rhinfels, are under the dominion of the Prince of Hesse Cassel.

The number of fortresses here, over which Rhinfels is in every respect paramount, seem to be the less necessary, because the river itself, suddenly swoln by many streams and vexed by hidden rocks, is a sort of natural fortification to both shores, a very little resistance from either of which must render it impassable. Whether the water has a subterraneous passage from Bingen hither or not, there are occasionally agitations in this part, which confound the skill of naturalists; and the river is universally allowed to have a fall. Near St. Goar, a sudden gust of wind, assisted by the current, rendered our boat so unmanageable, that, in spite of its heaviness and of all the efforts of the watermen, it was whirled round, and nearly forced upon the opposite bank to that, on which they would have directed it.

St. Goar is a place of great antiquity. A dispute about the etymology of its name is remarkable for the ludicrous contrariety of the two opinions. One author maintains, that it is derived from an hermit named Goar, who, in the sixth century, built a small chapel here. Another supposes that Gewerb, the name of a neighbouring fall in the Rhine, has been corrupted to Gewer, and thence to Goar; after which, considering that there is an island called *Sand* in the river, and that a great quantity of that material is hereabouts thrown up, he finds the two words combine very satisfactorily into a likeness of the present denomination. The former opinion is, however, promoted by this circumstance, which the advocates of the latter may complain of as a partiality, that a statue of St. Goar is actually to be seen in the great church, founded in 1440; and that, notwithstanding the robberies and violences committed in the church by a Spanish army, the following inscription is still entire: ‘S. GOAR
MONACHUS GALLUS
OBIIT 611.’

St. Goar is one of the largest places we had yet passed, and has a considerable share of the commerce carried on by the Rhine. Having in time of war a numerous garrison, and being a little resorted to on account of its romantic situation, it has an air of somewhat more animation than might be expected, mingling with the gloom of its walls, and the appearance of decay, which it has in common with other German towns. We were here required to pay the fifth toll from Mentz, and were visited by a Hessian serjeant, who demanded, that our names and condition should be written in his book. These being given, not in the Saxon, but the Roman character, he returned to require another edition of them in German; so that his officer was probably unable to read any other language, or characters. This being complied with, it seemed, that the noble garrison of St. Goar had no further fears concerning us, and we were not troubled by more of the precautions used,

“Lest foul invasion in disguise approach.”

The fortress of Rhinfels, which commands St. Goar, is frequently mentioned in the histories of German wars. In the year 1255 it endured forty assaults of an army, combined from sixty towns on the Rhine. In 1692, the French General Tallard besieged it in vain, retreating with the loss of four thousand men, and nearly two hundred officers; but, in 1758, the Marquis de Castries surprised it with so much ingenuity and vigour, that not a life was lost, and it remained in possession of the French till 1763, when it was restored by the treaty of peace.

2.33. BOPPART .

WE next reached the dismal old town of Boppart, once an imperial city, still surrounded with venerable walls, and dignified by the fine Benedictine nunnery and abbey of Marienberg, perched upon a mountain above; an institution founded in the eleventh century, for the benefit of noble families only, and enriched by the donations of several Emperors and Electors. Boppart, like many other towns, is built on the margin of the Rhine, whence it spreads up the rocks, that almost impend over the water, on which the clustered houses are scarcely distinguishable from the cliffs themselves. Besides the Benedictine abbey, here is a convent of Carmelites, and another of Franciscans; and the spot is such as suited well the superstition of former times, for

— “O’er the twilight groves, and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A deathlike silence, and a dread repose;
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror o’er the woods.”

The river, expanding into a vast bay, seems nearly surrounded by mountains, that assume all shapes, as they aspire above each other; shooting into cliffs of naked rock, which impend over the water, or, covered with forests, retiring in multiplied steeps into regions whither fancy only can follow. At their base, a few miserable cabins, and half-famished vineyards, are all, that diversify the savageness of the scene. Here two Capuchins, belonging probably to the convent above, as they walked along the shore, beneath the dark cliffs of Boppart, wrapt in the long black drapery of their order, and their heads shrowded in cowls, that half concealed their faces, were interesting figures in a picture, always gloomily sublime.

2.34. PLACE OF ANTIENT ELECTIONS .

PASSING the town of Braubach and the majestic castle of Marksberg, which we had long observed, above the windings of the stream, on a steep mountain, we came to Rense, a small town, remarkable only for its neighbourhood to a spot, on which the elections of kings of the Romans, or, at least, the meetings preliminary to them, are believed to have antiently taken place. This is distinguished at present by the remains of a low octagonal building, open at top, and accessible beneath by eight arches, in one of which is a slight of steps. Within, is a stone bench, supposed to be formed for the Electors, who might ascend to it by these steps. In the centre of the pavement below is a thick pillar, the use of which, whether as a tribune for the new king, or as a table for receiving the attestations of the electors, is not exactly known. That the building itself, now called Koningstuhl, or King’s Throne, was used for some purposes of election, appears from several German historians, who mention meetings there in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and impute them to antient customs.

2.35. INTERMIXTURE OF GERMAN TERRITORIES .

NEARLY opposite to *Rense* is the small town of *Oberlahnstein*, which belongs to the Elector of Mentz, though separated from his other dominions by those of several Princes. To such intersections of one territory with another the individual weakness of the German Princes is partly owing; while their collected body has not only necessarily the infirmities of each of its members, but is enfeebled by the counteraction arising from an arrangement, which brings persons together to decide a question, according to a common interest, who are always likely to have an individual one of more importance to each than his share in the general concern.

The banks of the Rhine afford many instances of this disjunction of territory. The Elector of Cologn has a town to the southward of nearly all the dominions of Treves; the Elector Palatine, whose possessions on the east bank of the Rhine are intersected by those of five or six other Princes, crosses the river to occupy some towns between the Electorates of Mentz and Treves; the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel does the same to his fortress of Rhinfels; and the Elector of Mentz, in return, has a strip of land and his chief country residence, between the dominions of the two houses of Hesse.

That this intermixture of territory exists, without producing domestic violences, is, however, obviously a proof, that the present state of the Germanic body, weak as it may be, with respect to foreign interests, is well formed for the preservation of interior peace. The aggrandizement of the Houses of Austria and Prussia, which has been supposed dangerous to the constitution of the Empire, tends considerably to secure its domestic tranquility, though it diminishes the independence of the lesser Sovereigns; for the interests of the latter are known to be ranged on one, or the other side; and, as the House, to which each is attached, is likely to interfere, upon any aggression against them, the weaker Princes are withheld from contests among themselves, which would be accompanied by wars, so very extensive and so disproportionate to their causes.

Nor is the Chamber of Wetzlaar, or the Court for deciding the causes of Princes, as well as all questions relative to the constitution, to be considered as a nullity. The appointment of the judges by the free but secret votes of all Princes, subject to their decrees, is alone wanting to make its purity equal to its power. In minute questions, the chief Princes readily receive its decision, instead of that of arms, which, without it, might sometimes be adopted; and the other Sovereigns may be compelled to obey it, the Chamber being authorised to command any Prince to enforce its decrees by his army, and to take payment of the expences out of the dominions of his refractory neighbour. An instance of such a command, and of its being virtually effectual, notwithstanding the ridicule, with which it was treated, occurred, during the reign of the late Frederic of Prussia; the story is variously told, but the following account was confirmed to us by an Advocate of the Chamber of Wetzlaar.

The Landgrave of Hesse Cassel had disobeyed several injunctions of the Chamber, relative to a question, which had been constitutionally submitted to them. At length, the Judges had recourse to their power of calling out what is called the *Armée Exécutrice de l'Empire*, consisting of so many troops of any Prince, not a party in the cause, as may be sufficient for enforcing submission. The Sovereign of Hesse Cassel was not to be conquered by any of his immediate neighbours, and they were induced to direct their order to the King of Prussia, notwithstanding the probability, that so unjust a monarch would shew some resentment of their controul.

Frederic consented to the propriety of supporting the Chamber, but did not choose to involve himself with the Landgrave, on their account. He, therefore, sent him a copy of their order, accompanied by a letter, which, in his own style of courteous pleasantry, yet with a sufficient shew of some further intentions, admonished him to obey them. The Landgrave assured him of his readiness to conform, and the two Princes had privately settled the matter, when the King of Prussia resolved to obey and to ridicule the Chamber of Wetzlaar. He sent, by a public diligence, a serjeant of foot, who, at the first Hessian garrison, delivered a paper to the captain of the guard, declaring himself to be the commander of the *Armée Exécutrice*, set on foot by order of the Chamber; and the army consisted of two corporals, who waited at the door! The Judges of Wetzlaar did not shew, that they

knew the disrespect, and were contented that the King of Prussia had reduced the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel to obedience.

To this Court subjects may make appeals from the orders of their immediate sovereigns, when the question can be shewn to have any general, or constitutional tendency. Such a cause we heard of in Germany, and it seemed likely to place the Chamber in somewhat a delicate situation. The Elector of Treves had banished a magistrate, for having addressed himself to Custine, during the invasion of the French, in 1792, and requested to know whether he might remain on a part of his property, near their posts, and perform the duties of his office, as usual. The magistrate appealed to Wetzlaar; admitted the facts charged; and set forth, that, in this part of his conduct, he had exactly followed the example of the Chamber itself, who, though at a greater distance, had made a similar application.

2.36 .

Soon after leaving Oberlahnstein, we passed the mouth of the Lahn, a small river, which descends from the mountains of Wetteravia on the right, and washes silver and lead mines in its course. It issues from one of those narrow and gloomy forest-glens, which had continually occurred on the eastern bank since we left Boppart, and which were once terrible for more than their aspect, having been the haunt of robbers, of whose crimes some testimonies still remain in the tombs of murdered travellers near the shore. In the ruins of castles and abandoned fortresses within the recesses of these wild mountains, such banditti took up their abode; and these are not fancied personages, for, in the year 1273, an Elector of Mentz destroyed the deserted fortress of Rheinberg, because it had been a rendezvous for them.

Towards sun-set, the rain, which had fallen at intervals during the day, ceased; a fiery flush from the west was reflected on the water, and partially coloured the rocks. Sometimes, an oblique gleam glanced among these glens, touching their upper cliffs, but leaving their depths, with the rivulets, that roared there, in darkness. As the boat glided by, we could now and then discover on the heights a convent, or a chateau, lighted up by the rays, and which, like the pictures in a magic lanthorn, appeared and vanished in a moment, as we passed on the current.

But the shores soon begin to wear a milder aspect; the mountains of the western bank soften into gradual heights; and vineyards, which had disappeared near Boppart, again climb along them. The eastern shore is more abrupt, still bearing on its points some antient buildings, till, opposite to Coblentz, it shoots up into that enormous mass, which sustains the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein.

Having passed a Benedictine convent, seated on the island of Oberworth, we reached Coblentz as the moon began to tint the rugged Ehrenbreitstein, whose towers and pointed angles caught the light. Part of the rock below, shaded by projecting cliffs, was dark and awful, but the Rhine, expanding at its feet, trembled with radiance. There the flying-bridge, and its sweeping line of boats, were just discernible. On the left,

the quay of Coblentz extended, high and broad, crowned with handsome buildings; with tall vessels lying along its base.

2.37. EHRENBREITSTEIN .

WE were now somewhat more pleasantly lodged than before, at an inn near the Rhine, almost opposite to the fortress, the importance of which had, in the mean time, greatly increased by the approach of the French armies. The strength of it was somewhat a popular topic. Being considered as one of the keys of Germany towards France, the Governor takes the oaths not only to the Elector of Treves, but to the Emperor and the Empire. As it can be attacked but on one side, and that is not towards the Rhine, a blockade is more expected than a siege; and there are storehouses in the rock for preserving a great quantity of provisions. The supply of water has been provided for so long since as the fifteenth century, when three years were passed in digging, with incredible labour, a well through the solid rock. An inscription on a part of the castle mentions this work, and that the rock was hewn to the depth of two hundred and eighty feet. The possession of the fortress was confirmed to the Elector of Treves by the treaty of Westphalia in 1650.

In the morning, our boatmen crossed the river from Coblentz, to pass under the walls of Ehrenbreitstein, perhaps an established symptom of submission. The river is still of noble breadth, and, after the junction with the Moselle, which immediately fronts the old palace, flows with great, but even rapidity. Its shores are now less romantic, and more open; spreading on the left into the plains of Coblentz, and swelling on the right into retiring mountains.

CONVERSATION RELATIVE TO FRANCE .

BUT our attention was withdrawn from the view, and our party in the cabin this day increased, by a circumstance, that occurred to our emigrant friend. Having found a large sabre, which he thought was of French manufacture, he was enquiring for the owner, when it was claimed by a gentleman, whom he recognised to be an old friend, but with whose escape from France he was unacquainted; so that he had supposed, from his rank, he must have fallen there. The meeting, on both sides, was very affecting, and they shed some tears, and embraced again and again, with all the ardour of Frenchmen, before the stranger was introduced to us, after which we had the pleasure of his company as far as Cologne.

This gentleman, a Lieutenant-Colonel before the Revolution, had made his escape from France so lately as May last, and his conversation of course turned upon his late condition. There were in most towns many persons who, like himself, were obnoxious for their principles, yet, being unsuspected of active designs, and unreached by the private malice of Roberspierre’s agents, were suffered to exist out of prison. They generally endeavoured to lodge in the houses of persons favourable to the Revolution; went to no public places; never visited each other; and, when they met in the street, passed with an hasty or concealed salutation. Their apartments were frequently searched; and those, who had houses, took care to have their cellars frequently dug for saltpetre.

With respect to the prospect of any political change, they had little hopes, and still less of being able, by remaining in France, to give assistance to the Combined Powers. They expected nothing but some chance of escape, which in general they would not attempt, without many probabilities in their favour, knowing the sure consequences of being discovered. It was impossible for them to pass by the common roads, being exposed to examination at every town, and by every patrol; but, in the daytime, they might venture upon tracts through forests, and, at night, upon cultivated ground; a sort of journey, to which they were tempted by the successes of others in it, but which could not be performed, without experienced guides. It will be heard with astonishment, that, notwithstanding the many difficulties and dangers of such an employment,

there were persons, who obtained a living by conducting others to the frontiers, without passing any town, village, or military post; who, having delivered one person, returned, with his recommendation, to another, and an offer to escort him for a certain sum. Our companion had waited several months for a guide, the person, whom he chose to trust, being under prior engagements, in all of which he was successful. They set out, each laden with his share of provisions, in the dress of peasants; and, without any other accident than that of being once so near the patrols as to hear their conversation, arrived in the Electorate of Treves, from whence this gentleman had been to Rastadt, for the purpose of presenting himself to M. de Condé.

It was remarkable that some of these guides did not share the principles of those, whom they conducted; yet they were faithful to their engagements, and seemed to gratify their humanity, as much as they served their interests. Considering the many contrivances, which are behind almost every political transaction, it seems not improbable, that these men were secretly encouraged by some of the rulers, who wished to be disencumbered from their enemies, without the guilt of a massacre, or the unpopularity of appearing to assist them.

The attachment to the new principles seemed to be increased, when any circumstances either of signal disadvantage, or success, occurred in the course of a campaign. The disasters of an army, it was said, attracted sympathy; their victories aroused pride. Such a change of manners and of the course of education had taken place, that the rising generation were all *enragées* in favour of the Revolution; of which the following was a remarkable instance: Two young ladies, the daughters of a baron, who had remained passively in the country, without promoting, or resisting the Revolution, were then engaged in a law-suit with their father, by which they demanded a maintenance, separate from him, ‘“he being either an Aristocrat, or a Neutralist, with whom they did not choose to reside.”’ They did not pretend to any other complaint, and, it was positively believed, had no other motive. Yet these ladies had been previously educated with the nicest care, by the most accomplished instructors, and, in fact, with more expence than was suitable to their father’s income, having been intended for places at the Court. The children of the poorer

classes were equally changed by education, and those of both sexes were proficients in all the Revolutionary songs and catechisms.

This conversation passed while we were floating through the vale of Ehrenbreitstein, where the river, bending round the plains of Coblentz, flows through open and richly cultivated banks, till it enters the valley of Andernach, where it is again enclosed among romantic rocks. The places, washed by it in its passage thither, are the villages of Neuralf, Warschheim, Nerenberg, Malter, the old castle of Malterberg, the village of Engus, the fine electoral palace of Schonbornust, the neat town and palace of Neuwied, and the chateau of Friedrichstein, called by the country people the Devil’s Castle, from that love of the wonderful, which has taught them to people it with apparitions.

2.38. NEUWIE D

WAS now the headquarters of a legion raised by the Prince of Salm, for the pay of Great Britain; and a scarlet uniform, somewhat resembling the English, was frequent on the quay. We heard of several such *corps* in Germany, and of the facility with which they are raised, the English pay being as eightpence to twopence better than those of Austria and Prussia. Recruits receive from one to two crowns bounty: whether it is equally true, that the officers are, notwithstanding, allowed ten pounds for each, we cannot positively assert; but this was said within the hearing of several at Cologne, and was not contradicted. *La solde d'Angleterre* is extremely popular in Germany; and the great wealth of the English nation begins to be very familiarly known.

2.39. ANDERNAC H

WAS occupied by Imperial troops; and, as we entered the gorge of its rocky pass, it was curious to observe the appearances of modern mixed with those of antient warfare; the soldiers of Francis the Second lying at the foot of the tower of Drusus; their artillery and baggage waggons lining the shore along the whole extent of the walls.

In this neighbourhood are three celebrated mineral springs, of which one rises in the domain of the Carmelite monastery of Jonniesstein; the second, called Ponterbrunnen, is so brisk and spirited, that the labourers in the neighbouring fields declare it a remedy for fatigue as well as thirst; and a third, called Heilbrunnen, has so much fixed air, as to effervesce slightly when mixed with wine.

The interesting valley of Andernach has been already described. Its scenery, viewed now from the water, was neither so beautiful, or so striking, as from the road, by which we had before passed. The elevation of the latter, though not great, enabled the eye to take a wider range, and to see mountains, now screened by the nearer rocks of the shore, which added greatly to the grandeur of the scene. The river itself was then also a noble object, either expanding below, or winding in the distance; but, now that we were upon its level, its appearance lost much both in dignity and extent, and even the rocks on its margin seemed less tremendous, when viewed from below. Something, however, should be allowed in this last respect to our having just quitted wilder landscapes; for, though the banks of the Rhine, in its course from Bingen to Coblentz, are less various and beautiful, than in its passage between Andernach and Bonn, they are more grand and sublime.

But the merits of the different situations for the view of riverscenery have been noticed and contended for by the three persons most authorised by their taste to decide upon them; of whom GRAY has left all his enthusiasm, and nearly all his sublimity, to his two surviving friends; so that this opinion is to be understood only with respect to the scenery of the Rhine, and does not presume to mingle with the general question between them. The Rhine now passes by the village and castle of Hammerstein, which, with those of Rheineck, were nearly laid waste by Louis the

Fourteenth, the castle of Argendorff and the towns of Lintz and Rheinmagen, all exhibiting symptoms of decay, though Lintz is called a commercial town.

ROLAND'S Castle appears soon after, and, almost beneath it, the island, that bears Adelaide's convent, called Rolands Werth, or the Worth of Roland.

We were now again at the base of the Seven Mountains, whose summits had long aspired in the distance, and, as we passed under the cliffs of Drakenfels, hailed the delightful plain of Goodesberg, though much of it was concealed by the high sedgy bank of the Rhine on the left. The spreading skirts of these favourite mountains accompanied us nearly to Bonn, and displayed all their various charms of form and colouring in this our farewell view of them.

The town and palace of Bonn extend with much dignity along the western bank, where the Rhine makes a very bold sweep; one wing of the former overlooking the shore, and the want of uniformity in the front, which is seen obliquely, being concealed by the garden groves; the many tall spires of the great church rise over the roof of the palace, and appear to belong to the building.

After leaving Bonn, the shores have little that is interesting, unless in the retrospect of the Seven Mountains, with rich woodlands undulating at their feet; and when these, at length, disappear, the Rhine loses for the rest of its course the wild and sublime character, which distinguishes it between Bingen and Bonn. The rich plain, which it waters between the latter place and Cologne, is studded, at every gentle ascent, that bounds it, with abbeys and convents, most of them appropriated to the maintenance of noble Chapters.

Of these, the first is the Ladies Chapter of Vilich, founded in the year 1190, by Megiegor, a Count and Prince of Guelderland, who endowed it richly, and made his own daughter the first abbess; a lady, who had such excellent notions of discipline, that, when any nuns neglected to sing in the choir, she thought a heavy blow on the cheek the best means of restoring their voices. This Chapter is one of the richest in Germany, and is peculiarly valuable to the nobility of this Electorate from its neighbourhood to Bonn, where many of the ladies pass great part of the year with their families. On the other side of the river is the Benedictine

abbey of Siegberg, appropriated also to nobles, and lying in the midst of its own domains, of which a small town, at the foot of its vineyards, is part. Admission into this society is an affair of the most strict and ceremonious proof, as to the sixteen quarterings in the arms of the candidate, each of which must be unblemished by any plebeian symptoms. Accompanied by his genealogy, these quarterings are exposed to view for six weeks and three days, before the election; and, as there is an ample income to be contended for, the candidates do not hesitate to impeach each others' claims by every means in their power. The prelate of this abbey writes himself Count of Guls, Strahlen and Neiderpleis, and has six provostships within his jurisdiction.

Besides this, and similar buildings, the Rhine passes not less than twenty villages in its course from Bonn to Cologne, a distance of probably five-and-twenty English miles.

2.40. COLOGN E

NOW began to experience the inconveniences of its neighbourhood to the seat of war, some of which had appeared at Bonn from the arrival of families, who could not be lodged in the former place. We were no sooner within the gates, than the throng of people and carriages in a city, which only a few weeks before was almost as silent as gloomy, convinced us we should not find a very easy welcome. The sentinels, when they made the usual enquiry as to our inn, assured us, that there had been no lodgings at the Hotel de Prague for several days, and one of them followed us, to see what others we should find. Through many obstructions by military and other carriages, we, however, reached this inn, and were soon convinced that there could be no room, the landlord shewing us the chaises in which some of his guests slept, and his billiard table already loaden with beds for others. There was so much confusion meanwhile in the adjoining square, that, upon a slight assurance, we could have believed the French to be within a few miles of the city, and have taken refuge on the opposite bank of the Rhine.

At length, our host told us, that what he believed to be the worst room in the place was still vacant, but might not be so half an hour longer. We followed his man to it, in a distant part of the city, and saw enough in our way of parties taking refreshment in carriages, and gentlemen carrying their own baggage, to make us contented with a viler cabin than any person can have an idea of, who has not been out of England. The next morning we heard from the mistress of it how fortunately we had been situated, two or three families having passed the night in the open marketplace, and great numbers in their carriages.

The occasion of this excessive pressure upon Cologne was the entry of the French into Brussels, their advances towards Liege, and the immediate prospect of the siege of Maestricht, all which had dispeopled an immense tract of territory of its wealthier inhabitants, and driven them, together with the French emigrants, upon the confines of Holland and Germany. The Austrian hospitals having been removed from Maestricht, five hundred waggons, laden with sick and wounded, had passed through Cologne the day before. The carriages on the roads from Maestricht and

Liege were almost as close as in a procession, and at *Aix la Chapelle*, where these roads meet, there was an obstruction for some hours. While we were at Cologne, another detachment of hospital waggons arrived, some hundreds of which we had the misfortune to see, for they passed before our window. They were all uncovered, so that the emaciated figures and ghastly countenances of the soldiers, laid out upon straw in each, were exposed to the rays of a burning sun, as well as to the fruitless pity of passengers; and, as the carriages had no springs, it seemed as if these half-sacrificed victims to war would expire before they could be drawn over the rugged pavement of Cologne. Any person, who had once witnessed such a sight, would know how to estimate the glories of war, even though there should be a mercenary at every corner to insult his unavoidable feelings and the eternal sacredness of peace, with the slander of disaffection to his country.

We had some thoughts of resuming our course by land from this place, but were now convinced, that it was impracticable, seeing the number of post-horses, which were engaged, and judging of the crowds of travellers, that must fill the inns on the road. Our watermen from Mentz were, however, not allowed to proceed lower, so that we had to comply with the extortions of others, and to give nine louis for a boat from Cologne to Nimeguen. Having, not without some difficulty, obtained this, and stored it with provisions, we again embarked on the Rhine, rejoicing that we were not, for a second night, to make part of the crowd on shore.

Cologne, viewed from the river, appears with more of antient majesty than from any other point. Its quays, extending far along the bank, its lofty ramparts, shaded with old chesnuts, and crowned by many massy towers, black with age; the old gateways opening to the Rhine, and the crowd of steeples, overtopping all, give it a venerable and picturesque character. But, however thronged the city now was, the shore without was silent and almost deserted; the sentinels, watching at the gates and looking out from the ramparts, or a few women gliding beneath, wrapt in the nun-like scarf, so melancholy in its appearance and so generally worn at Cologne, were nearly the only persons seen.

The shores, though here flat, when compared with those to the southward, are high enough to obstruct the view of the distant mountains,

that rise in the east; in the south, the wild summits of those near Bonn were yet visible, but, after this faint glimpse, we saw them no more.

About two miles below Cologne, the west bank of the Rhine was covered with hospital waggons and with troops, removed from them, for the purpose of crossing the river, to a mansion, converted by the Elector into an hospital. About a mile lower, but on the opposite bank, is Muhleim, a small town in the dominions of the Elector Palatine, which, in the beginning of the present century, was likely to become a rival of Cologne. A persecution of the Protestant merchants of the latter place drove them to Muhleim, where they erected a staple, and began to trade with many advantages over the mother city; but the pusillanimity of the Elector Palatine permitted them to sink under the jealousy of the Colonese merchants; their engines for removing heavy goods from vessels to the shore were ordered to be demolished; and the commerce of the place has since consisted chiefly in the exportation of grain.

The shores are now less enlivened by villages than in the *Rheingan* and other districts to the southward, where the cultivation and produce of the vineyards afsord, at least, so much employment, that six or seven little towns, each clustered round its church, are frequently visible at once. The course of the river being also wider and less rapid, the succession of objects is flower, and the eye is often wearied with the uniform lowness of the nearer country, where the antient castle and the perched abbey, so frequent in the Rheingau, seldom appear. Corn lands, with a slight intermixture of wood, border the river from hence to Dusseldorff, and the stream flows, with an even force, through long reaches, scarcely distinguished from each other by any variety of the country, or intervention of towns. Those, which do occur, are called Stammel, Niel, Flietert, Merkenich, Westdorff, Langelt, and Woringen; in which last place, the burgesses of Cologne, at the latter end of the thirteenth century, stood a siege against their Archbishop, and, by a successful resistance, obtained the enjoyment of some commercial rights, here so rare as to be called privileges. After Dormagen, a small town very slightly provided with the means of benefiting itself by the river, we came opposite to Zons, the fortifications of which are so far preserved, as that the boatmen on the Rhine are required to stop before them and give an account of their cargoes.

We were listening to an old French song, and had almost forgotten the chance of interruption from any abuses of power, when the steersman called to us in a low, but eager voice, and enquired whether we would permit him to attempt passing the castle, where, if we landed, we might probably be detained an hour, or, if the officer was at supper, for the whole night. By the help of twilight and our silence, he thought it possible to glide unnoticed under the opposite bank, or that we should be in very little danger, if the sentinels should obey their order for firing upon all vessels that might attempt to pass. The insolent tediousness of a German customhouse, and the probable wretchedness of inns at such a place as this, determined us in favour of the man's proposal; we were silent for a quarter of an hour; the men withheld their oars; and the watchful garrison of Zons saw us not, or did not think a boat of two tons burthen could be laden with an army for the conquest of Germany.

The evening was not so dark as entirely to deny the view of either shore, while we continued to float between both, and to trace the features of three or four small towns upon them. Neuss, being at some little distance from the river, was concealed; but we had an accurate remembrance of its hideousness, and, recognizing it for the model of many towns since seen, were pleased with a mode of travelling, which rendered us independent of them. The same mode, however, prevented us from visiting Dusseldorff, which we did not reach, till after the shutting of the gates; so that, had we stayed, we must have passed the night in our boat on the outside, a sacrifice of too much time to be made, while an army was advancing to the opposite shore. Being compelled to remain in the boat, we thought it desirable to be, at the same time, proceeding with the stream, and suffered the steersman to attempt passing another garrison, by whom, as he said, we should otherwise be inevitably detained for the night. He did not effect this, without being noticed by the sentinels, who called and threatened to fire; but, as the boatmen assured us this would scarcely be done, without leave from an officer, who might not be immediately at hand, we yielded to their method of pressing forward as hastily as possible, and were presently out of sight of Dusseldorff, of which we had seen only the walls and the extensive palace, rising immediately above the water. In the next reach, the boatmen stopped to take breath, and then confessed, that, though we had escaped being detained, as they had said, they had saved some

florins due for tolls here and at Zons; which saving was their motive for running the risk. Though we would not have encouraged such a purpose, had we been aware of it, since the neglect of an unjust payment might produce an habitual omission of a just one, it did not seem necessary to say much, in behalf of a toll on the Rhine, for which there is no other pretence and no other authority than the power to enforce it.

The loss of Dusseldorff, we were assured, was the less, because the pictures of the celebrated gallery had been carried off to meet those of Manheim, at Munich.

It was now dark for two or three hours, but we did not hear of any town or view worth waiting to observe. The first object in the dawn was the island of Kaiserwerth, on which there is a small town, twice besieged in the wars of Louis the Fourteenth, and now in the condition, to which military glory has reduced so many others. One of the mines in the last siege blew so large a part of the walls over the island into the Rhine, that the navigation of the river was, for some time, obstructed by them. The dominion of this island, for which the Elector of Cologne and the Elector Palatine contended, was decided so lately as 1768 by the authority of the Chamber of Wetzlaar, who summoned the King of Prussia to assist them with his troops, as the *Armée exécutrice de l'Empire*, and the Elector Palatine was put in possession of it, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his rival.

As the morning advanced, we reached the villages of Kreuzberg, Rheinam and Einingen; and, at five, stopped at Urdingen, a town on the west bank of the Rhine, at which the Elector of Cologne takes his northernmost toll, and a place of more commerce than we had expected to see short of Holland. Great part of this is in timber, which it adds to the floats annually sent to that country; a sort of expedition so curious and useful, that we shall make no apology for introducing the following account of it.

TIMBER FLOATS ON THE RHINE .

THESE are formed chiefly at Andernach, but consist of the fellings of almost every German forest, which, by streams, or short land carriage, can be brought to the Rhine. Having passed the rocks of Bingen and the rapids of St. Goar in small detachments, the several rafts are compacted at some town not higher than Andernach, into one immense body, of which an idea may be formed from this list of dimensions.

The length is from 700 to 1000 feet; the breadth from 50 to 90; the depth, when manned with the whole crew, usually seven feet. The trees in the principal rafts are not less than 70 feet long, of which ten compose a rast.

On this sort of floating island, five hundred labourers of different classes are employed, maintained and lodged, during the whole voyage; and a little street of deal huts is built upon it for their reception. The captain’s dwelling and the kitchen are distinguished from the other apartments by being somewhat better built.

The first rafts, laid down in this structure, are called the foundation, and are always either of oak, or sir-trees, bound together at their tops, and strengthened with firs, fastened upon them crossways by iron spikes. When this foundation has been carefully compacted, the other rafts are laid upon it, the trees of each being bound together in the same manner, and each *stratum* fastened to that beneath it. The surface is rendered even; storehouses and other apartments are raised; and the whole is again strengthened by large masts of oak.

Before the main body proceed several thin and narrow rafts, composed only of one floor of timbers, which, being held at a certain distance from the float by masts of oak, are used to give it direction and force, according to the efforts of the labourers upon them.

Behind it, are a great number of small boats, of which fifteen or sixteen, guided by seven men each, are laden with anchors and cables; others contain articles of light rigging, and some are used for messages from this populous and important fleet to the towns, which it passes. There are twelve sorts of cordage, each having a name used only by the float-masters; among the largest are cables of four hundred yards long and

eleven inches diameter. Iron chains are also used in several parts of the structure.

The consumption of provisions on board such a float is estimated for each voyage at fifteen or twenty thousand pounds of fresh meat, between forty and fifty thousand pounds of bread, ten or fifteen thousand pounds of cheese, one thousand or fifteen hundred pounds of butter, eight hundred or one thousand pounds of dried meat, and five or six hundred tons of beer.

The apartments on the deck are, first, that of the pilot, which is near one of the magazines, and, opposite to it, that of the persons called masters of the float: another class, called masters of the valets, have also their apartment; near it is that of the valets, and then that of the sub-valets; after this are the cabins of the *tyrolois,* or last class of persons, employed in the float, of whom eighty or an hundred sleep upon straw in each, to the humber of more than four hundred in all. There is, lastly, one large eating-room, in which the greater part of this crew dine at the same time.

The pilot, who conducts the fleet from Andernach to Dusseldorff, quits it there, and another is engaged at the same salary, that is, five hundred florins, or 42 l. ; each has his sub-pilot, at nearly the same price. About twenty tolls are paid in the course of the voyage, the amount of which varies with the size of the fleet and the estimation of its value, in which latter respect the proprietors are so much subject to the caprice of customhouse officers, that the first signal of their intention to depart is to collect all these gentlemen from the neighbourhood, and to give them a grand dinner on board. After this, the float is sounded and measured, and their demands upon the owners settled.

On the morning of departure, every labourer takes his post, the rowers on their benches, the guides of the leading rafts on theirs, and each boat’s crew in its own vessel. The eldest of the valetmasters then makes the tour of the whole float, examines the labourers, passes them in review, and dismisses those, who are unfit. He afterwards addresses them in a short speech; recommends regularity and alertness; and repeats the terms of their engagement, that each shall have five crowns and a half, besides provisions, for the ordinary voyage; that, in case of delay by accident, they shall work three days, gratis; but that, after that time, each shall be paid at the rate of twelve creitzers, about four pence, per day.

After this, the labourers have a repast, and then, each being at his post, the pilot, who stands on high near the rudder, takes off his hat and calls out, ‘“Let us all pray.”’ In an instant there is the happy spectacle of all these numbers on their knees, imploring a blessing on their undertaking.

The anchors, which were fastened on the shores, are now brought on board, the pilot gives a signal, and the rowers put the whole float in motion, while the crews of the several boats ply round it to facilitate the departure.

Dort in Holland is the destination of all these floats, the sale of one of which occupies several months, and frequently produces 350,000 florins, or more than 30,000 l.

2.41. URDINGE N

HAS a neat marketplace and some symptoms of greater comfort than are usual in the towns of the Electorate of Cologne; but it is subject to violent floods, so much so, that at the inn, which is, at least, an hundred and fifty yards from the shore, a brass plate, nailed upon the door of the parlour, relates, that the river had risen to that height; about five feet from the ground.

After resting here, five hours, we returned to our little bark, with the spirits inspired by favourable weather, and were soon borne away on the ample current of the Rhine.

Large Dutch vessels, bound to Cologne, now frequently appeared, and refreshed us once again with the shew of neatness, industry and prosperity. The boatmen learned, that several of these were from Rotterdam, laden with the effects of Flemish refugees, brought thither from Ostend; and others were carrying military stores for the use, as they said, of the Emperor. The ordinary trade of the Dutch with Germany, in tea, coffee, English cloths and English hardware, which we had heard at Mentz was slackened by the expected approach of armies, now seemed to be exchanged for the conveyance of property from scenes of actual distress to those not likely to be long exempted from it.

A little beyond Urdingen, the town of Bodberg marks the northern extremity of the long and narrow dominions of Cologne, once so far connected with Holland, as that the Archbishop had jurisdiction over the Bishop of Holland, and the Chapter of Utrecht. But Philip the Second, before the States had resisted his plundering, obtained of the Pope, that they should not be subject to any foreign see; and the Bishop had a residence assigned to him at Haerlem.

The Rhine is now bounded on the left by the country of Meurs; and, having, after a few miles, part of the Duchy of Cleves on the right, it becomes thus enclosed by the territories of the King of Prussia, under whose dominion it rolls, till the States of Guelderland repose upon one bank, and, soon after, those of Utrecht, on the other. We were here, of course, in the country of tolls; and our waterman could not promise how far we should proceed in the day, since it was impossible to estimate the

delays of the collectors. Meurs has no place, except small villages, near the river; but, at the commencement of the Duchy of Cleves, the influx of the Ruhr into the Rhine makes a small port, at which all vessels are obliged to stop, and pay for a Prussian pass. Some Dutch barks, of probably one hundred and twenty tons burthen, we were assured would not be dismissed for less than fifty ducats, or twenty guineas each. The town is called the Ruhort, and we had abundance of time to view it, for the Collector would not come to the boat, but ordered that we should walk up, and make our appearance before him.

It is a small place, rendered busy by a dockyard for building vessels to be employed on the Rhine, and has somewhat of the fresh appearance, exhibited by such towns as seem to be built for present use, rather than to subsist because they have once been erected. In the dock, which opens to the Ruhr, two vessels of about sixty tons each were nearly finished, and with more capital, many might no doubt be built for the Dutch, timber and labour being here much cheaper than in Holland.

After the boatman had satisfied the Collector, we resumed our voyage, very well contented to have been detained only an hour. The woody heights of Cleves now broke the flat monotony of the eastern shore, the antiquity of whose forests is commemorated by Tacitus in the name of *Saltus Teutoburgensis,* supposed to have been bounded here by the town now called Duisbourg:'— "haud procul Teutoburgensi saltu, in quo reliquiae Vari legionumque msepultae dicebantur"— '

"Unburied remain,
Inglorious on the plain."

These forests were also celebrated for their herds of wild horses; and the town of Duisbourg, having been rendered an University in 1655, is thus panegyrized by a German poet:

Dis ist die Deutsche Burg, vor langst gar hochgeehrt
Von vielen König und auch Kaiserlichen Kronen:
Der schöne Musenthron, wo kluge Leute wohnen;
Und wo die Kausmannschast so manchen Bürger nährt

This is the German town, that's fam'd so long
By throned Kings, and gentle Muses' song;
Where learned folks live well on princely pay,

And commerce makes so many Burghers gay.

Of the commerce there were still some signs in half a dozen vessels, collected on the beach. Whether the University also subsists, or is any thing more than a free school, which is frequently called an University in Germany, we did not learn.

2.42. WESEL .

AFTER five or six small towns, or villages, more, the Rhine reaches the well known fortified town and state prison of Wesel; a place, not always unfavourable to freedom, for here RAPIN, driven from the district now called La Vendée in France, by Louis the Fourteenth’s persecution of Protestants, retired to write his History; recollecting, perhaps, that it had before sheltered refugees from the tyranny of the Duke of Alva, and our sanguinary Mary.

The towers and citadel of Wesel give it the appearance of a military place, and it is frequently so mentioned; but the truth is, that the late King of Prussia, with the same fear of his subjects, which was felt by Joseph the Second in Flanders, demolished all the effectual works, except those of the citadel; a policy not very injurious to the Monarch in this instance, but which, in Flanders, has submitted the country to be twice overrun in three years, and has in fact been the most decisive of passed events in their influence upon present circumstances.

The reformed worship is exercised in the two principal churches, but the Catholics have two or three monasteries, and there is a Chapter of Noble Ladies, of whom two thirds are Protestants, and one third Catholic; an arrangement which probably accounts for their having no settled and common residence.

Opposite to Wesel is Burick, the fortifications of which remain, and are probably intended to serve instead of the demolished works of the former place, being connected with it by a flying-bridge over the Rhine. A little lower are the remains of the old chateau of Furstemberg, on a hill where the ladies of the noble Cistercian nunnery of Furstemberg had once a delightful seat, now deserted for the society of Xanten.

Xanten, the first place at which we had stopped in Germany, and the last, for a long tract, which we had seen with pleasure, Xanten, now distinguishable, at a small distance from the river, by its spires, reminded us of the gay hopes we had formed on leaving it; with a new world spread out before us, for curiosity, and, as we thought, for admiration; yet did not render the remembrance of disappointment, as to the last respect, painful,

for even the little information we had gained seemed to be worth the labour of acquiring it.

The exchange of indefinite for exact ideas is for ever desirable. Without this journey of eleven or twelve hundred miles we should have considered Germany, as its position in maps and description in books represent it, to be important, powerful and prosperous; or, even if it had been called wretched, the idea would have been indistinct, and the assertion, perhaps, not wholly credited. The greatest and, as it is reasonable to believe, the best part of Germany we have now seen, and, in whatever train of reasoning it is noticed, have an opinion how it should be valued. Those, who cannot guess at causes, may be sure of effects; and having seen, that there is little individual prosperity in Germany, little diffusion of intelligence, manners, or even of the means for comfort, few sources of independence, or honourable wealth, and no examples of the poverty, in which there may be pride, it was not less perceptible, that there can be no general importance, no weight in the balance of useful, that is, peaceful power, and no place, but that of an instrument, even in the desperate exercises of politics.

A respect for the persons of learning, or thought, who live, as the impertinence of high and the ignorance of low society forces them to live, in a strict and fastidious retirement, cannot alter the general estimation of the country, in any respect here considered; their conversation with each other has no influence upon the community; their works cannot have a present, though they will have a general and a permanent effect. The humbler classes, from whom prosperity should result in peace, and strength in war, give little of either to Germany; and man is very seldom negatively stationed; when not useful to his fellowcreatures, he is generally somewhat injurious. The substantial debasement of the German peasantry, that is, their want of ordinary intelligence, re-acts upon the means that produced it, and, continuing their inferiority, continues many injurious effects upon the rest of Europe.

That Germany should be thus essentially humble, perhaps, none would have ventured to foresee. The materialist could not have found it in the climate. The politician might hastily expect it from the arbitrary character of the governments, but must hesitate, when he recollects how France advanced in science and manufactures, under the dominion of Louis the

Fourteenth, greatly more despotic than the usual administrations in Germany. Perhaps, the only solution for this difference of effects from apparently similar causes is, that the greater extent of his territory, as well as the better opportunities of his subjects for commerce, enabled Louis to gratify his taste for splendour, at the same time that they shewed his ambition a means of indulgence, by increasing the means of his people. Germany, frittered into several score of sovereignties, has no opulent power; no considerable income, remaining after the payment of its armies; few wealthy individuals. The Emperor, with fifty-six titles, does not gain a florin by his chief dignity; or Granvelle, the Minister of Charles the Fifth, would have been contradicted when he said so in the Chamber of Princes. The Elector Palatine is almost the only Prince, whose revenue is not absorbed by political, military and household establishments; and though, in an advanced state of society, or in opulent nations, what is called patronage is seldom necessary, and must, perhaps, be as injurious to the happiness as it is to the dignity of those who receive it, nothing is more certain than that there have been periods in the history of all countries, when the liberality of the Prince, or the more independent protection of beneficed institutions, was necessary to the existence of curiosity and knowledge. At such times, a large expenditure, if directed by taste, or even by vanity, afforded a slow recompense for the aggressions, that might support it, by spreading a desire of distinction for some intellectual accomplishment, as the claim to notice from the court; and the improvement of mind circulated, by more general encouragement, till every town and village had its men of science. Thus it was that the despotism of Louis the Fourteenth had a different effect from that of his contemporary German Princes, who, by no oppressions, could raise a sufficient income, to make their own expenditure the involuntary means of improving the intellectual condition of their people.

From the neighbourhood of Xanten, in which we were induced thus to estimate what had been gained, since we saw it last, and from a shore that gradually rises into the many woody heights around Calcar and Cleves, the Rhine speedily reaches Rees, a town on the right bank, built advantageously at an angle, made by a flexu [...]e of the river to the left.

We landed to view this place, and were soon persuaded, by the Dutch-like cleanliness and civility of the people at the inn, to remain there for the

night, rather than to attempt reaching Emmerick.

Rees is near enough to Holland to have some of its advantages; and, whatever contempt it may be natural for English travellers, at the commencement of their tour, to feel for Dutch dullness and covetousness, nothing but some experience of Germany is necessary to make them rejoice in a return to the neatness, the civility, the comforts, quietness, and even the good humour and intelligence to be easily found in Holland. Such, at least, was the change, produced in our minds by a journey from Nimeguen to Friburg. The lower classes of the Dutch, and it is the conduct of such classes, that every where has the chief influence upon the comforts of others, are not only without the malignant fullenness of the Germans, and, therefore, ready to return you services for money, but are also much superior to them in intelligence and docility. Frequent opportunities of gain, and the habit of comparing them, sharpen intellects, which might otherwise never be exercised. In a commercial country, the humblest persons have opportunities of profiting by their qualifications; they are, therefore, in some degree, prepared for better conditions, and do not feel that angry envy of others, which arises from the consciousness of some irremediable distinction.

The inhabitants of Rees speak both Dutch and German; and it was pleasing to hear at the inn the sulky *yaw* of the latter exchanged for the civil *Yaw well, Mynheer,* of the Dutch. The town is built chiefly of brick, like those in Holland; the streets light; the marketplace spacious, and the houses well preserved. It is of no great extent, but the space within the walls is filled, though this must have been sometimes partly cleared by the sieges, to which Rees was subject in the war of Philip the Second upon the Dutch. A few emigrants from Brussels and Maestricht were now sheltered in it; but there was no garrison and no other symptom of its neighbourhood to the scene of hostilities, than the arrival of a Prussian commissary to collect hay and corn. We were cheered by the reappearance of prosperity in a country, where it is so seldom to be seen, and passed a better evening in this little town, than in any other between Friburg and Holland.

In the morning, having no disgust to impel us, we were somewhat tardy in embarking; and the boatmen, who had found out the way of reviving our impatience, talked of the great distance of Holland, till they had us on board. Five or six well-looking villages presently appear after leaving

Rees, the next port to which is Emmerick, once an Hanseatic town, and still a place of some dignity, from spires and towers, but certainly not of much commerce, for we could not see more than two vessels on the beach.

This is the town, at which a Governor and General, appointed by Philip the Second, with probably half a dozen titles, asserting his excellence, serenity and honour, gave an instance of baseness, scarcely ever exceeded even by Philip himself. Approaching the place, which was then neutral, the inhabitants went out to him with an entreaty, that he would not send troops into it, and, probably by something more than entreaty, obtained his promise, that they should be spared. In spite of this promise, of the remonstrances of the inhabitants, and of the representations of a clergyman, that the Spanish assurances of having engaged in the war chiefly for the interests of the Catholic religion could not be credited, if acts, contrary to the precepts of all religion, were daily perpetrated; in spite of these, Mendoza, the Spanish commander, sent in four hundred troops, but with another promise, that their number should not be increased, and with this consolation for the burgesses, that the Spanish Colonel of the detachment was directed to swear in their presence, to admit no more, even if they should be offered to him.

Mendoza had estimated this man's heart by his own, and considered his oath only as a convenient delusion for preventing the resistance of the inhabitants. He accordingly sent other troops to him, under the command of a foreign hireling, and with a peremptory order for their admission; but the honest Spaniard gave him this reply, '"Though the General has set the example, I will not violate my faith."'

Passing Emmerick with much pleasure, we speedily came to the point at which the Rhine, dividing itself into two streams, loses its name immediately in the one, and presently after in the other. Some writer has compared this merging to the voluntary surrender of exertions and views, by which affectionate parents lose themselves in their children. The stream, which bends to the west, takes the name of the Waal; that, which flows in the general direction of the river, retains its name, for a few miles, when another stream issues to the northward, and takes that of the Yssel. The old river is still recognized, after this separation, and the town of Rhenen takes its name from it; but, about a mile lower, it yields to the denomination of the Leck, which, like that of the Waal, does not long

enjoy its usurped distinction. The Waal, or Wahl, being joined by the Maas, as the Dutch, or the Meuse, as the French call it, near Bommel, takes the name of that river, and, soon after, the Leck merges in their united stream, which carries the title of the Maas by Rotterdam, Schiedam and Flaarding, into the German ocean.

We did not yield to this artificial distinction, so far as to think ourselves taking leave of the Rhine, or losing the stream, that had presented to us, at first, features of the boldest grandeur, mingled with others of the sweetest beauty, and then borne us safely past a shore, pressed by the hasty steps of distress, as well as threatened by those of ravage from a flying and a pursuing army. Nor does the river change the character it has lately assumed; but still passes with an even, wide and forceful current between cultivated or pastoral levels, bounded, at some distance, by gradual, woody ascents.

Among these heights and woods, Cleves is visible to the left, and those, who see it only at this distance, may repeat the dictionary descriptions of its grandeur and consequence as a capital. Soon after, Schenckenkanze, a small fort, built on the point of the long island, round which the Rhine and the Waal slow, occurs; and then the southern extremity of the province of Utrecht. We were glad to see this commencement of the dominions of the United States, though the shore opposite to them was still Prussian; and, telling the boatmen, if they had occasion to stop at any town, to touch only upon the free bank, they humoured us so far as to row out of the current for the sake of approaching it; in short, we stepped no more upon German land; and, within a few miles, were enveloped, on both sides, by the prospering, abounding plains of the Dutch provinces. *Italiam! Italiam!*

3. HOLLAN D

3.1 .

Early in the afternoon, the lofty tower of the Belvidere, or prospect-house at Nimeguen, came in sight; then the bright pinnacles of the public buildings, and the high, turf-coloured angles of the fortifications. The town was thronged with fugitives from Flanders, but we found sufficient accommodation, as before, at the inn in the marketplace, and were not in a tone of spirits to be fastidious about any thing, heightened as the appearance of prosperity was to us by contrast, and happy as even the refugees appeared to be at finding peace and safety. The mall before the Prince of Orange’s house was filled with parties of them, as gay as if they had left their homes in Flanders but for an holiday excursion.

We were at the Belvidere till evening, lingering over the rich prospect of probably forty miles diameter, from Arnheim and Duisbourg in the north to Cleves and Guelders in the south, with an eastern view over half the forests of Guelderland to those of Westphalia. Such an extent of green landscape, richly varied with towns, villages and woods, spreading and gradually ascending to the horizon, was now almost as novel to us, as it was placidly beautiful. On the east, the blue mountainous lines of Germany broke in upon the reposing character of the scene.

In the Waal below, two or three vessels bore the Emperor’s flag, and were laden, as it was said, with some of his *regalia* from Flanders. Near them, several bilanders, the decks of which were covered with awnings, had attracted spectators to the opposite bank, for to that side only they were open; and the company in all were objects of curiosity to the Dutch, being no less than the sisterhood of several Flemish convents, in their proper dresses, and under the care of their respective abbesses. These ladies had been thus situated, for several days and nights, which they had passed on board their vessels. They were attended by their usual servants, and remained together, without going on shore, being in expectation, as we were told, of invitations to suitable residences in Germany; but it was then reported at Nimeguen, that Prince Cobourg was re-advancing to Brussels, and these societies had probably their misfortunes increased by the artifices of a political rumour. We could not learn, as we wished, that they had brought away many effects. Their plate it was needless to enquire

about; the contributions of the preceding spring had no doubt swallowed up that.

Having dismissed our Cologne watermen, we embarked upon the Waal, the next day, in a public boat for Rotterdam; a neat schuyt, well equipped and navigated, in which, for a few florins, you have the use of the cabin. Our voyage, from the want of wind, was slow enough to shew as much as could be seen of the Waal; which, at Nimeguen, runs almost constantly downward, but is soon met by the tide, and overcome, or, at least, resisted by it. The breadth, which varies but little above Bommel, is, to our recollection, not less than that of the Thames, at Fulham; the depth, during the beginning of the same space, is probably considerable, in the stream, for, even upon the shore, our dextrous old steersman found water enough to sweep the rushy bank at almost every tack, with a boat, drawing about five feet. The signs of activity in commerce are astonishing. A small hamlet, one cannot call any place in Holland contemptible, or miserable, a hamlet of a dozen houses has two or three vessels, of twenty tons each; a village has a herring boat for almost every house, and a trading vessel for Rotterdam two or three times a week. Heavy, high rigged vessels, scarcely breasting the stream, and fit only for river voyages, we frequently met; many of them carrying coals for the nearer part of Germany, such as we saw on the banks between Rees and Nimeguen, and, with much pleasure, recognized for symptoms of neighbourhood to England.

The first town from Nimeguen, on the right bank of the Waal, is Thiel, which we had only time to see was enclosed by modern fortifications, and was not inferior in neatness to other Dutch towns, at least not so in one good street, which we were able to traverse. A sand bank before the port has much lessened the trade of the place, which, in the tenth century, was considerable enough to be acknowledged by the Emperor Otto, in the grant of several privileges.

About a league lower, on the opposite side of the Waal, or rather on the small island of Voorn, stood formerly a fort, called Nassau, which the French, in 1672, utterly destroyed. Near its site, at the northern extremity of the island of Bommel, which lies between the Maas and the Waal, a fort, built by Cardinal Andrew of Austria, still subsists, under the name of *Fort St. André.* The founder, who built it upon the model of the citadel of Antwerp, had no other view than to command by it the town of Bommel;

but, in the year 1600, Prince Maurice of Nassau reduced the garrison, after a siege of five weeks, and it has since contributed to protect what it was raised to destroy, the independence of the Dutch commonwealth.

In the evening, we came opposite to the town of Bommel, where we were put on shore to pass the night and the next day, being Sunday; the boat proceeded on the voyage for Rotterdam, but could not reach it before the next morning.

Bommel is a small town on the edge of the river, surrounded by wood enough to make it remarkable in Holland; light, neat and pretty. The two principal streets cross each other at right angles, and are without canals. Being at some distance from the general roads, it is ill provided with inns; but one of them has a delightful prospect, and there is no dirt, or other symptom of negligence within. The inhabitants are advanced enough in prosperity and intelligent curiosity to have two *Sociétés*, where they meet to read new publications; a luxury, which may be found in almost every Dutch town. At the ends of the two principal streets are gates; that towards the water between very old walls; those on the land side modern and stronger, with drawbridges over a wide fossé, that nearly surrounds the town.

On the other side of this ditch are high and broad embankments, well planted with trees, and so suitable to be used as public walks, that we supposed them to have been raised partly for that purpose, and partly as defences to the country against water. They are, however, greater curiosities, having been thrown up by Prince Maurice in 1599, chiefly because his garrison of four thousand foot and two thousand horse were too numerous for the old works; and between these intrenchments was made what is thought to have been the first attempt at a covered way, since improved into a regular part of fortifications. This was during the ineffectual siege of three weeks, in which Mendoza lost two thousand men, Maurice having then a constant communication with the opposite bank of the Waal by means of two bridges of boats, one above, the other below the town.

Bommel was otherwise extremely important in the struggle of the Dutch against Philip. It was once planned to have been delivered by treachery, but, that being discovered, the Earl of Mansfeldt, Philip’s commander, raised the siege. It adhered to the assembly at Dort, though the Earl of

March, the commander of the first armed force of the Flemings, had committed such violences in the town, that the Prince of Orange found it necessary to send him to prison. In the campaign of 1606, when Prince Maurice adopted defensive operations, this was one of the extreme points of his line, which extended from hence to Schenck.

The natural honesty of mankind is on the side of the defensive party, and it is, therefore, that in reading accounts of sieges one is always on the side of the besieged. The Dutch, except when subject to some extraordinary influence, have been always defensive in their wars; from their first astonishing resistance to Philip, to that against the petty attack, which Charles the Second incited the Bishop of Munster to make, who had the coolness to tell Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, that he had thought over the probabilities of his enterprise, and, if it failed, he should not care, for he could go into Italy and buy a Cardinal's cap; but that he had first a mind to make some figure in the world. The territory of the United Provinces is so small, that, in these wars, the whole Dutch Nation has been in little better condition, than that of a people, besieged in one great town; and Louis the Fourteenth, in the attempt, which Charles the Second's wicked sister concerted between the two Monarchs, sent, for the first time, to a whole people, a threat, similar to those sometimes used against a single town. His declaration of the 24th of June, 1672, after boasting how his '"just designs"' and undertakings had prospered, since his arrival in the army, and how he would treat the Dutch, if, by submission, they would '"deserve his great goodness,"' thus proceeds:

'"On the contrary, all of whatever quality and condition, who shall refuse to comply with these offers, and shall resist his Majesty's forces, either by the inundation of their dyke, or otherwise, shall be punished with the utmost rigour. At present, all hostilities shall be used against those, who oppose his Majesty's designs; and, when the ice shall open a passage on all sides, his Majesty will not give any quarter to the inhabitants of such cities, but give order, that their goods be plundered and their houses burnt."'

It is pleasant, in every country, to cherish the recollections, which make it a spectacle for the mind as well as the eye, and no country is enriched by so many as Holland, not even the West of England, where patriotism and

gratitude hover in remembrance over the places, endeared by the steps of our glorious WILLIAM.

Bommel is built on a broad projection of the island of the same name into the Waal, which thus flows nearly on two sides of its walls, and must be effectually commanded by them. But, though it is therefore important in a military view, and that the French were now so near to Breda, as to induce families to fly from thence, whom we saw at Bommel, yet the latter place was in no readiness for defence. There was not a cannon upon the walls, or upon the antient outworks, which we mistook for terraces, and not ten soldiers in the place; a negligence, which was, however, immediately after remedied.

The Dutch tardiness of exertion has been often blamed, and, in such instances, deservedly; but, as to the influence of this sparingness in their general system of politics and in former periods, a great deal more wit than truth has been circulated by politicians. The chief value of power is in the known possession of it. Those who are believed to have exerted it much, will be attacked, because the exertion may be supposed to have exhausted the power. The nation, or the individual, that attempts to rectify every error and punish every trivial offence of others, may soon lose, in worthless contests, the strength, that should be preserved for resisting the most positive and unequivocal attacks.

Ministers have appeared in Holland, who could plan unnecessary contests, and meditate the baseness, falsely called ambition, of putting the whole valour and wealth of a nation into exercise, for the purpose of enforcing whatever they may have once designed, or said; and, as there is, perhaps, no country in Europe, which cannot justly allege some injury against another, they have exaggerated the importance of such injuries, for the purpose of impelling their own country, by aggravated anger, or fear, into precipitate hostilities. But the Dutch, accustoming themselves to as much vigilance, as confidence, have withheld encouragement from such artifices, and hence that general tardiness in beginning wars, which every politician, capable of an inflammatory declamation, thinks it wisdom to ridicule.

We left Bommel at seven in the morning, in a stout, decked seaboat, well rigged, and, as appeared, very dextrously navigated. The wind was directly contrary, and there are sometimes islands, sometimes shoals in the

Waal, which narrowed the channel to four or five times the length of the vessel; yet there was not any failure in tacking, and the boom was frequently assisted to traverse by the reeds of the bank, which it swept. The company in the cabin were not very numerous, but there was amongst them at least one lamentable group; the minister of a Protestant church at Maestricht, an aged and decrepid gentleman, flying with his wife and two daughters from the approaching siege of that place; himself laid on pillows upon the floor of the cabin; his daughters attending him; all neglected, all victims to the glories of war.

The boat soon passed Louvenstein, on the left bank of the Maese, a brick castellated building, apparently about two centuries old, surrounded by some modern works, which render it one of the defences of the river. Count Byland, the late commander of Breda, was then imprisoned in this fortress, which has been long used for state purposes. Here those friends of Barneveldt were confined, who derived from it, and left to their posterity the name of the Louvenstein party; and hence Grotius, who was of the number, made his escape, concealed in a trunk, which the sentinels had so often seen filled with Arminian books, that his wife persuaded them they carried nothing more than their usual cargo.

From Louvenstein, near which the Waal unites with the Maese, and assumes the name of that river, we soon reached Gorcum, where the short stay of the boat permitted us only to observe the neatness of the town, and that the fortifications had the appearance of being strong, though small, and seemed to be in most exact repair. This, indeed, is one of the forts chiefly relied upon by the province of Holland; for, in 1787, their States made Gorcum and Naarden the extreme points of their line of defence, and ordered a dyke to be thrown across the Linge, which flows into the Maese at the former place, for the purpose of overflowing the surrounding country.

The next town in the voyage is Dort, formerly one of the most considerable in Holland, and still eminent for its wealth, though the trade is diminished by that of Rotterdam. This is the town, which Dumourier strove to reach, in the invasion of 1792, and forty thousand stand of arms were found to have been collected there for him. Our boat passed before one quarter, in which the houses rise immediately over a broad bay of the

Maese, with an air of uncommon gaiety and lightness; but the evenness of the town prevented us from seeing more than the part directly nearest.

In the bay was one of those huge timber floats, the construction of which has been before described. It was crowded with visitors from the town; and the wooden huts upon it, being ornamented with flags, had the appearance of booths at a fair. Large as this was, it had been considerably diminished, since its arrival at Dort, and several hundreds of the workmen had departed.

A little further on, and within sight of this joyous company, was the melancholy reverse of nearly an hundred ladies, driven from some convent in Flanders, now residing, like those near Nimeguen, in bilanders moored to the bank. Their vessels being open on the side towards the water, we caught as full a view of them as could be had, without disrespect; and saw that they still wore their conventual dresses, and were seated, apparently according to their ages, at some sort of needlework. It might have been censured, a few years since, that mistakes, or deceptions, as to religious duties, should have driven them from the world; but it was certainly now only to be lamented, that any thing short of the gradual and peaceful progress of reason should have expelled them from their retirement.

We reached Rotterdam, in the evening, and stayed there, the next day, to observe whether the confidence of the Dutch in their dykes and fortresses was sufficient to preserve their tranquillity in a place almost within hearing of the war, the French being then besieging Sluys. There was no perceptible symptom of agitation, or any diminution of the ordinary means for increasing wealth. The persons, with whom we conversed, and they were not a few, spoke of the transactions of the campaign with almost as much calmness and curiosity, as if these had been passing in India. They could not suppose it possible, that the French might reach the city; or, if they did, seemed to rely upon the facility, with which their property could be removed by the canals through Leyden and Haerlem, to the shore of the Zuyder Zee, then across it by sailing barges, and then again by the canals as far as Groningen, whither the French would certainly not penetrate. So valuable was water thought in Holland, not only as a means of opulence in peace, but of defence, or preservative flight in war. An excessive selfishness, which is the vice of the Dutch, appeared sometimes to prevent those, who could fly, from thinking of their remaining countrymen.

An intention of dispensing with the customary fair was the only circumstance, which distinguished this season from others at Rotterdam, and that was imputed to the prudence of preventing any very numerous meetings of the populace.

About three weeks sooner than was necessary, for it was so long before a convenient passage occurred, we went from hence to Helvoetsluys, and there remained, a fortnight, watching an inflexible north-westerly wind, and listening to accounts but too truly certified of French frigates and privateers, almost unopposed in those latitudes. Lloyd's List brought the names of five, or seven, French ships, then known to be cruising in the north; and one packet was delayed in its voyage by the sight of several Dutch vessels, set on fire within a few leagues of *Goree*. The Dutch lamented, that the want of seamen crippled the operations of their Admiralty Board: an Englishman, who was proud to deny, that any such want, or want in such a degree, existed, as to his country, was reduced to silence and shame, when it was enquired, Why, then, have these seas been, for twelve months, thus exposed to the dominion of the French?

At length, a convoy arrived for a noble family, and we endeavoured to take the benefit of it by embarking in a packet, which sailed at the same time; but the sloop of war was unable to pass over what are called the Flats, and our captain had resolved to proceed without it, notwithstanding the contrarieties of the wind, when, with much joy, we discerned a small boat, and knew it to be English by the skilful impetuosity of the rowers. Having induced the people of the packet to make a signal, by paying them for the passage to Harwich, we were fortunately taken on board this boat, at the distance of about three leagues from Helvoetsluys, and soon relanded at that place; the packet proceeding on her voyage, which, supposing no interruption from the French vessels, was not likely to be made in less than three days. We rejoiced at the release from fatigue and from fear, at least, if not from danger; and, seeing little probability of an immediate passage, returned, the next day, to Rotterdam, with the hope of finding some neutral vessel, bound to an English port.

We were immediately gratified by the promise of an American captain to meet us with his vessel at Helvoetsluys, and, the next day, had a delightful voyage thither, in a hired yacht, partly by the Maese, and partly by channels inaccessible to large vessels.

3.2. FLAARDING .

THE Maese presently brought us opposite to this small port, the metropolis of the herring fishers; rendered interesting by the patient industry and useful courage of its inhabitants. We landed at it, but saw only what was immediately open for observation. Like most of the Dutch towns, on the banks of rivers, it is protected from floods by standing at the distance of three or four hundred yards from the shore, and communicates with the stream only by a narrow, but deep canal. The best street is built upon the quays of this channel, on which the herring boats deposit their cargoes before the doors of the owners. We did not see more than fifty, a great number being then at sea. Except the business in this street, and the smell of herrings, which prevailed every where, there was nothing to shew that we were in a place supported solely by the industry of fishermen; no neglected houses, no cottages, no dirty streets, no inferiority, in point of neatness and brightness, to the other towns of Holland.

The inhabitants are remarkable for adhering to the dress, as well as the employments of their ancestors; so much so, that their clothing is mentioned in other towns as the representation of the antient national dress, common throughout all the provinces two centuries since; and it is certain, that their appearance is exactly such as is delineated in pictures of that date.

3.3 .

Some miles further, we entered the old Maese, a channel in several parts very narrow, and evidently preserved by art, but in others nobly expansive, and filled almost to the level of the luxuriant pastures and groves that border it. In one part, where the antient stream takes a circuitous course, a canal has been cut, that shortens the voyage, for light vessels, by several miles, and barks in one channel are sometimes visible from the other, their sails swelling over fields, in which, at a distance, no water is discernible. Neat and substantial farm-houses, with meadows slanting from them to the river, frequently occurred; and there were more appearances of the careful labours, peculiar to the Dutch, than in the great Maese itself, the banks being occasionally supported, like their dykes, by a compact basket-work of flags and faggots.

Passing many small villages, or hamlets, we came, at sun-set, to the large branch of the sea, which spreads from Williamstadt to Helvoetsluys and from thence to the German ocean. The former fortress was faintly visible at a great distance over the water; and, while we were straining our sight towards it, there was proof enough of a nearness to the present theatre of war, the sounds of the siege of Sluys coming loudly and distinctly in the breeze. The characters of evening had fallen upon the scene in mild and deep solemnity; but the glories of nature were unselt, while a dreadful estimation of the miseries, produced at each return of the sullen roar, pressed almost exclusively upon the mind; considerations, which were soon after prolonged by the melancholy view of several English transports, filled with wounded soldiers, whose blythe music, now at the firing of the evening gun, was rendered painful by its contrast to the truth of their conditions.

At Helvoetsluys, nothing was to be heard, but accounts, derived from many respectable officers, on their way to England, of the unexampled difficulties borne, cheerfully borne, by the British army, within the last three months, and deservedly mentioned, not as complaints, but as proofs of their sirmness. There were, however, mingled with these, many reports as to the contrary conduct even of those continental troops, which still kept the field with us; of their tardiness, their irregularity, of the readiness

with which they permitted the British to assume all the dangers of attacks, and of their little co-operation even in the means of general resistance. *Brave Anglois! Brave Anglois!* was the constant shout of these troops, when they had recourse to the British to regain the posts themselves had just lost, or to make some assault, which they had refused, or had attempted with ineffectual formality. They would then follow our troops, and, when an advantage was gained, seemed to think they had share enough of the victory, if they were at hand to continue the slaughter of the retreating, and to engross all the plunder of the dead.

We were as glad to escape from such considerations, as from the crowded inns of Helvoetsluys, now little more convenient than ships; and, the next morning, embarked on board the American vessel, then arrived from Rotterdam. A fair wind soon wafted us out of sight of the low coast of Holland; but we were afterwards becalmed, and carried by tides so far towards the Flemish shore as to have the firing before Sluys not only audible, but terribly loud. For part of three days, we remained within hearing of this noise; but did not, therefore, think ourselves very distant from the English coast, knowing that the fire, at the preceding siege of Nieuport, had been heard as far as the Downs; Nieuport, the wretched scene of so many massacres, and of distress, which, in Holland, had been forcibly described to us by eye-witnesses.

So keenly, indeed, were the horrors of this place conceived by those, who personally escaped from them, that of the emigrants, rescued by the intrepidity of our seamen, many suppressed all joy at their own deliverance by lamentations for the fate of their brethren. One gentleman was no sooner on board a ship, then exposed to the batteries on shore, than he climbed the shrouds and remained aloft, notwithstanding all entreaties, till a severe wound obliged him to descend. Another, who had been saved from the beach by a young sailor, was unable to swim so far as the ship; and the honest lad, having taken him upon his back, struggled hard amidst a shower of balls to save both their lives. At length, he, too, began to falter; and the weakness of his efforts, not his complaints, seemed to shew his companion, that one, or both of them, must perish: the latter nobly asked the lad, whether he could save his own life, if left to himself; and, receiving a reluctant reply, that probably he might do so, but that he would strive for both, the emigrant instantly plunged into the ocean, and was seen

no more. The glorious sailor reached his ship, just as he began again to fail, and was saved.

The calm continued during the day, and the sun set with uncommon grandeur among clouds of purple, red and gold, that, mingling with the serene azure of the upper sky, composed a richness and harmony of colouring which we never saw surpassed. It was most interesting to watch the progress of evening and its effect on the waters; streaks of light scattered among the dark western clouds, after the sun had set, and gleaming in long reflection on the sea, while a grey obscurity was drawing over the east, as the vapours rose gradually from the ocean. The air was breathless; the tall sails of the vessel were without motion, and her course upon the deep scarcely perceptible; while, above, the planet Jupiter burned with steady dignity, and threw a tremulous line of light on the sea, whose surface flowed in smooth waveless expanse. Then, other planets appeared, and countless stars spangled the dark waters. Twilight now pervaded air and ocean, but the west was still luminous, where one solemn gleam of dusky red edged the horizon, from under heavy vapours.

It was now that we first discovered some symptoms of England; the lighthouse on the South-Foreland appeared like a dawning star above the margin of the sea.

The vessel made little progress during the night. With the earliest dawn of morning we were on deck, in the hope of seeing the English coast; but the mists veiled it from our view. A spectacle, however, the most grand in nature, repaid us for our disappointment, and we found the circumstances of a sunrise at sea, yet more interesting than those of a sun-set. The moon, bright and nearly at her meridian, shed a strong lustre on the ocean, and gleamed between the sails upon the deck; but the dawn, beginning to glimmer, contended with her light, and, soon touching the waters with a cold grey tint, discovered them spreading all round to the vast horizon. Not a sound broke upon the silence, except the lulling one occasioned by the course of the vessel through the waves, and now and then the drowsy song of the pilot, as he leaned on the helm; his shadowy figure just discerned, and that of a sailor pacing near the head of the ship with crossed arms and a rolling step. The captain, wrapt in a sea-coat, lay asleep on the deck, wearied with the early watch. As the dawn strengthened, it discovered white sails stealing along the distance, and the flight of some

sea-fowls, as they uttered their slender cry, and then, dropping upon the waves, sat floating on the surface. Meanwhile, the light tints in the east began to change, and the skirts of a line of clouds below to assume a hue of tawny red, which gradually became rich orange and purple. We could now perceive a long tract of the coast of France, like a dark streak of vapour hovering in the south, and were somewhat alarmed on finding ourselves within view of the French shore, while that of England was still invisible.

The moonlight faded fast from the waters, and soon the long beams of the sun shot their lines upwards through the clouds and into the clear blue sky above, and all the sea below glowed with fiery reflections, for a considerable time, before his disk appeared. At length he rose from the waves, looking from under clouds of purple and gold; and as he seemed to touch the water, a distant vessel passed over his disk, like a dark speck.

4. ENGLAN D

4.1 .

We were soon after cheered by the faintly seen coast of England, but at the same time discovered, nearer to us on the south-west, the high blue headlands of Calais; and, more eastward, the town, with its large church and the steeples of two others, seated on the edge of the sea. The woods, that fringe the summits of hills rising over it, were easily distinguished with glasses, as well as the national flag on the steeple of the great church. As we proceeded, Calais cliffs, at a considerable distance westward of the town, lost their aërial blue, and shewed an high front of chalky precipice, overtopped by dark downs. Beyond, far to the south-west, and at the foot of a bold promontory, that swelled above all the neighbouring heights, our glasses gave us the towers and ramparts of Boulogne, sloping upward from the shore, with its tall lighthouse on a low point running out into the sea; the whole appearing with considerable dignity and picturesque effect. The hills beyond were tamer, and sunk gradually away in the horizon. At length, the breeze wafting us more to the north, we discriminated the bolder features of the English coast, and, about noon, found ourselves nearly in the middle of the channel, having Picardy on our left and Kent on the right, its white cliffs aspiring with great majesty over the flood. The sweeping bay of Dover, with all its chalky heights, soon after opened. The town appeared low on the shore within, and the castle, with round and massy towers, crowned the vast rock, which, advancing into the sea, formed the eastern point of the crescent, while Shakespeare’s cliff, bolder still and sublime as the eternal name it bears, was the western promontory of the bay. The height and grandeur of this cliff were particularly striking, when a ship was seen sailing at its base, diminished by comparison to an inch. From hence the cliffs towards Folkstone, though still broken and majestic, gradually decline. There are, perhaps, few prospects of sea and shore more animated and magnisicent than this. The vast expanse of water, the character of the cliffs, that guard the coast, the ships of war and various merchantmen moored in the Downs, the lighter vessels skimming along the channel, and the now distant shore of France, with Calais glimmering faintly, and hinting of different modes of life and a new world,

all these circumstances formed a scene of preeminent combination, and led to interesting reflection.

Our vessel was bound to Deal, and, leaving Dover and its cliffs on the south, we entered that noble bay, which the rich shores of Kent open for the sea. Gentle hills, swelling all round from the water, green with woods, or cultivation, and speckled with towns and villages, with now and then the towers of an old fortress, offered a landscape particularly cheering to eyes accustomed to the monotonous flatness of Dutch views. And we landed in England under impressions of delight more varied and strong than can be conceived, without referring to the joy of an escape from districts where there was scarcely an home for the natives, and to the love of our own country, greatly enhanced by all that had been seen of others.

Between Deal and London, after being first struck by the superior appearance and manners of the people to those of the countries we had been lately accustomed to, a contrast too obvious as well as too often remarked to be again insisted upon, but which made all the ordinary circumstances of the journey seem new and delightful, the different between the landscapes of England and Germany occurred forcibly to notice. The large scale, in which every division of land appeared in Germany, the long corn grounds, the huge stretches of hills, the vast plains and the wide vallies could not but be beautifully opposed by the varieties and undulations of English surface, with gently swelling slopes, rich in verdure, thick inclosures, woods, bowery hop grounds, sheltered mansions, announcing the wealth, and substantial farms, with neat villages, the comfort of the country. English landscape may be compared to cabinet pictures, delicately beautiful and highly finished; German scenery to paintings for a vestibule, of bold outline and often sublime, but coarse and to be viewed with advantage only from a distance.

Northward, beyond London, we may make one stop, after a country, not otherwise necessary to be noticed, to mention Hardwick, in Derbyshire, a seat of the Duke of Devonshire, once the residence of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whom Elizabeth deputed the custody of the unfortunate Mary. It stands on an easy height, a few miles to the left of the road from Mansfield to Chesterfield, and is approached through shady lanes, which conceal the view of it, till you are on the confines of the park. Three towers of hoary grey then rise with great majesty among old woods, and

their summits appear to be covered with the lightly shivered fragments of battlements, which, however, are soon discovered to be perfectly carved open work, in which the letters E. S. frequently occur under a coronet, the initials, and the memorials of the vanity, of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, who built the present edifice. Its tall features, of a most picturesque tint, were finely disclosed between the luxuriant woods and over the lawns of the park, which, every now and then, let in a glimpse of the Derbyshire hills. The scenery reminded us of the exquisite descriptions of Harewood,

The deep embowering shades, that veil Elfrida;”

and those of Hardwick once veiled a form as lovely as the ideal graces of the Poet, and conspired to a fate more tragical than that, which Harewood witnessed.

In front of the great gates of the castle court, the ground, adorned by old oaks, suddenly sinks to a darkly shadowed glade, and the view opens over the vale of Scarsdale, bounded by the wild mountains of the Peak. Immediately to the left of the present residence, some ruined features of the antient one, enwreathed with the rich drapery of ivy, give an interest to the scene, which the later, but more historical structure heightens and prolongs. We followed, not without emotion, the walk, which Mary had so often trodden, to the folding doors of the great hall, whose lofty grandeur, aided by silence and seen under the influence of a lowering sky, suited the temper of the whole scene. The tall windows, which half subdue the light they admit, just allowed us to distinguish the large figures in the tapestry, above the oak wainscoting, and shewed a colonnade of oak supporting a gallery along the bottom of the hall, with a pair of gigantic elk’s horns flourishing between the windows opposite to the entrance. The scene of Mary’s arrival and her feelings upon entering this solemn shade came involuntarily to the mind; the noise of horses’ feet and many voices from the court; her proud yet gentle and melancholy look, as, led by my Lord Keeper, she passed slowly up the hall; his somewhat obsequious, yet jealous and vigilant air, while, awed by her dignity and beauty, he remembers the terrors of his own Queen; the silence and anxiety of her maids, and the bustle of the surrounding attendants.

From the hall a staircase ascends to the gallery of a small chapel, in which the chairs and cushions, used by Mary, still remain, and proceeds to

the first story, where only one apartment bears memorials of her imprisonment, the bed, tapestry and chairs having been worked by herself. This tapestry is richly embossed with emblematic figures, each with its title worked above it, and, having been scrupulously preserved, is still entire and fresh.

Over the chimney of an adjoining dining-room, to which, as well as to other apartments on this floor, some modern furniture has been added, is this motto carved in oak:

“There is only this: To fear God and keep his Commandments.”

So much less valuable was timber than workmanship, when this mansion was constructed, that, where the staircases are not of stone, they are formed of solid oaken steps, instead of planks; such is that from the second, or state story to the roof, whence, on clear days, York and Lincoln Cathedrals are said to be included in the extensive prospect. This second floor is that, which gives its chief interest to the edifice. Nearly all the apartments of it were allotted to Mary; some of them for state purposes; and the furniture is known by other proofs, than its appearance, to remain as she left it. The chief room, or that of audience, is of uncommon loftiness, and strikes by its grandeur, before the veneration and tenderness arise, which its antiquities, and the plainly told tale of the sufferings they witnessed, excite.

The walls, which are covered to a considerable height with tapestry, are painted above with historical groups. The chairs are of black velvet, nearly concealed by a raised needlework of gold, silver and colours, that mingle with surprising richness, and remain in fresh preservation. The upper end of the room is distinguished by a lofty canopy of the same materials, and by steps which support two chairs; so that the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury probably enjoyed their own stateliness here, as well as assisted in the ceremonies practised before Mary. A carpeted table, in front of the canopy, was, perhaps, the desk of Commissioners, or Secretaries, who here recorded some of the proceedings concerning her; below which, the room breaks into a spacious recess, where a few articles of furniture are deposited, not originally placed in it; a bed of state, used by Mary, the curtains of gold tissue, but in so tattered a condition, that its orginal texture can scarcely be perceived. This and the chairs, which accompany it, are supposed to have been much earlier than Mary’s time.

A short passage leads from the state apartment to her own chamber, a small room, overlooked from the passage by a window, which enabled her attendants to know, that she was contriving no means of escape through the others into the court. The bed and chairs of this room are of black velvet, embroidered by herself; the toilet of gold tissue; all more decayed than worn, and probably used only towards the conclusion of her imprisonment here, when she was removed from some better apartment, in which the antient bed, now in the stateroom, had been placed. The date 1599 is once or twice inscribed in this chamber; for no reason, that could relate to Mary, who was removed hence in 1584, and fell, by the often-blooded hands of Elizabeth, in 1587.

These are the apartments, distinguished by having been the residence of so unhappy a personage. On the other side of the mansion, a grand gallery occupies the length of the whole front, which is 165 feet, and contains many portraits, now placed carelessly on chairs, or the floor; amongst them an head of Sir Thomas More, apparently very fine; heads of Henries the Fourth, Seventh and Eighth; a portrait of Lady Jane Gray, meek and fair, before a harpsichord, on which psalm-book is opened; at the bottom of the gallery, Elizabeth, slyly proud and meanly violent; and, at the top, Mary, in black, taken a short time before her death, her countenance much faded, deeply marked by indignation and grief, and reduced as if to the spectre of herself, frowning with suspicion upon all who approached it; the black eyes looking out from their corners, thin lips, somewhat aquiline nose and beautiful chin.

What remains of the more antient building is a ruin, which, standing nearly on the brink of the glade, is a fine object from this. A few apartments, though approached with difficulty through the fragments of others, are still almost entire, and the dimensions of that called the Giant’s Chamber are remarkable for the beauty of their proportion.

From Hardwick to within a few miles of Middleton, the beauty of the country declines, while the sublimity is not perfected; but, from the north-west brow of Brampton Moor, the vast hills of Derbyshire appear in wild and ghastly succession. Middleton, hewn out of the grey rocks, that impend over it, and scarcely distinguishable from them, is worth notice for its very small and neat octagon church, built partly by brief and partly by a donation from the Duke of Devonshire. The valley, or rather chasm, at the

entrance of which it stands, is called Middleton Dale, and runs, for two miles, between perpendicular walls of rock, which have more the appearance of having been torn asunder by some convulsive rent of the earth, than any we have elsewhere seen. The strata are horizontal, and the edges of each are often distinct and rounded; one of the characteristics of granite. Three grey rocks, resembling castles, project from these solid walls, and, now and then, a lime-kiln, round like a bastion, half involves in smoke a figure, who, standing on the summit, looks the Witch of the Dale, on an edge of her cauldron, watching the workings of incantation.

The chasm opened, at length, to a hill, whence wild moorish mountains were seen on all sides, some entirely covered with the dull purple of heath, others green, but without enclosures, except sometimes a stone wall, and the dark sides of others marked only by the blue smoke of weeds, driven in circles near the ground.

Towards sun-set, from a hill in Cheshire, we had a vast view over part of that county and nearly all Lancashire, a scene of fertile plains and gentle heights, till some broad and towering mountains, at an immense distance, were but uncertainly distinguished from the clouds. Soon after, the cheerful populousness of the rich towns and villages in Lancashire supplied objects for attention of a different character; Stockport first, crowded with buildings and people, as much so as some of the busiest quarters in London, with large blazing fires in every house, by the light of which women were frequently spinning, and manufacturers issuing from their workshops and filling the steep streets, which the chaise rolled down with dangerous rapidity; then an almost continued street of villages to Manchester, some miles before which the road was busy with passengers and carriages, as well as bordered by handsome country houses; and, finally for this day, Manchester itself; a second London; enormous to those, who have not seen the first, almost tumultuous with business, and yet well proved to afford the necessary peacefulness to science, letters and taste. And not only for itself may Manchester be an object of admiration, but for the contrast of its useful profits to the wealth of a neighbouring place, immersed in the dreadful guilt of the Slave Trade, with the continuance of which to believe national prosperity compatible, is to hope, that the actions of nations pass unseen before the Almighty, or to suppose extenuation of crimes by increase of criminality, and that the eternal laws

of right and truth, which smite the wickedness of individuals, are too weak to struggle with the accumulated and comprehensive guilt of a national participation in robbery, cruelty and murder.

From Manchester to Lancaster the road leads through a pleasant and populous country, which rises gradually as it approaches the huge hills we had noticed in the distance from the brow of Cheshire, and whose attitudes now resembled those of the Rheingau as seen from Mentz. From some moors on this side of Lancaster the prospects open very extensively over a rich tract fading into blue ridges; while, on the left, long lines of distant sea appear, every now and then, over the dark woods of the shore, with vessels sailing as if on their summits. But the view from a hill descending to Lancaster is preeminent for grandeur, and comprehends an extent of sea and land, and a union of the sublime in both, which we have never seen equalled. In the green vale of the Lune below lies the town, spreading up the side of a round hill overtopped by the old towers of the castle and the church. Beyond, over a ridge of gentle heights, which bind the west side of the vale, the noble inlet of the sea, that flows upon the Ulverston and Lancaster sands, is seen at the feet of an amphitheatre formed by nearly all the mountains of the Lakes; an exhibition of alpine grandeur, both in form and colouring, which, with the extent of water below, compose a scenery perhaps faintly rivalling that of the Lake of Geneva. To the south and west, the Irish Channel finishes the view.

The antient town and castle of Lancaster have been so often and so well described, that little remains to be said of them. To the latter considerable additions are building in the Gothic style, which, when time shall have shaded the stone, will harmonize well with the venerable towers and gate-house of the old structure. From a turret rising over the leads of the castle, called John o’ Gaunt’s Chair, the prospect is still finer than from the terrace of the church-yard below. Overlooking the Lune and its green slopes, the eye ranges to the bay of the sea beyond, and to the Cumberland and Lancashire mountains. On an island near the extremity of the peninsula of Low Furness, the double point of Peel Castle starts up from the sea, but is so distant that it resembles a forked rock. This peninsula, which separates the bay of Ulverston from the Irish Channel, swells gradually into a pointed mountain called Blackcomb, thirty miles from Lancaster, the first in the amphitheatre, that binds the bay. Hence a range

of lower, but more broken and forked summits, extends northward to the fells of High Furness, rolled behind each other, huge, towering and dark; then, higher still, Langdale Pikes, with a confusion of other fells, that crown the head of Windermere and retire towards Keswick, whose gigantic mountains, Helvelyn and Saddleback, are, however, sunk in distance below the horizon of the nearer ones. The top of Skiddaw may be discerned when the air is clear, but it is too far off to appear with dignity. From Windermere-Fells the heights soften towards the Vale of Lonsdale, on the east side of which Ingleborough, a mountain in Craven, rears his rugged front, the loftiest and most majestic in the scene. The nearer country, from this point of the landscape, is intersected with cultivated hills, between which the Lune winds its bright but shallow stream, falling over a weir and passing under a very handsome stone bridge at the entrance of the town, in its progress towards the sea. A ridge of rocky eminences shelters Lancaster on the east, whence they decline into the low and uninteresting country, that stretches to the Channel.

The appearance of the northern Fells is ever changing with the weather and shifting lights. Sometimes they resemble those evening clouds on the horizon, that catch the last gleams of the sun; at others, wrapt in dark mist, they are only faintly traced, and seem like stormy vapours rising from the sea. But in a bright day their appearance is beautiful; then, their grand outlines are distinctly drawn upon the sky, a vision of Alps; the rugged sides are faintly marked with light and shadow, with wood and rock, and here and there a cluster of white cottages, or farms and hamlets, gleam at their feet along the water’s edge. Over the whole landscape is then drawn a softening azure, or sometimes a purple hue, exquisitely lovely, while the sea below reflects a brighter tint of blue.

4.2. FROM LANCASTER TO KENDAL .

LEAVING Lancaster, we wound along the southern brow of the vale of the Lune, which there serpentizes among meadows, and is soon after shut up between steep shrubby banks. From the heights we had some fine retrospects of Lancaster and the distant sea; but, about three miles from the town, the hills open forward to a view as much distinguished by the notice of Mr. GRAY, as by its own charms. We here looked down over a woody and finely broken foreground upon the Lune and the vale of Lonsdale, undulating in richly cultivated slopes, with Ingleborough, for the background, bearing its bold promontory on high, the very crown and paragon of the landscape. To the west, the vale winds from sight among smoother hills; and the gracefully falling line of a mountain, on the left, forms, with the wooded heights, on the right, a kind of frame for the distant picture.

The road now turned into the sweetly retired vale of Caton, and by the village church-yard, in which there is not a single gravestone, to Hornby, a small straggling town, delightfully seated near the entrance of the vale of Lonsdale. Its thin toppling castle is seen among wood, at a considerable distance, with a dark hill rising over it. What remains of the old edifice is a square grey building, with a slender watchtower, rising in one corner, like a feather in a hat, which joins the modern mansion of white stone, and gives it a singular appearance, by seeming to start from the centre of its roof.

In front, a steep lawn descends between avenues of old wood, and the park extends along the skirts of the craggy hill, that towers above. At its foot, is a good stone bridge over the Wenning, now shrunk in its pebbly bed, and, further on, near the castle, the church, shewing a handsome octagonal tower, crowned with battlements. The road then becomes extremely interesting, and, at Melling, a village on a brow some miles further, the view opens over the whole vale of Lonsdale. The eye now passes, beneath the arching foliage of some trees in the foreground, to the sweeping valley, where meadows of the most vivid green and dark woods, with white cottages and villages peeping from among them, mingle with surprising richness, and undulate from either bank of the Lune to the feet

of hills. Ingleborough, rising from elegantly swelling ground, overlooked this enchanting vale, on the right, clouds rolling along its broken top, like smoke from a cauldron, and its hoary tint forming a boundary to the soft verdure and rich woodlands of the slopes, at its feet. The perspective was terminated by the tall peeping heads of the Westmoreland fells, the nearer ones tinged with faintest purple, the more distant with light azure; and this is the general boundary to a scene, in the midst of which, enclosed between nearer and lower hills, lies the vale of Lonsdale, of a character mild, delicate and reposing, like the countenance of a Madona.

Descending Melling brow, and winding among the perpetually-changing scenery of the valley, we approached Ingleborough; and it was interesting to observe the lines of its bolder features gradually strengthening, and the shadowy markings of its minuter ones becoming more distinct, as we advanced. Rock and grey crags looked out from the heath, on every side; but its form on each was very different. Towards Lonsdale, the mountain is bold and majestic, rising in abrupt and broken precipices, and often impending, till, at the summit, it suddenly becomes flat, and is level for nearly a mile, whence it descends, in a long gradual ridge, to Craven in Yorkshire. In summer, some festivities are annually celebrated on this top, and the country people, as they ‘“drink the freshness of the mountain breeze* ,”’ look over the wild moorlands of Yorkshire, the rich vales of Lancashire, and to the sublime mountains of Westmoreland.

Crossing a small bridge, we turned from Ingleborough, and passed very near the antient walls of Thirlham Castle, little of which is now remaining. The ruin is on a green broken knoll, one side of which is darkened with brush-wood and dwarf-oak. Cattle were reposing in the shade, on the bank of a rivulet, that rippled through what was formerly the castle ditch. A few old trees waved over what was once a tower, now covered with ivy.

Some miles further, we crossed the Leck, a shrunk and desolate stream, nearly choked with pebbles, winding in a deep rocky glen, where trees and shrubs marked the winter boundary of the waters. Our road, mounting a green eminence of the opposite bank, on which stands Overborough, the handsome modern mansion of Mr. FENWICK, wound between plantations and meadows, painted with yellow and purple flowers, like those of spring. As we passed through their gentle slopes, we had, now and then, sweet

views between the foliage, on the left, into the vale of Lonsdale, now contracting in its course, and winding into ruder scenery. Among these catches, the best picture was, perhaps, where the white town of Kirby Lonsdale shelves along the opposite bank, having rough heathy hills immediately above it, and, below, a venerable Gothic bridge over the Lune, rising in tall arches, like an antient aqueduct; its grey tint agreeing well with the silvery lightness of the water and the green shades, that flourished from the steep margin over the abutments.

The view from this bridge, too, was beautiful. The river, foaming below among masses of dark rock, variegated with light tints of grey, as if touched by the painter's pencil, withdrew towards the south in a straight channel, with the woods of Overborough on the left. The vale, dilating, opened a long perspective to Ingleborough and many blue mountains more distant, with all the little villages we had passed, glittering on the intervening eminences. The colouring of some low hills, on the right, was particularly beautiful, long shades of wood being overtopped with brown heath, while, below, meadows of soft verdure fell gently towards the river bank.

Kirby Lonsdale, a neat little town, commanding the whole vale, is on the western steep. We staid two hours at it, gratified by witnessing, at the first inn we reached, the abundance of the country and the goodwill of the people. In times, when the prices of necessary articles are increasing with the taste for all unnecessary display, instances of cheapness may be to persons of small incomes something more than mere physical treasures; they have a moral value in contributing to independence of mind.

Here we had an early and, as it afterwards appeared, a very exaggerated specimen of the dialect of the country. A woman talked, for five minutes, against our window, of whose conversation we could understand scarcely a word. Soon after, a boy replied to a question, '"*I do na ken,* "' and '"*gang* "' was presently the common word for *go;* symptoms of nearness to a country, which we did not approach, without delighting to enumerate the instances of genius and worth, that adorn it.

Leaving Kirby-Lonsdale by the Kendal road, we mounted a steep hill, and, looking back from its summit upon the whole vale of Lonsdale, perceived ourselves to be in the mid-way between beauty and desolation, so enchanting was the retrospect and so wild and dreary the prospect.

From the neighbourhood of Caton to Kirby the ride was superior, for elegant beauty, to any we had passed; this from Kirby to Kendal is of a character distinctly opposite. After losing sight of the vale, the road lies, for nearly the whole distance, over moors and perpetually succeeding hills, thinly covered with dark purple heath flowers, of which the most distant seemed black. The dreariness of the scene was increased by a heavy rain and by the flowness of our progress, jostling amongst coal carts, for ten miles of rugged ground. The views over the Westmoreland mountains were, however, not entirely obscured; their vast ridges were visible in the horizon to the north and west, line over line, frequently in five or six ranges. Sometimes the intersecting mountains opened to others beyond, that fell in deep and abrupt precipices, their profiles drawing towards a point below and seeming to sink in a bottomless abyss.

On our way over these wilds, parts of which are called Endmoor and Cowbrows, we overtook only long trains of coal carts, and, after ten miles of bleak mountain road, began to desire a temporary home, somewhat sooner than we perceived Kendal, white-smoking in the dark vale. As we approached, the outlines of its ruinous castle were just distinguishable through the gloom, scattered in masses over the top of a small round hill, on the right. At the entrance of the town, the river Kent dashed in foam down a weir; beyond it, on a green slope, the gothic tower of the church was half hid by a cluster of dark trees; gray fells glimmered in the distance.

We were lodged at another excellent inn, and, the next morning, walked over the town, which has an air of trade mingled with that of antiquity. Its history has been given in other places, and we are not able to discuss the doubt, whether it was the Roman *Brocanonacio,* or not. The manufacture of cloth, which our statute books testify to have existed as early as the reign, in which *Falstaff* is made to allude to it, appears to be still in vigour, for the town is surrounded, towards the river, with dying grounds. We saw, however, no shades of ‘“Kendal green,”’ or, indeed, any but bright scarlet.

The church is remarkable for three chapels, memorials of the antient dignity of three neighbouring families, the Bellinghams, Stricklands and Parrs. These are inclosures, on each side of the altar, differing from pews chiefly in being large enough to contain tombs. Mr. Gray noticed them minutely in the year 1769. They were then probably entire; but the

wainscot or railing, which divided the chapel of the Parrs from the aisle, is now gone. Of two stone tombs in it one is inclosed with modern railing, and there are many remnants of painted arms on the adjoining windows. The chapel of the Stricklands, which is between this and the altar, is separated from the church aisle by a solid wainscot, to the height of four feet, and after that by a wooden railing with broken fillagree ornaments. That of the Bellinghams contains an antient tomb, of which the brass plates, that bore inscriptions and arms, are now gone, but some traces of the latter remain in plaistered stone at the side. Over it, are the fragments of an helmet, and, in the roof, those of armorial bearings, carved in wood. On a pillar, near this, is an inscription, almost obliterated, in which the following words may yet be traced:

"Dame Thomasim Thornburgh
Wiffe of Sir William Thornburgh Knyght
Daughter of Sir Robert Bellingham
Gentle Knyght: the ellventhe of August
On thousand fyue hundreth eightie too."

The Saxon has been so strongly engrafted on our language, that, in reading old inscriptions, especially those, which are likely to have been spelt, according to the pronunciation, one is frequently reminded by antient English words of the modern German synonyms. A German of the present day would say for eleven, eilf, pronounced long like eilve, and for five, funf, pronounced like fuynf.

Over the chief seat in the old pew of the Bellinghams is a brass plate, engraved with the figure of a man in armour, and, on each side of it, a brass escutcheon, of which that on the right has a motto thus spelled *Ains. y L'est.* Under the figure is the following inscription, also cut in brass:'Heer lyeth the bodye of Alan Bellingham esquier
who maryed Catheryan daughter of Anthonye
Ducket esquier by whom he had no children
after whose decease he maryed Dorothie daughter
of Thomas Sanford esquier of whom he had —
sonnes & eight daughters, of which five sonnes & 7
daughters with the said Dorothie ar yeat lyving, he

was threscore and one yares of age & dyed y^{e} 7 of Maye
Ao dni 1577.’

The correctness of inserting the unpronounced consonants in the words Eight and Daughters, notwithstanding the varieties of the other orthography in this inscription, is a proof of the universality of the Saxon mode of spelling, with great abundance and even waste of letters; a mode, which is so incorporated with our language, that those, who are for dispensing with it in some instances, as in the final k in ‘“publick”’ and other words, should consider what a general change they have to effect, or what partial incongruities they must submit to.

Kendal is built on the lower steeps of a hill, that towers over the principal street, and bears on one of its brows a testimony to the independence of the inhabitants, an obelisk dedicated to liberty and to the memory of the Revolution in 1688. At a time, when the memory of that revolution is reviled, and the praises of liberty itself endeavoured to be suppressed by the artifice of imputing to it the crimes of anarchy, it was impossible to omit any act of veneration to the blessings of this event. Being thus led to ascend the hill, we had a view of the country, over which it presides; a scene simple, great and free as the spirit revered amidst it.

4.3. FROM KENDAL TO BAMPTON AND HAWES WATER .

OF two roads from Kendal to Bampton one is through Long Sleddale, the other over Shapfell, the king of the Westmoreland mountains; of which routes the last is the most interesting for simple sublimity, leading through the heart of the wildest tracts and opening to such vast highland scenery as even Derbyshire cannot shew. We left Kendal by this road, and from a very old, ruinous bridge had a full view of the castle, stretching its dark walls and broken towers round the head of a green hill, to the southward of the town. These reliques are, however, too far separated by the decay of large masses of the original edifice, and contain little that is individually picturesque.

The road now lay through shady lanes and over undulating, but gradually ascending ground, from whence were pleasant views of the valley, with now and then a break in the hills, on the left, opening to a glimpse of the distant fells towards Windermere, gray and of more pointed form than any we had yet seen; for hitherto the mountains, though of huge outline, were not so broken, or alpine in their summits as to strike the fancy with surprize. After about three miles, a very steep hill shuts up the vale to the North, and from a gray rock, near the summit, called Stone-cragg, the prospect opens over the vale of Kendal with great dignity and beauty. Its form from hence seems nearly circular; the hills spread round it, and sweep with easy lines into the bottom, green nearly to their summits, where no fantastic points bend over it, though rock frequently mingles with the heath. The castle, or its low green hill, looked well, nearly in the centre of the landscape, with Kendal and its mountain, on the right. Far to the south, were the groves of Leven’s park, almost the only wood in the scene, and, over the heights beyond, blue hills bounded the horizon. On the west, an opening in the near steeps discovered clusters of huge and broken fells, while other breaks, on the east, shewed long ridges stretching towards the south. Nearer us and to the northward, the hills rose dark and awful, crowding over and intersecting each other in long and abrupt lines, heath and crag their only furniture.

The rough knolls around us and the dark mountain above gave force to the verdant beauty and tranquillity of the vale below, and seemed especially to shelter from the storms of the north some white farms and cottages, scattered among enclosures in the hollows. Soon after reaching the summit of the mountain itself

“A vale appear’d below, a deep retir’d abode,”

and we looked down on the left into Long Sleddale, a little scene of exquisite beauty, surrounded with images of greatness. This narrow vale, or glen, shewed a level of the brightest verdure, with a few cottages scattered among groves, enclosed by dark fells, that rose steeply, yet gracefully, and, at their summits, bent forward in masses of shattered rock. An hugely pointed mountain, called Keintmoor-head, shuts up this sweet scene to the north, rising in a sudden precipice from the vale, and heightening, by barren and gloomy steeps, the miniature beauty, that glowed at its feet. Two mountains, called Whiteside and Potter’s-fell, screen the perspective; Stone-crag is at the southern end, fronting Keintmoor-head. The vale, seen beyond the broken ground we were upon, formed a landscape of, perhaps, unexampled variety and grace of colouring; the tender green of the lowland, the darker verdure of the woods ascending the mountains, the brown rough heath above them, and the impending crags over all, exhibit their numerous shades, within a space not more than two miles long, or half a mile in breadth.

From the right of our road another valley extended, whose character is that of simple sublimity, unmixed with any tint of beauty. The vast, yet narrow perspective sweeps in ridges of mountains, huge, barren and brown, point beyond point, the highest of which, Howgill-fell, gives its name to the whole district, in which not a wood, a village, or a farm appeared to cheer the long vista. A shepherd boy told us the names of almost all the heights within the horizon, and we are sorry not to have written them, for the names of mountains are seldom compounded of modern, or trivial denominations, and frequently are somewhat descriptive of their prototypes. He informed us also, that we should go over eight miles of Shapfell, without seeing a house; and soon after, at Haw’s-foot, we took leave of the last on the road, entering then a close valley, surrounded by stupendous mountains of heath and rock, more towering and abrupt than those, that had appeared in moorlands on the other side of

Kendal. A stream, rolling in its rocky channel, and crossing the road under a rude bridge, was all that broke the solitary silence, or gave animation to the view, except the flocks, that hung upon the precipices, and which, at that height, were scarcely distinguishable from the grey round stones, thickly starting out from the heathy steeps. The Highlands of Scotland could scarcely have offered to OSSIAN more images of simple greatness, or more circumstances for melancholy inspiration. Dark glens and fells, the mossy stone, the lonely blast, descending on the valley, the roar of distant torrents every where occurred; and to the bard the ‘“song of spirits”’ would have swelled with these sounds, and their fleeting forms have appeared in the clouds, that frequently floated along the mountain tops.

The road, now ascending Shapfell, alternately climbed the steeps and sunk among the hollows of this sovereign mountain, which gives its name to all the surrounding hills; and, during an ascent of four miles, we watched every form and attitude of the features, which composed this vast scenery. Sometimes we looked from a precipice into deep vallies, varied only with shades of heath, with the rude summer hut of the shepherd, or by streams accumulating into torrents; and, at others, caught long prospects over high lands as huge and wild as the nearer ones, which partially intercepted them.

The flocks in this high region are so seldom disturbed by the footsteps of man, that they have not learned to fear him; they continued to graze within a few feet of the carriage, or looked quietly at it, seeming to consider these mountains as their own.

Near the summit of the road, though not of the hill, a retrospective glance gave us a long view over the fells, and of a rich distance towards Lancaster, rising into blue hills, which admitted glimpses of sparkling sea in the bay beyond. This gay perspective, lighted up by a gleam of sunshine, and viewed between the brown lines of the nearer mountains, shewed like the miniature painting of a landscape, illuminated beyond a darkened foreground.

At the point of every steep, as we ascended, the air seemed to become thinner, and, at the northern summit of Shapfell, which we reached after nearly two hours’ toil, the wind blew with piercing intenseness, making it difficult to remain as long as was due to our admiration of the prospect.

The scene of mountains, which burst upon us, can be compared only to the multitudinous waves of the sea. On the northern, western and eastern scope of the horizon rose vast ridges of heights, their broken lines sometimes appearing in seven or eight successive ranges, though shewing nothing either fantastic or peaked in their forms. The autumnal lights, gleaming on their sides, or shadows sweeping in dark lines along them, produced a very sublime effect; while summits more remote were often misty with the streaming shower, and others glittered in the partial rays, or were coloured with the mild azure of distance. The greater tract of the intervening hills and Shapfell itself were, at this time, darkened with clouds, while Fancy, awed by the gloom, imaged the genius of Westmoreland brooding over it and directing the scowling storm.

A descent of nearly four miles brought us to Shap, a straggling village, lying on the side of a bleak hill, feebly sheltered by clumps of trees. Here, leaving the moorlands, we were glad to find ourselves again where ‘“bells have knolled to church,”’ and in the midst of civilized, though simple life. After a short rest, at a cleanly little inn, we proceeded towards Bampton, a village five miles further in a vale, to which it gives its name, and one mile from Hawswater, the lake, that invited us to it. As the road advanced, the sells of this lake fronted it, and, closing over the southern end of Bampton vale, were the most interesting objects in the view. They were of a character very different from any yet seen; tall, rocky, and of more broken and pointed form. Among them was the high blue peak, called Kidstowpike; the broader ridge of Wallow-crag; a round and still loftier mountain — Ikolm-moor, beyond, and, further yet, other ranges of peaked summits, that overlook Ullswater.

In a hollow on the left of the road, called the Vale of Magdalene, are the ruins of Shap-abbey, built in the reign of John, of which little now appears except a tower with pointed windows. The situation is deeply secluded, and the gloom of the surrounding mountains may have accorded well with monastic melancholy.

Proceeding towards Bampton we had a momentary peep into Hawswater, sunk deep among black and haggard rocks, and overtopped by the towering fells before named, whose summits were involved in tempest, till the sun, suddenly breaking out from under clouds, threw a watery gleam aslant the broken top of Kidstowpike; and his rays, struggling with

the shower, produced a fine effect of light, opposed to the gloom, that wrapt Ickolm-moor and other huge mountains.

We soon after looked down from the heights of Bampton upon its open vale, checkered with corn and meadows, among which the slender Lowther wound its way from Hawswater to the vale of Eden, crossing that of Bampton to the north. The hills, enriched here and there with hanging woods and seats, were cultivated nearly to their summits, except where in the south the rude heights of Hawswater almost excluded the lake and shut up the valley. Immediately below us Bamptongrange lay along the skirt of the hill, and crossed the Lowther, a grey, rambling and antient village, to which we descended among rough common, darkened by plantations of fir, and between corn enclosures.

The interruption, which inclosed waters and pathless mountains give to the intercourse and business of ordinary life, renders the district, that contains the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland, more thinly inhabited than is due to the healthiness of the climate and, perhaps, to the richness of the vallies. The roads are always difficult from their steepness, and in winter are greatly obstructed by snow. That over Shapfell to Kendal was, some years since, entirely impassable, till the inhabitants of a few scattered towns subscribed thirty pounds, and a way was cut wide enough for one horse, but so deep, that the snow was, on each side, above the rider’s head. It is not in this age of communication and intelligence, that any person will be credulously eager to suppose the inhabitants of one part of the island considerably or generally distinguished in their characters from those of another; yet, perhaps, none can immerge themselves in this country of the lakes, without being struck by the superior simplicity and modesty of the people. Secluded from great towns and from examples of selfish splendour, their minds seem to act freely in the sphere of their own affairs, without interruption from envy or triumph, as to those of others. They are obliging, without servility, and plain but not rude, so that, when, in accosting you, they omit the customary appellations, you perceive it to be the familiarity of kindness, not of disrespect; and they do not bend with meanness, or hypocrisy, but shew an independent well meaning, without obtrusiveness and without the hope of more than ordinary gain.

Their views of profit from strangers are, indeed, more limited than we could have believed, before witnessing it. The servants at the little inns confess themselves by their manner of receiving what you give, to be almost as much surprised as pleased. A boy, who had opened four or five gates for us between Shap and Bampton, blushed when we called to him to have some halfpence; and it frequently happened, that persons, who had looked at the harness, or rendered some little services of that sort on the road, passed on, before anything could be offered them. The confusion of others, on being paid, induced us to suppose, at first, that enough had not been given; but we were soon informed, that nothing was expected.

The inns, as here at Bampton, are frequently humble; and those, who are disposed to clamour for luxuries, as if there was a crime in not being able to supply them, may confound a simple people, and be themselves greatly discontented, before they go. But those, who will be satisfied with comforts, and think the experience of integrity, carefulness and goodwill is itself a luxury, will be glad to have stopped at Bampton and at several other little villages, where there is some sort of preparation for travellers.

Nor is this secluded spot without provision for the mind. A beneficed grammar school receives the children of the inhabitants, and sends, we believe, some to an University. Bishop GIBSON received his education at it. Bishop LAW, who was born at Bampton, went daily across one, or two of the rudest fells on the lake to another school, at Martindale; an exercise of no trifling fatigue, or resolution; for among the things to be gained by seeing the lakes is a conception of the extreme wildness of their boundaries. You arrive with a notion, that you can and dare rove any where amongst the mountains; and have only to see three to have the utmost terror of losing your way.

The danger of wandering in these regions without a guide is increased by an uncertainty, as to the titles of heights; for the people of each village have a name for the part of a mountain nearest to themselves, and they sometimes call the whole by that name. The circumference of such heights is also too vast, and the flexures too numerous to admit of great accuracy. Skiddaw, Saddleback and Helvellyn, may however, be certainly distinguished. There are others, a passage over which would save, perhaps, eight or ten miles out of twenty, but which are so little known, except to the shepherds, that they are very rarely crossed by travellers. We could not

trust to any person’s knowledge of Harter-fell, beyond the head of Hawswater.

4.4. HAWSWATER .

THIS is a lake, of which little has been mentioned, perhaps because it is inferiour in size to the others, but which is distinguished by the solemn grandeur of its rocks and mountains, that rise in very bold and awful characters. The water, about three miles long, and at the widest only half a mile over, nearly describes the figure 8, being narrowed in the centre by the projecting shores; and, at this spot, it is said to be fifty fathom deep.

Crossing the meadows of Bampton vale and ascending the opposite heights, we approached the fells of Hawswater, and, having proceeded for a mile along the side of hills, the views over the vale and of the southern mountains changing with almost every step, the lake began to open between a very lofty ridge, covered with forest, and abrupt fells of heath, or naked rock. Soon after, we looked upon the first expanse of the lake. Its eastern shore, rising in a tremendous ridge of rocks, darkened with wood to the summit, appears to terminate in Wallow-crag, a promontory of towering height, beyond which the lake winds from view. The finely broken mountains on the west are covered with heath, and the tops impend in crags and precipices; but their ascent from the water is less sudden than that of the opposite rocks, and they are skirted by a narrow margin of vivid green, where cattle were feeding, and tufted shrubs and little groves overhung the lake and were reflected on its dark surface. Above, a very few white cottages among wood broke in upon the solitude; higher still, the mountain-flocks were browsing, and above all, the narrow perspective was closed by dark and monstrous summits.

As we wound along the bank, the rocks unfolded and disclosed the second expanse, with scenery yet more towering and sublime than the first. This perspective seemed to be terminated by the huge mountain called Castle-street; but, as we advanced, Harter-fell reared his awful front, impending over the water, and shut in the scene, where, amidst rocks, and at the entrance of a glen almost choked by fragments from the heights, stands the chapel of Martindale, spoken by the country people Mardale. Among the fells of this dark prospect are Lathale, Wilter-crag, Castle crag and Riggindale, their bold lines appearing beyond each other as they fell into the upper part of the lake, and some of them shewing only

masses of shattered rock. Kidstowpike is preeminent among the crowding summits beyond the eastern shore, and the clouds frequently spread their gloom over its point, or fall in showers into the cup within; on the west Highstreet, which overlooks the head of Ullswater, is the most dignified of the mountains.

Leaving the green margin of the lake, we ascended to the Parsonage, a low, white building on a knoll, sheltered by the mountain and a grove of sycamores, with a small garden in front, falling towards the water. From the door we had a view of the whole lake and the surrounding fells, which the eminence we were upon was just raised enough to shew to advantage. Nearly opposite to it the bold promontory of Wallow-crag pushed its base into the lake, where a peninsula advanced to meet it, spread with bright verdure, on which the hamlet of Martindale lay half concealed among a grove of oak, beech and sycamore, whose tints contrasted with the darker one of the spiry spruce, or more clumped English sir, and accorded sweetly with the pastoral green beneath. The ridge of precipices, that swept from Wallow-crag southward, and formed a bay for the upper part of the lake, was despoiled of its forest; but that, which curved northward, was dark with dwarfwood to the water's brim, and, opening distantly to Bampton vale, let in a gay miniature landscape, bright in sunshine. Below, the lake reflected the gloom of the woods, and was sometimes marked with long white lines, which, we were told, indicated bad weather; but, except when a sudden gust swept the surface, it gave back every image on the shore, as in a dark mirror.

The interior of the Parsonage was as comfortable as the situation was interesting. A neat parlour opened from the passage, but it was newly painted, and we were shewn into the family room, having a large old-fashioned chimney corner, with benches to receive a social party, and forming a most enviable retreat from the storms of the mountains. Here, in the winter evening, a family circle, gathering round a blazing pile of wood on the hearth, might defy the weather and the world. It was delightful to picture such a party, happy in their home, in the sweet affections of kindred and in honest independence, conversing, working and reading occasionally, while the blast was struggling against the casement and the snow pelting on the roof.

The seat of a long window, overlooking the lake, offered the delights of other seasons; hence the luxuriance of summer and the colouring of autumn successively spread their enchantments over the opposite woods, and the meadows that margined the water below; and a little garden of sweets sent up its fragrance to that of the honeysuckles, that twined round the window. Here, too, lay a store of books, and, to instance that an inhabitant of this remote nook could not exclude an interest concerning the distant world, among them was a history of passing events. Alas! to what scenes, to what display of human passions and human suffering did it open! How opposite to the simplicity, the innocence and the peace of these!

The venerable father of the mansion was engaged in his duty at his chapel of Martindale, but we were hospitably received within, and heard the next day how gladly he would have rendered any civilities to strangers.

On leaving this enviable little residence, we pursued the steeps of the mountain behind it, and were soon amidst the flocks and the crags, whence the look-down upon the lake and among the fells was solemn and surprising. About a quarter of a mile from the Parsonage, a torrent of some dignity rushed past us, foaming down a rocky chasm in its way to the lake. Every where, little streams of chrystal clearness wandered silently among the moss and turf, which half concealed their progress, or dashed over the rocks; and, across the largest, sheep-bridges of flat stone were thrown, to prevent the flocks from being carried away in attempting to pass them in winter. The grey stones, that grew among the heath, were spotted with mosses of so fine a texture, that it was difficult to ascertain whether they were vegetable; their tints were a delicate pea-green and primrose, with a variety of colours, which it was not necessary to be a botanist to admire.

An hour, passed in ascending, brought us to the brow of Bampton vale, which sloped gently downward to the north, where it opened to lines of distant mountains, that extended far into the east. The woods of Lowther-park capped two remote hills, and spread luxuriantly down their sides into the valley; and nearer, Bamptongrange lay at the base of a mountain, crowned with sir plantations, over which, in a distant vale, we discovered the village of Shap and long ridges of the hig hland, passed on the preceding day.

One of the fells we had just crossed is called Blanarasa, at the summit of which two grey stones, each about four feet high, and placed upright, at the distance of nine feet from each other, remain of four, which are remembered to have been formerly there. The place is still called Four Stones; but tradition does not relate the design of the monument; whether to limit adjoining districts, or to commemorate a battle, or a hero.

We descended gradually into the vale, among thickets of rough oaks, on the bank of a rivulet, which foamed in a deep channel beneath their foliage, and came to a glade so sequestered and gloomily overshadowed, that one almost expected to see the venerable arch of a ruin, peeping between the branches. It was the very spot, which the founder of a monastery might have chosen for his retirement, where the chantings of a choir might have mingled with the soothing murmur of the stream, and monks have glided beneath the solemn trees in garments scarcely distinguishable from the shades themselves.

This glade, sloping from the eye, opened under spreading oaks to a remote glimpse of the vale, with blue hills in the distance; and on the grassy hillocks of the foreground cattle were every where reposing.

We returned, about sunset, to Bampton, after a walk of little more than four miles, which had exhibited a great variety of scenery, beautiful, romantic and sublime. At the entrance of the village, the Lowther and a nameless rivulet, that runs from Hawswater, join their waters; both streams were now sunk in their beds; but in winter they sometimes contend for the conquest and ravage of the neighbouring plains. The waters have then risen to the height of five or six feet in a meadow forty yards from their summer channels. In an inclosure of this vale was fought the last battle, or skirmish, with the Scots in Westmoreland; and it is within the telling of the sons of great-grandfathers, that the contest continued, till the Scots were discovered to fire only pebbles; the villagers had then the folly to close with them and the success to drive them away; but such was the simplicity of the times, that it was called a victory to have made one prisoner. Stories of this sort are not yet entirely forgotten in the deeply inclosed vales of Westmoreland and Cumberland, where the greater part of the present inhabitants can refer to an ancestry of several centuries, on the same spot.

We thought Bampton, though a very ill-built village, an enviable spot; having a clergyman, as we heard, of exemplary manners, and, as one of us witnessed, of a most faithful earnestness in addressing his congregation in the church; being but slightly removed from one of the lakes, that accumulates in a small space many of the varieties and attractions of the others; and having the adjoining lands distributed, for the most part, into small farms, so that, as it is not thought low to be without wealth, the poor do not acquire the offensive and disreputable habits, by which they are too often tempted to revenge, or resist the ostentation of the rich.

4.5. ULLS-WATER .

THE ride from Bampton to Ullswater is very various and delightful. It winds for about three miles along the western heights of this green and open vale, among embowered lanes, that alternately admit and exclude the pastoral scenes below, and the fine landscapes on the opposite hills, formed by the plantations and antient woods of Lowther-park. These spread over a long tract, and mingle in sweet variety with the lively verdure of lawns and meadows, that slope into the valley, and sometimes appear in gleams among the dark thickets. The house, of white stone with red windowcases, embosomed among the woods, has nothing in its appearance answerable to the surrounding grounds. Its situation and that of the park are exquisitely happy, just where the vale of Bampton opens to that of Eden, and the long mountainous ridge and peak of Crossfell, aspiring above them all, stretch before the eye; with the town of Penrith shelving along the side of a distant mountain, and its beacon on the summit; the ruins of its castle appearing distinctly at the same time, crowning a low round hill. The horizon to the north and the east is bounded by lines of mountains, range above range, not romantic and surprising, but multitudinous and vast. Of these, Crossfell, said to be the highest mountain in Cumberland, gives its name to the whole northern ridge, which in its full extent, from the neighbourhood of Gillsland to that of Kirkby-Steven, is near fifty miles. This perspective of the extensive vale of Eden has grandeur and magnificence in as high a degree as that of Bampton has pastoral beauty, closing in the gloomy solitudes of Hawswater. The vale is finely wooded, and variegated with mansions, parks, meadow-land, corn, towns, villages, and all that make a distant landscape rich. Among the peculiarities of it, are little mountains of alpine shape, that start up like pyramids in the middle of the vale, some covered with wood, others barren and rocky. The scene perhaps only wants a river like the Rhine, or the Thames, to make it the very finest in England for union of grandeur, beauty and extent.

Opposite Lowther-hall, we gave a farewell look to the pleasant vale of Bampton and its southern fells, as the road, winding more to the west, led us over the high lands, that separate it from the vale of Emont. Then,

ascending through shady lanes and among fields where the oat harvest was gathering, we had enchanting retrospects of the vale of Eden, spreading to the east, with all its chain of mountains chequered by the autumnal shadows.

Soon after, the road brought us to the brows of Emont, a narrow wellwooded vale, the river, from which it takes its name, meandering through it from Ullswater among pastures and pleasure-grounds, to meet the Lowther near Brougham Castle. Penrith and its castle and beacon look up the vale from the north, and the astonishing fells of Ullswater close upon it in the south; while Delemain, the house and beautiful grounds of Mr. Hassel, Hutton St. John, a venerable old mansion, and the single tower called Dacre-castle adorn the valley. But who can pause to admire the elegancies of art, when surrounded by the wonders of nature? The approach to this sublime lake along the heights of Emont is exquisitely interesting; for the road, being shrouded by woods, allows the eye only partial glimpses of the gigantic shapes, that are assembled in the distance, and, awakening high expectation, leaves the imagination, thus elevated, to paint the ‘“forms of things unseen.”’ Thus it was, when we caught a first view of the dark broken tops of the fells, that rise round Ullswater, of size and shape most huge, bold, and awful; overspread with a blue mysterious tint, that seemed almost supernatural, though according in gloom and sublimity with the severe features it involved.

Further on, the mountains began to unfold themselves; their outlines, broken, abrupt and intersecting each other in innumerable directions, seemed, now and then, to fall back like a multitude at some supreme command, and permitted an oblique glimpse into the deep vales. A close lane then descended towards Pooly-bridge, where, at length, the lake itself appeared beyond the spreading branches, and, soon after, the first reach expanded before us, with all its mountains tumbled round it; rocky, ruinous and vast, impending, yet rising in wild confusion and multiplied points behind each other.

This view of the first reach from the foot of Dunmallet, a pointed woody hill, near Pooly-bridge, is one of the finest on the lake, which here spreads in a noble sheet, near three miles long, and almost two miles broad, to the base of Thwaithill-nab, winding round which it disappears, and the whole is then believed to be seen. The character of this view is nearly that of

simple grandeur; the mountains, that impend over the shore in front, are peculiarly awful in their forms and attitudes; on the left, the fells soften; woodlands, and their pastures, colour their lower declivities, and the water is margined with the tenderest verdure, opposed to the dark woods and crags above. On the right, a green conical hill slopes to the shore, where cattle were reposing on the grass, or sipping the clear wave; further, rise the bolder rocks of Thwaithill-nab, where the lake disappears, and, beyond, the dark precipices and summits of fells, that crown the second reach.

Winding the foot of Dunmallet, the almost pyramidal hill, that shuts up this end of Ullswater, and separates it from the vale of Emont, we crossed Barton bridge, where this little river, clear as crystal, issues from the lake, and through a close pass hurries over a rocky channel to the vale. Its woody steeps, the tufted island, that interrupts its stream, and the valley beyond, form altogether a picture in fine contrast with the majesty of Ullswater, expanding on the other side of the bridge.

We followed the skirts of a smooth green hill, the lake, on the other hand, flowing softly against the road and shewing every pebble on the beach beneath, and proceeded towards the second bend; but soon mounted from the shore among the broken knolls of Dacre-common, whence we had various views of the first reach, its scenery appearing in darkened majesty as the autumnal shadows swept over it. Sometimes, however, the rays, falling in gleams upon the water, gave it the finest silvery tone imaginable, sober though splendid. Dunmallet at the foot of the lake was a formal unpleasing object, not large enough to be grand, or wild enough to be romantic.

The ground of the common is finely broken, and is scattered sparingly with white cottages, each picturesquely shadowed by its dark grove; above, rise plantations and gray crags which lead the eye forward to the alpine forms, that crown the second reach, changing their attitudes every instant as they are approached.

Ullswater in all its windings, which give it the form of the letter S, is nearly nine miles long; the width is various, sometimes nearly two miles and seldom less than one; but Skelling-nab, a vast rock in the second reach, projects so as to reduce it to less than a quarter of a mile. These are chiefly the reputed measurements, but the eye loses its power of judging

even of the breadth, confounded by the boldness of the shores and the grandeur of the fells, that rise beyond; the proportions however are grand, for the water retains its dignity, notwithstanding the vastness of its accompaniments; a circumstance, which Derwentwater can scarcely boast.

The second bend, assuming the form of a river, is very long, but generally broad, and brought strongly to remembrance some of the passes of the Rhine beyond Coblentz: though, here, the rocks, that rise over the water, are little wooded; and, there, their skirts are never margined by pasture, or open to such fairy summer scenes of vivid green mingling with shades of wood and gleams of corn, as sometimes appear within the recesses of these wintry mountains. These cliffs, however, do not shew the variety of hue, or marbled veins, that frequently surprise and delight on the Rhine, being generally dark and gray, and the varieties in their complexion, when there are any, purely aerial; but they are vast and broken; rise immediately from the stream, and often shoot their masses over it; while the expanse of water below accords with the dignity of that river in many of its reaches. Once too, there were other points of resemblance, in the ruins of monasteries and convents, which, though reason rejoices that they no longer exist, the eye may be allowed to regret. Of these, all which now remains on record is, that a society of Benedictine monks was founded on the summit of Dunmallet, and a nunnery of the same order on a point behind Sowlby-fell; traces of these ruins, it is said, may still be seen.

Thus grandeur and immensity are the characteristics of the left shore of the second reach; the right exhibits romantic wildness in the rough ground of Dacre-common and the craggy heights above, and, further on, the sweetest forms of reposing beauty, in the grassy hillocks and undulating copses of Gowbarrow-park, fringing the water, sometimes over little rocky eminences, that project into the stream, and, at others, in shelving bays, where the lake, transparent as crystal, breaks upon the pebbly bank, and laves the road, that winds there. Above these pastoral and sylvan landscapes, rise broken precipices, less tremendous than those of the opposite shore, with pastures pursuing the crags to a considerable height, speckled with cattle, which are exquisitely picturesque, as they graze upon the knolls and among the old trees, that adorn this finely declining park.

Leaving the hamlet of Watermillock at some distance on the left, and passing the seat of Mr. Robinson, sequestered in the gloom of beech and sycamores, there are fine views over the second reach, as the road descends the common towards Gowbarrow. Among the boldest fells, that breast the lake on the left shore, are Holling-fell and Swarth-fell, now no longer boasting any part of the forest of Martindale, but shewing huge walls of naked rock, and scars, which many torrents have inflicted. One channel only in this dry season retained its shining stream; the chasm was dreadful, parting the mountain from the summit to the base; and its waters in winter, leaping in foam from precipice to precipice, must be infinitely sublime; not, however, even then from their mass, but from the length and precipitancy of their descent.

The perspective as the road descends into Gowbarrow-park is perhaps the very finest on the lake. The scenery of the first reach is almost tame when compared with this, and it is difficult to say where it can be equalled for Alpine sublimity, and for effecting wonder and awful elevation. The lake, after expanding at a distance to great breadth, once more loses itself beyond the enormous pile of rock called Place-fell, opposite to which the shore, seeming to close upon all further progress, is bounded by two promontories covered with woods, that shoot their luxuriant foliage to the water’s edge. The shattered mass of gray rock, called Yew-crag, rises immediately over these, and, beyond, a glen opens to a chaos of mountains more solemn in their aspect, and singular in their shapes, than any which have appeared, point crowding over point in lofty succession. Among these is Stone-cross-pike and huge Helvellyn, scowling over all; but, though this retains its pre eminence, its dignity is lost in the mass of alps around and below it. A fearful gloom involved them; the shadows of a stormy sky upon mountains of dark rock and heath. All this is seen over the woody foreground of the park, which, soon shrouding us in its bowery lanes, allowed the eye and the fancy to repose, while venturing towards new forms and assemblages of sublimity.

Meantime, the green shade, under which we passed, where the sultry low of cattle, and the sound of streams hurrying from the heights through the copses of Gowbarrow to the lake below, were all that broke the stillness; these, with gleamings of the water, close on the left, between the foliage, and which was ever changing its hue, sometimes assuming the soft

purple of a pigeon’s neck, at others the silvery tint of sunshine — these circumstances of imagery were in soothing and beautiful variety with the gigantic visions we had lost.

The road still pursuing this border of the lake, the copses opened to partial views of the bold rocks, that form the opposite shore, and many a wild recess and solemn glen appeared and vanished among them, some shewing only broken fells, the sides of others shaggy with forests, and nearly all lined, at their bases, with narrow pastures of the most exquisite verdure. Thus descending upon a succession of sweeping bays, where the shades parted, and admitted the lake, that flowed even with us, and again retreating from it over gentle eminences, where it glittered only between the leaves; crossing the rude bridges of several becks, rapid, clear and foaming among dark stones, and receiving a green tint from the closely shadowing trees, but neither precipitous enough in their descent, nor ample enough in their course, to increase the dignity of the scene, we came, after passing nearly three miles through the park, to Lyulph’s Tower. This mansion, a square, gray edifice, with turreted corners, battlements and windows in the Gothic style, has been built by the present Duke of Norfolk in one of the finest situations of a park, abounding with views of the grand and the sublime. It stands on a green eminence, a little removed from the water, backed with wood and with pastures rising abruptly beyond, to the cliffs and crags that crown them. In front, the ground falls finely to the lake’s edge, broken, yet gentle, and scattered over with old trees, and darkened with copses, which mingle in fine variety of tints with the light verdure of the turf beneath. Herds of deer, wandering over the knolls, and cattle, reposing in the shade, completed this sweet landscape.

The lake is hence seen to make one of its boldest expanses, as it sweeps round Place-fell, and flows into the third and last bend of this wonderful vale. Lyulph’s Tower looks up this reach to the south, and to the east traces all the fells and curving banks of Gowbarrow, that bind the second; while, to the west, a dark glen opens to a glimpse of the solemn alps round Helvellyn; and all these objects are seen over the mild beauty of the park.

Passing fine sweeps of the shore and over bold headlands, we came opposite to the vast promontory, called Place-fell, that pushes its craggy foot into the lake, like a lion’s claw, round which the waters make a sudden turn, and enter Patterdale, their third and final expanse. In this reach, they

lose the form of a river, and resume that of a lake, being closed, at three miles distance, by the ruinous rocks, that guard the gorge of Patterdale, backed by a multitude of fells. The water, in this scope, is of oval form, bounded on one side by the precipices of Place-fell, Martindale-fell, and several others equally rude and awful that rise from its edge, and shew no lines of verdure, or masses of wood, but retire in rocky bays, or project in vast promontories athwart it. The opposite shore is less severe and more romantic; the rocks are lower and richly wooded, and, often receding from the water, leave room for a tract of pasture, meadow land and corn, to margin their ruggedness. At the upper end, the village of Patterdale, and one or two white farms, peep out from among trees beneath the scowling mountains, that close the scene; pitched in a rocky nook, with corn and meadow land, sloping gently in front to the lake, and, here and there, a scattered grove. But this scene is viewed to more advantage from one of the two woody eminences, that overhang the lake, just at the point where it forms its last angle, and, like an opened compass, spreads its two arms before the eye. These heights are extremely beautiful, viewed from the opposite shore, and had long charmed us at a distance. Approaching them, we crossed another torrent, Glencoyn-beck, or Airey-force, which here divides not only the estates of the Duke of Norfolk and Mr. Hodgkinson, but the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland; and all the fells beyond, that enclose the last bend of Ullswater, are in Patterdale. Here, on the right, at the feet of awful rocks, was spread a gay autumnal scene, in which the peasants were singing merrily as they gathered the oats into sheafs; woods, turfy hillocks, and, above all, tremendous crags, abruptly closing round the yellow harvest. The figures, together with the whole landscape, resembled one of those beautifully fantastic scenes, which fable calls up before the wand of the magician.

Entering Glencoyn woods and sweeping the boldest bay of the lake, while the water dashed with a strong surge upon the shore, we at length mounted a road frightful from its steepness and its crags, and gained one of the wooded summits so long admired. From hence the view of Ullswater is the most extensive and various, that its shores exhibit, comprehending its two principal reaches, and though not the most picturesque, it is certainly the most grand. To the east, extends the middle sweep in long and equal perspective, walled with barren fells on the right,

and margined on the left with the pastoral recesses and bowery projections of Gowbarrow park. The rude mountains above almost seemed to have fallen back from the shore to admit this landscape within their hollow bosom, and then, bending abruptly, appear, like Milton's Adam viewing the sleeping Eve, to hang over it enamoured.

Lyulph's Tower is the only object of art, except the hamlet of Watermillock, seen in the distant perspective, that appears in the second bend of Ullswater; and this loses much of its effect from the square uniformity of the structure, and the glaring green of its painted windowcases. This is the longest reach of the lake.

Place-fell, which divides the two last bends, and was immediately opposite to the point we were on, is of the boldest form. It projects into the water, an enormous mass of grey crag, scarred with dark hues; thence retiring a little it again bends forward in huge cliffs, and finally starts up into a vast perpendicular face of rock. As a single object, it is wonderfully grand; and, connected with the scene, its effect is sublime. The lower rocks are called Silver-rays, and not inaptly; for, when the sun shines upon them, their variegated sides somewhat resemble in brightness the rays streaming beneath a cloud.

The last reach of Ullswater, which is on the right of this point, expands into an oval, and its majestic surface is spotted with little rocky islets, that would adorn a less sacred scene; here they are prettinesses, that can scarcely be tolerated by the grandeur of its character. The tremendous mountains, which scowl over the gorge of Patterdale; the cliffs, massy, broken and overlooked by a multitude of dark summits, with the grey walls of Swarth and Martindale fells, that upheave themselves on the eastern shore, form altogether one of the most grand and awful pictures on the lake; yet, admirable and impressive as it is, as to solemnity and astonishment, its effect with us was not equal to that of the more alpine sketch, caught in distant perspective from the descent into Gowbarrow-park.

In these views of Ullswater, sublimity and greatness are the predominating characters, though beauty often glows upon the western bank. The mountains are all bold, gloomy and severe. When we saw them, the sky accorded well with the scene, being frequently darkened by autumnal clouds; and the equinoctial gale swept the surface of the lake,

marking its blackness with long white lines, and beating its waves over the rocks to the foliage of the thickets above. The trees, that shade these eminences, give greater force to the scenes, which they either partially exclude, or wholly admit, and become themselves fine objects, enriched as they are with the darkest moss.

From hence the ride to the village of Patterdale, at the lake's head, is, for the first part, over precipices covered with wood, whence you look down, on the left, upon the water, or upon pastures stretching to it; on the right, the rocks rise abruptly, and often impend their masses over the road; or open to narrow dells, green, rocky and overlooked by endless mountains.

About half way to the village of Patterdale, a peninsula spreads from this shore into the lake, where a white house, peeping from a grove and surrounded with green enclosures, is beautifully placed. This is an inn, and, perhaps, the principal one, as to accommodation; but, though its situation, on a spot which on each side commands the lake, is very fine, it is not comparable, in point of wildness and sublimity, to that of the cottage, called the King's Arms, at Patterdale. In the way thither, are enchanting catches of the lake, between the trees on the left, and peeps into the glens, that wind among the alps towards Helvellyn, on the right. These multiply near the head of Ullswater, where they start off as from one point, like radii, and conclude in trackless solitudes.

It is difficult to spread varied pictures of such scenes before the imagination. A repetition of the same images of rock, wood and water, and the same epithets of grand, vast and sublime, which necessarily occur, must appear tautologous, on paper, though their archetypes in nature, ever varying in outline, or arrangement, exhibit new visions to the eye, and produce new shades of effect on the mind. It is difficult also, where these delightful differences have been experienced, to forbear dwelling on the remembrance, and attempting to sketch the peculiarities, which occasioned them. The scenery at the head of Ullswater is especially productive of such difficulties, where a wish to present the picture, and a consciousness of the impossibility of doing so, except by the pencil, meet and oppose each other.

Patterdale itself is a name somewhat familiar to recollection, from the circumstance of the chief estate in it having given to its possessors, for

several centuries, the title of Kings of Patterdale. The last person so distinguished was richer than his ancestors, having increased his income, by the most ludicrous parsimony, to a thousand pounds a year. His son and successor is an industrious country gentleman, who has improved the sort of farming mansion, annexed to the estate, and, not affecting to depart much from the simple manners of the other inhabitants, is respectable enough to be generally called by his own name of Mounsey, instead of the title, which was probably seldom given to his ancestors, but in some sort of mockery.

The village is very humble, as to the conditions and views of the inhabitants; and very respectable, as to their integrity and simplicity, and to the contentment, which is proved by the infrequency of emigrations to other districts. It straggles at the feet of fells, somewhat removed from the lake and near the entrance of the wild vale of Glenridding. Its white church is seen nearly from the commencement of the last reach, rising among trees, and in the church-yard are the ruins of an antient yew, of remarkable size and venerable beauty; its trunk, hollowed and silvered by age, resembles twisted roots; yet the branches, that remain above, are not of melancholy black, but flourish in rich verdure and flaky foliage.

The inn is beyond the village, securely sheltered under high crags, while enormous fells, close on the right, open to the gorge of Patterdale; and Coldrill-beck, issuing from it, descends among the corn and meadows, to join the lake at a little distance. We had a happy evening at this cleanly cottage, where there was no want, without its recompense, from the civil offices of the people. Among the rocks, that rose over it, is a station, which has been more frequently selected than any other on the lake by the painter and the lover of the *bean idée*, as the French and Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS expressively term what Mr. BURKE explains in his definition of the word *fine*. Below the point, on which we stood, a tract of corn and meadow land fell gently to the lake, which expanded in great majesty beyond, bounded on the right by the precipices of many fells, and, on the left, by rocks finely wooded, and of more broken and spiry outline. The undulating pastures and copses of Gowbarrow closed the perspective. Round the whole of these shores, but particularly on the left, rose clusters of dark and pointed summits, assuming great variety of shape, amongst which Helvellyn was still preeminent. Immediately around us, all was vast

and gloomy; the fells mount swiftly and to enormous heights, leaving at their bases only crags and hillock, tufted with thickets of dwarf-oak and holly, where the beautiful cattle, that adorned them, and a few sheep, were picking a scanty supper among the heath.

From this spot glens open on either hand, that lead the eye only to a chaos of mountains. The profile of one near the sore-ground on the right is remarkably grand, shelving from the summit in one vast sweep of rock, with only some interruption of craggy points near its base, into the water. On one side, it unites with the fells in the gorge of Patterdale, and, on the other, winds into a bold bay for the lake. Among the highlands, seen over the left shore, is Common-fell, a large heathy mountain, which appeared to face us. Somewhat nearer, is a lower one, called Glenridding, and above it the Nab. Grassdale has Glenridding and the Nab on one side towards the water, and Birks-fell and St. Sunday's-crag over that, on the other. The points, that rise above the Nab, are Stridon-edge, then Cove's head, and, over all, the precipices of dark Helvellyn, now appearing only at intervals among the clouds.

Not only every fell of this wild region has a name, but almost every crag of every fell, so that shepherds sitting at the fireside can direct each other to the exact spot among the mountains, where a stray sheep has been seen.

Among the rocks on the right shore, is Martindale-fell, once shaded with a forest, from which it received its name, and which spreading to a vast extent over the hills and vallies beyond, even as far as Hawswater, darkened the front of Swarth-fell and several others, that impend over the first and second reach of Ullswater. Of the mountains, which tower above the glen of Patterdale, the highest are Harter's-fell, Kidstowpike, and the ridge, called the Highstreet; a name, which reminded us of the German denomination, *Berg strasse.*

The effect of a stormy evening upon the scenery was solemn. Clouds smoked along the fells, veiling them for a moment, and passing on to other summits; or sometimes they involved the lower steeps, leaving the tops unobscured and resembling islands in a distant ocean. The lake was dark and tempestuous, dashing the rocks with a strong foam. It was a scene worthy of the sublimity of Ossian, and brought to recollection some touches of his gloomy pencil. '"When the storms of the mountains come, when the north lifts the waves on high, I sit by the sounding shore, &c."'

A large hawk, sailing proudly in the air, and wheeling among the stormy clouds, superior to the shock of the gust, was the only animated object in the upward prospect. We were told, that the eagles had forsaken their aeries in this neighbourhood and in Borrowdale, and are fled to the isle of Man; but one had been seen in Patterdale, the day before, which, not being at its full growth, could not have arrived from a great distance.

We returned to our low-roofed habitation, where, as the wind swept in hollow gusts along the mountains and strove against our casements, the crackling blaze of a wood fire lighted up the cheerfulness, which, so long since as Juvenal's time, has been allowed to arise from the contrast of ease against difficulty. *Suave mari magno, turbantibus aequora ventis;* and, however we might exclaim,

— "be my retreat
Between the groaning forest and the shore,
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves!"
it was pleasant to add,
"Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom."

4.6. BROUGHAM CASTLE .

THE next morning, we proceeded from Ullswater along the vale of Emont, so sweetly adorned by the woods and lawns of Dalemain, the seat of Mr. Hassel, whose mansion is seen in the bottom. One of the most magnificent prospects in the country is when this vale opens to that of Eden. The mountainous range of Crossfell fronted us, and its appearance, this day, was very striking, for the effect of autumnal light and shade. The upper range, bright in sunshine, appeared to rise, like light clouds above the lower, which was involved in dark shadow, so that it was a considerable time before the eye could detect the illusion. The effect of this was inexpressibly interesting.

Within view of Emont bridge, which divides the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is that memorial of antient times, so often described under the name of Arthur’s Round Table; a green circular spot of forty paces diameter, inclosed by a dry ditch, and, beyond this, by a bank; each in sufficient preservation to shew exactly what has been its form. In the midst of the larger circle is another of only seven paces diameter. We have no means of adding to, or even of corroborating any of the well known conjectures, concerning the use of this rude and certainly very antient monument. Those not qualified to propose decisions in this respect may, however, suffer themselves to believe, that the bank without the ditch and the enclosure within it were places for different classes of persons, interested as parties, or spectators, in some transactions, passing within the inner circle; and that these, whether religious, civil, or military ceremonies, were rendered distinct and conspicuous, for the purpose of impressing them upon the memory of the spectators, at a time when memory and tradition were the only preservatives of history.

Passing a bridge, under which the Lowther, from winding and romantic banks, enters the vale of Eden, we ascended between the groves of Bird’s Nest, or, as it is now called, Brougham Hall; a white mansion, with battlements and gothic windows, having formerly a bird painted on the front. It is perched among woods, on the brow of a steep, but not lofty hill, and commands enchanting prospects over the vale. The winding Emont; the ruins of Brougham Castle on a green knoll of Whinsield park,

surrounded with old groves; far beyond this, the highlands of Crossfell; to the north, Carleton-hall, the handsome modern mansion of Mr. Wallace, amidst lawns of incomparable verdure and luxuriant woods falling from the heights; further still, the mountain, town and beacon of Penrith; these are the principal features of the rich landscape, spread before the eye from the summit of the hill, at Bird's Nest.

As we descended to Brougham Castle, about a mile further, its ruined masses of pale red stone, tufted with shrubs and plants, appeared between groves of fir, beach, oak and ash, amidst the broken ground of Whinfield park, a quarter of a mile through which brought us to the ruin itself. It was guarded by a sturdy mastiff, worthy the office of porter to such a place, and a good effigy of the Sir Porter of a former age. Brougham Castle, venerable for its wellcertified antiquity and for the hoary masses it now exhibits, is rendered more interesting by having been occasionally the residence of the humane and generous Sir Philip Sydney; who had only to look from the windows of this once noble edifice to see his own '"Arcadia"' spreading on every side. The landscape probably awakened his imagination, for it was during a visit here, that the greatest part of that work was written.

This edifice, once amongst the strongest and most important of the border fortresses, is supposed to have been founded by the Romans; but the first historical record concerning it is dated in the time of William the Conqueror, who granted it to his nephew, Hugh de Albinois. His successors held it, till 1170, when Hugh de Morville, one of the murderers of Thomas a Becket, forfeited it by his crime. Brougham was afterwards granted by King John to a grandson of Hugh, Robert de Vipont, whose grandson again forfeited the estate, which was, however, restored to his daughters, one of whom marrying a De Clifford, it remained in this family, till a daughter of the celebrated Countess of Pembroke gave it by marriage to that of the Tuftons, Earls of Thanet, in which it now remains.

This castle has been thrice nearly demolished; first by neglect, during the minority of Roger de Vipont, after which it was sufficiently restored to receive James the First, on his return from Scotland, in 1617; secondly, in the civil wars of Charles the First's time; and thirdly, in 1728, when great part of the edifice was deliberately taken down, and the materials sold for one hundred pounds. Some of the walls still remaining are twelve feet

thick, and the places are visible, in which the massy gates were held to them by hinges and bolts of uncommon size. A fuller proof of the many sacrifices of comfort and convenience, by which the highest classes in former ages were glad to purchase security, is very seldom afforded, than by the three detached parts still left of this edifice; but they shew nothing of the magnificence and gracefulness, which so often charm the eye in gothic ruins. Instead of these, they exhibit symptoms of the cruelties, by which their first lords revenged upon others the wretchedness of the continual suspicion felt by themselves. Dungeons, secret passages and heavy iron rings remain to hint of unhappy wretches, who were, perhaps, rescued only by death from these horrible engines of a tyrant's will. The bones probably of such victims are laid beneath the damp earth of these vaults.

A young woman from a neighbouring farm-house conducted us over broken banks, washed by the Emont, to what had been the grand entrance of the castle; a venerable gothic gateway, dark and of great depth, passing under a square tower, sinely shadowed by old elms. Above, are a cross-loop and two tier of small pointed windows; no battlements appear at the top; but four rows of corbells, which probably once supported them, now prop some tufts of antient thorn, that have roots in their fractures.

As we passed under this long gateway, we looked into what is still called the Keep, a small vaulted room, receiving light only from loops in the outward wall. Near a large fire-place, yet entire, is a trap door leading to the dungeon below; and, in an opposite corner, a door-case to narrow stairs, that wind up the turret, where too, as well as in the vault, prisoners were probably secured. One almost saw the surly keeper descending through this door-case, and heard him rattle the keys of the chambers above, listening with indifference to the clank of chains and to the echo of that groan below, which seemed to rend the heart it burst from.

This gloomy gateway, which had once sounded with the trumpets and horses of James the First, when he visited the Earl of Cumberland, this gateway, now serving only to shelter cattle from the storm, opens, at length, to a grassy knoll, with bold masses of the ruin scattered round it and a few old ash trees, waving in the area. Through a fractured arch in the rampart some features in the scenery without appear to advantage; the Emont falling over a weir at some distance, with fulling-mills on the bank

above; beyond, the pastured slopes and woodlands of Carleton park, and Crossfell sweeping the background.

Of the three ruinous parts, that now remain of the edifice, one large square mass, near the tower and gateway, appears to have contained the principal apartments; the walls are of great height, and, though roofless, nearly entire. We entered what seemed to have been the great hall, now choaked with rubbish and weeds. It was interesting to look upwards through the void, and trace by the many windowcases, that appeared at different heights in the walls, somewhat of the plan of apartments, whose floors and ceilings had long since vanished; majestic reliques, which shewed, that here, as well as at Hardwick, the chief rooms had been in the second story. Door-cases, that had opened to rooms without this building, with remains of passages within the walls, were frequently seen, and, here and there, in a corner at a vast height, fragments of a winding staircase, appearing beyond the arch of a slender doorway.

We were tempted to enter a ruinous passage below, formed in the great thickness of the walls; but it was soon lost in darkness, and we were told that no person had ventured to explore the end of this, or of many similar passages among the ruins, now the dens of serpents and other venomous reptiles. It was probably a secret way to the great dungeon, which may still be seen, underneath the hall; for the roof remains, though what was called the Sweating Pillar, from the dew, that was owing to its damp situation and its seclusion from outward air, no longer supports it. Large iron rings, fastened to the carved heads of animals, are still shewn in the walls of this dungeon. Not a single loop-hole was left by the contriver of this hideous vault for the refreshment of prisoners; yet were they insulted by some display of gothic elegance, for the pillar already mentioned, supporting the centre of the roof, spread from thence into eight branches, which descended the walls, and terminated at the floor in the heads, holding the iron rings.

The second mass of the ruin, which, though at a considerable distance from the main building, was formerly connected with it, shews the walls of many small chambers, with reliques of the passages and stairs, that led to them. But, perhaps, the only picturesque feature of the castle is the third detachment; a small tower finely shattered, having near its top a flourishing ash, growing from the solid walls, and overlooking what was

once the moat. We mounted a perilous staircase, of which many steps were gone, and others trembled to the pressure; then gained a turret, of which two sides were also fallen, and, at length, ascended to the whole magnificence and sublimity of the prospect.

To the east, spread nearly all the rich vale of Eden, terminated by the Stainmore hills and other highlands of Yorkshire; to the northeast, the mountains of Crossfell bounded the long landscape. The nearer grounds were Whinfield-park, broken, towards the Emont, into shrubby steeps, where the deep red of the soil mingled with the verdure of foliage; part of Sir Michael le Fleming's woods rounding a hill on the opposite bank, and, beyond, a wide extent of low land. To the south, swelled the upland boundaries of Bamptonvale, with Lowther-woods, shading the pastures and distantly crowned by the fells of Hawswater; more to the west, Bird's Nest, '"bosomed high in tufted trees;"' at its foot, Lowther-bridge, and, a little further, the neat hamlet and bridge of Emont. In the low lands, still nearer, the Lowther and Emont united, the latter flowing in shining circles among the woods and deep-green meadows of Carleton-park. Beyond, at a vast distance to the west and north, rose all the alps of all the lakes! an horizon scarcely to be equalled in England. Among these broken mountains, the shaggy ridge of Saddleback was proudly preeminent; but one forked top of its rival Skiddaw peeped over its declining side. Helvellyn, huge and misshapen, towered above the fells of Ullswater. The sun's rays, streaming from beneath a line of dark clouds, that overhung the west, gave a tint of silvery light to all these alps, and reminded us of the first exquisite appearance of the mountains, at Goodesberg, which, however, in grandeur and elegance of outline, united with picturesque richness, we have never seen equalled.

Of the walls around us every ledge, marking their many stories, was embossed with luxuriant vegetation. Tufts of the hawthorn seemed to grow from the solid stone, and slender saplings of ash waved over the deserted door-cases, where, at the transforming hour of twilight, the superstitious eye might mistake them for spectres of some early possessor of the castle, restless from guilt, or of some sufferer persevering from vengeance.

4.7. THE TOWN AND BEACON OF PENRITH .

HAVING pursued the road one mile further, for the purpose of visiting the tender memorial of pious affection, so often described under the name of Countess' Pillar, we returned to Emontbridge, and from thence reached Penrith, pronounced Peyrith, the most southern town of Cumberland. So far off as the head of Ullswater, fourteen miles, this is talked of as an important place, and looked to as the storehouse of whatever is wanted more than the fields and lakes supply. Those, who have lived chiefly in large towns, have to learn from the wants and dependencies of a people thinly scattered, like the inhabitants of all mountainous regions, the great value of any places of mutual resort, however little distinguished in the general view of a country. Penrith is so often mentioned in the neighbourhood, that the first appearance of it somewhat disappointed us, because we had not considered how many serious reasons those, who talked of it, might have for their estimation, which should yet not at all relate to the qualities, that render places interesting to a traveller.

The town, consisting chiefly of old houses, straggles along two sides of the high north road, and is built upon the side of a mountain, that towers to great height above it, in steep and heathy knolls, unshaded by a single tree. Eminent, on the summit of this mountain, stands the old, solitary beacon, visible from almost every part of Penrith, which, notwithstanding its many symptoms of antiquity, is not deficient of neatness. The houses are chiefly white, with door and window cases of the red stone found in the neighbourhood. Some of the smaller have over their doors dates of the latter end of the sixteenth century. There are several inns, of which that called Old Buchanan's was recommended to us, first, by the recollection, that Mr. Gray had mentioned it, and afterwards by the comfort and civility we found there.

Some traces of the Scottish dialect and pronunciation appear as far south as Lancashire; in Westmoreland, they become stronger; and, at Penrith, are extremely distinct and general, serving for one among many peaceful indications of an approach, once notified chiefly by preparations for hostility, or defence. Penrith is the most southern town in England at which the guinea notes of the Scotch bank are in circulation. The beacon, a

sort of square tower, with a peaked roof and openings at the sides, is a more perfect instance of the direful necessities of past ages, than would be expected to remain in this. The circumstances are well known, which made such watchfulness especially proper, at Penrith; and the other traces of warlike habits and precautions, whether appearing in records, or buildings, are too numerous to be noticed in a sketch, which rather pretends to describe what the author has seen, than to enumerate what has been discovered by the researches of others. Dr. Burn's History contains many curious particulars; and there are otherwise abundant and satisfactory memorials, as to the state of the debateable ground, the regulations for securing passes or fords, and even to the public maintenance of slough dogs, which were to pursue aggressors with hot trod, as the inhabitants were to follow them by horn and voice. These are all testimonies, that among the many evils, inflicted upon countries by war, that, which is not commonly thought of, is not the least; the public encouragement of a disposition to violence, under the names of gallantry, or valour, which will not cease exactly when it is publicly prohibited; and the education of numerous bodies to habits of supplying their wants, not by constant and useful labour, but by sudden and destructive exertions of force. The mistake, by which courage is released from all moral estimation of the purposes, for which it is exerted, and is considered to be necessarily and universally a good in itself, rather than a means of good, or of evil, according to its application, is among the severest misfortunes of mankind. Tacitus has an admirable reproof of it —

"Ubi manu agitur, modestia et probitas nomina superioris sunt."

Though the situation of Penrith, looking up the vales of Eden and Emont, is remarkably pleasant, that of the beacon above is infinitely finer, commanding an horizon of at least an hundred miles diameter, filled with an endless variety of beauty, greatness and sublimity. The view extends over Cumberland, parts of Westmoreland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and a corner of Northumberland and Durham. On a clear day, the Scottish high lands, beyond Solway Firth, may be distinguished, like faint clouds, on the horizon, and the steeples of Carlisle are plainly visible. All the intervening country, speckled with towns and villages, is spread beneath the eye, and, nearly eighty miles to the eastward, part of the Cheviot-hills are traced, a dark line, binding the distance and marking the separation between earth

and sky. On the plains towards Carlisle, the nearer ridges of Crossfell are seen to commence, and thence stretch their barren steeps thirty miles towards the east, where they disappear among the Stainmorehills and the huge moorlands of Yorkshire, that close up the long landscape of the vale of Eden. Among these, the broken lines of Ingleborough start above all the broader ones of the moors, and that mountain still proclaims itself sovereign of the Yorkshire heights.

Southward, rise the wonders of Westmoreland, Shapfells, ridge over ridge, the nearer pikes of Hawswater, and then the mountains of Ullswater, Helvellyn preeminent amongst them, distinguished by the grandeur and boldness of their outline, as well as the variety of their shapes; some hugely swelling, some aspiring in clusters of alpine points, and some broken into shaggy ridges. The sky, westward from hence and far to the north, displays a vision of Alps, Saddleback spreading towards Keswick its long shattered ridge, and one top of Skiddaw peering beyond it; but the others of this district are inferior in grandeur to the fells of Ullswater, more broken into points, and with less of contrast in their forms. Behind Saddleback, the skirts of Skiddaw spread themselves, and thence low hills shelve into the plains of Cumberland, that extend to Whitehaven; the only level line in the scope of this vast horizon. The scenery nearer to the eye exhibited cultivation in its richest state, varied with pastoral and sylvan beauty; landscapes embellished by the elegancies of art, and rendered venerable by the ruins of time. In the vale of Eden, Carleton-hall, flourishing under the hand of careful attention, and Bird’s Nest, luxuriant in its spiry woods, opposed their cheerful beauties to the neglected walls of Brougham Castle, once the terror, and, even in ruins, the pride of the scene, now half-shrouded in its melancholy grove. These objects were lighted up by partial gleams of sunshine, which, as they fled along the valley, gave magical effect to all they touched.

The other vales in the home prospect were those of Bampton and Emont; the first open and gentle, shaded by the gradual woods of Lowther-park; the last closer and more romantic, withdrawing in many a lingering bend towards Ullswater, where it is closed by the pyramidal Dunmallard, but not before a gleam of the lake is suffered to appear beyond the dark base of the hill. At the nearer end of the vale, and immediately under the eye, the venerable ruins of Penrith Castle crest a round green hill. These

are of palered stone, and stand in detached masses; but have little that is picturesque in their appearance, time having spared neither tower, or gateway, and not a single tree giving shade, or force, to the shattered walls. The ground about the castle is broken into grassy knolls, and only cattle wander over the desolated tract. Time has also obscured the name of the founder; but it is known, that the main building was repaired, and some addition made to it by Richard the Third, when Duke of Gloucester, who lived here, for five years, in his office of sheriff of Cumberland, promoting the York interest by artful hospitalities, and endeavouring to strike terror into the Lancastrians. Among the ruins is a subterraneous passage, leading to a house in Penrith, above three hundred yards distant, called Dockwray Castle. The town lies between the fortress and the Beacon-hill, spreading prettily along the skirts of the mountain, with its many roofs of blue slate, among which the church rises near a dark grove.

Penrith, from the latter end of the last century, till lately, when it was purchased by the Duke of Devonshire, belonged to the family of Portland, to whom it was given by William the Third; probably instead of the manors in Wales, which it was one of William’s few faulty designs to have given to his favourite companion, had not Parliament remonstrated, and informed him, that the Crown could not alienate the territories of the Principality. The church, a building of red stone, unusually well disposed in the interior, is a vicarage of small endowment; but the value of money in this part of the kingdom is so high, that the merit of independence, a merit and a happiness which should always belong to clergymen, is attainable by the possessors of very moderate incomes. What is called the Giant’s Grave in the church yard is a narrow spot, inclosed, to the length of fourteen or fifteen feet, by rows of low stones, at the sides, and, at the ends, by two pillars, now slender, but apparently worn by the weather from a greater thickness. The height of these is eleven or twelve feet; and all the stones, whether in the borders, at the sides, or in these pillars, bear traces of rude carving, which shew, at least, that the monument must have been thought very important by those that raised it, since the singularity of its size was not held a sufficient distinction. We pored intently over these traces, though certainly without the hope of discovering any thing not known to the eminent antiquarians, who have confessed their ignorance concerning the origin of them.

4.8. FROM PENRITH TO KESWICK .

THE Graystock road, which we took for the first five or sixmiles, is uninteresting, and offers nothing worthy of attention, before the approach to the castle, the seat of the Duke of Norfolk. The appearance of this from the road is good; a gray building, with gothic towers, seated in a valley among lawns and woods, that stretch, with great pomp of shade, to gently-rising hills. Behind these, Saddleback, huge, gray and barren, rises with all its ridgy lines; a grand and simple background, giving exquisite effect to the dark woods below. Such is the height of the mountain, that, though eight or ten miles off, it appeared, as we approached the castle, almost to impend over it. Southward from Saddleback, a multitude of pointed summits crowd the horizon; and it is most interesting, after leaving Graystock, to observe their changing attitudes, as you advance, and the gradual disclosure of their larger features. Perhaps, a sudden display of the sublimest scenery, however full, imparts less emotion, than a gradually increasing view of it; when expectation takes the highest tone, and imagination finishes the sketch.

About two miles beyond Graystock, the moorlands commence, and, as far as simple greatness constitutes sublimity, this was, indeed, a sublime prospect; less so only than that from Shapfell itself, where the mountains are not so varied in their forms and are plainer in their grandeur. We were on a vast plain, if plain that may be called, which swells into long undulations, surrounded by an amphitheatre of heathy mountains, that seem to have been shook by some grand convulsion of the earth, and tumbled around in all shapes. Not a tree, a hedge, and seldom even a stone wall, broke the grandeur of their lines; what was not heath was only rock and gray crags; and a shepherd’s hut, or his flocks, browsing on the steep sides of the fells, or in the narrow vallies, that opened distantly, was all that diversified the vast scene. Saddleback spread his skirts westward along the plain, and then reared himself in terrible and lonely majesty. In the long perspective beyond, were the crowding points of the fells round Keswick, Borrowdale, and the vales of St. John and Leyberthwaite, stretching away to those near Grasmere. The weather was in solemn harmony with the scenery; long shadows swept over the hills, followed by

gleaming lights. Tempestuous gusts alone broke the silence. Now and then, the sun’s rays had a singular appearance; pouring, from under clouds, between the tops of fells into some deep vale, at a distance, as into a focus.

This is the very region, which the wild fancy of a poet, like Shakespeare, would people with witches, and shew them at their incantations, calling spirits from the clouds and spectres from the earth.

On the now lonely plains of this vast amphitheatre, the Romans had two camps, and their Eagle spread its wings over a scene worthy of its own soarings. The lines of these encampments may still be traced on that part of the plain, called Hutton Moor, to the north of the high road; and over its whole extent towards Keswick a Roman way has been discovered. Funereal urns have also been dug up here, and an altar of Roman form, but with the inscription obliterated.

Nearer Saddleback, we perceived crags and heath mingling on its precipices, and its base broken into a little world of mountains, green with cultivation. White farms, each with its grove to shelter it from the descending gusts, corn and pastures of the brightest verdure enlivened the skirts of the mountain all round, climbing towards the dark heath and crags, or spreading downwards into the vale of Threlkeld, where the slender Lowther shews his shining stream.

Leaving Hutton Moor, the road soon began to ascend the skirts of Saddleback, and passed between green hillocks, where cattle appeared most elegantly in the mountain scene, under the crags, or sipping at the clear stream, that gushed from the rocks, and wound to the vale below. Such crystal rivulets crossed our way continually, as we rose upon the side of Saddleback, which towers abruptly on the right, and, on the left, sinks as suddenly into the vale of Threlkeld, with precipices sometimes little less than tremendous. This mountain is the northern boundary of the vale in its whole length to Keswick, the points of whose fells close the perspective. Rocky heights guard it to the south. The valley between is green, without wood, and, with much that is grand, has little beautiful, till near its conclusion; where, more fertile and still more wild, it divides into three narrower vallies, two of which disclose scenes of such sublime severity as even our long view of Saddleback had not prepared us to expect.

The first of these is the vale of St. John, a narrow, cultivated spot, lying in the bosom of tremendous rocks, that impend over it in masses of gray crag, and often resemble the ruins of castles. These rocks are overlooked by still more awful mountains, that fall in abrupt lines, and close up the vista, except where they also are commanded by the vast top of Helvellyn. On every side, are images of desolation and stupendous greatness, closing upon a narrow line of pastoral richness; a picture of verdant beauty, seen through a frame of rock work. It is between the cliffs of Threlkeld-fell and the purple ridge of Nadale-fell, that this vale seems to repose in its most silent and perfect peace. No village and scarcely a cottage disturbs its retirement. The flocks, that feed at the feet of the cliffs, and the steps of a shepherd, ‘“in this office of his mountain watch,”’ are all, that haunt the ‘“dark sequestered nook.”’

The vale of Nadale runs parallel with that of St. John, from which it is separated by the ridge of Nadale-fell, and has the same style of character, except that it is terminated by a well wooded mountain. Beyond this, the perspective is overlooked by the fells, that terminate the vale of St. John.

The third valley, opening from the head of Threlkeld, winds along the feet of Saddleback and Skiddaw to Keswick, the approach to which, with all its world of rocky summits, the lake being still sunk below the sight, is sublime beyond the power of description. Within three miles of Keswick, Skiddaw unfolds itself, close behind Saddleback; their skirts unite, but the former is less huge and of very different form from the last; being more pointed and seldomer broken into precipices, it darts upward with a vast sweep into three spiry summits, two of which only are seen from this road, and shews sides dark with heath and little varied with rock. Such is its aspect from the Penrith road; from other stations its attitude, shape and colouring are very different, though its alpine terminations are always visible.

Threlkeld itself is a small village, about thirteen miles from Penrith, with a very humble inn, at which those, who have passed the bleak sides of Saddleback, and those, who are entering upon them, may rejoice to rest. We had been blown about, for some hours, in an open chaise, and hoped for more refreshment than could be obtained; but had the satisfaction, which was, indeed, general in these regions, of observing the good intentions, amounting almost to kindness, of the cottagers towards their

guests. They have nearly always some fare, which less civility than theirs might render acceptable; and the hearth blazes in their clean sanded parlours, within two minutes after you enter them. Some sort of preserved fruit is constantly ferved after the repast, with cream, an innocent luxury, for which no animal has died.

It is not only from those, who are to gain by strangers, but from almost every person, accidentally accosted by a question, that this favourable opinion will be formed, as to the kind and frank manners of the people. We were continually remarking, between Lancaster and Keswick, that severe as the winter might be in these districts, from the early symptoms of it then apparent, the conduct of the people would render it scarcely unpleasant to take the same journey in the depths of December.

In these countries, the farms are, for the most part, small, and the farmers and their children work in the same fields with their servants. Their families have thus no opportunities of temporary insight into the society, and luxuries of the great, and have none of those miseries, which dejected vanity and multiplied wishes inflict upon the pursuers of the higher ranks. They are also without the baseness, which such pursuers usually have, of becoming abject before persons of one class, that by the authority of an apparent connection with them, they may be insolent to those of another; and are free from the essential humiliation of shewing, by a general and undistinguishing admiration of all persons richer than themselves, that the original distinctions between virtue and vice have been erased from their minds by the habit of comparing the high and the low.

The true consciousness of independence, which labour and an ignorance of the vain appendages, falsely called luxuries, give to the inhabitants of these districts, is probably the cause of the superiority, perceived by strangers in their tempers and manners, over those of persons, apparently better circumstanced. They have no remembrance of slights, to be revenged by insults; no hopes from servility, nor irritation from the desire of unattainable distinctions. Where, on the contrary, the encouragement of artificial wants has produced dependence, and mingled with the fictitious appearance of wealth many of the most real evils of poverty, the benevolence of the temper flies with the simplicity of the mind. There is, perhaps, not a more odious prospect of human society, than where an

ostentatious, manoeuvring and corrupted peasantry, taking those, who induce them to crimes, for the models of their morality, mimic the vices, to which they were not born, and attempt the coarse covering of cunning and insolence for practices, which it is a science and frequently an object of education to conceal by flagitious elegancies. Such persons form in the country a bad copy of the worst London society; the vices, without the intelligence, and without the assuaging virtues.

4.9. DRUIDICAL MONUMENT .

AFTER passing the very small, but neatly furnished church of Threlkeld, the condition of which may be one testimony to the worthiness of the neighbourhood, and rising beyond the vales before described, we came to the brow of a hill, called Castle Rigg, on which, to the left of the road, are the remains of one of those circular monuments, which, by general consent, are called Druids' Temples. This is formed of thirty-seven stones, placed in a circle of about twenty-eight yards diameter, the largest being not less than seven feet and a half high, which is double the height of the others. At the eastern part of this circle, and within it, smaller stones are arranged in an oblong of about seven yards long, and, at the greatest breadth, four yards wide. Many of those round the circle appear to have fallen and now remain at unequal distances, of which the greatest is towards the north.

Whether our judgment was influenced by the authority of a Druid's choice, or that the place itself commanded the opinion, we thought this situation the most severely grand of any hitherto passed. There is, perhaps, not a single object in the scene, that interrupts the solemn tone of feeling, impressed by its general characters of profound solitude, greatness and awful wildness. Castle Rigg is the central point of three vallies, that dart immediately under it from the eye, and whose mountains form part of an amphitheatre, which is completed by those of Derwentwater, in the west, and by the precipices of Skiddaw and Saddleback, close on the north. The hue, which pervades all these mountains, is that of dark heath, or rock; they are thrown into every form and direction, that Fancy would suggest, and are at that distance, which allows all their grandeur to prevail; nearer than the high lands, that surround Hutton Moor, and further removed than the fells in the scenery of Ullswater.

To the south open the rocks, that disclose the vale of St. John, whose verdant beauty bears no proportion to its sublimity; to the west, are piled the shattered and fantastic points of Derwentwater; to the north, Skiddaw, with its double top, resembling a volcano, the cloudy vapours ascending from its highest point, like smoke, and sometimes rolling in wreaths down its sides; and to the east, the vale of Threlkeld, spreading green round the

base of Saddleback, its vast side-skreen, opened to the moorlands, beyond which the ridge of Crossfell appeared; its dignity now diminished by distance. This point then is surrounded by the three grand rivals of Cumberland; huge Helvellyn, spreading Saddleback and spiry Skiddaw.

Such seclusion and sublimity were, indeed, well suited to the deep and wild mysteries of the Druids. Here, at moonlight, every Druid, summoned by that terrible horn, never awakened but upon high occasions, and descending from his mountain, or secret cave, might assemble without intrusion from one sacrilegious footstep, and celebrate a midnight festival by a savage sacrifice —

— “rites of such strange potency
As, done in open day, would dim the sun,
Tho’ thron’d in noontide brightness.”
CARACTACUS.
Here, too, the Bards,
“Rob’d in their flowing vests of innocent white,
Descend, with harps, that glitter to the moon,
Hymning immortal strains. The spirits of air,
Of earth, of water, nay of heav’n itself,
Do listen to their lay; and oft, ‘tis said,
In visible shapes, dance they a magic round
To the high minstrelsy.”

As we descended the steep mountain to Keswick, the romantic fells round the lake opened finely, but the lake itself was concealed, deep in its rocky cauldron. We saw them under the last glow of sun-set, the upward rays producing a misty purple glory between the dark tops of Cawsey-pikes and the bending peaks of Thornthwaite fells. Soon after, the sun having set to the vale of Keswick, there appeared, beyond breaks in its western mountains, the rocks of other vallies, still lighted up by a purple gleam, and receiving strong rays on shaggy points, to which their recesses gave soft and shadowy contrast. But the magical effect of these sunshine rocks, opposed to the darkness of the nearer valley, can scarcely be imagined.

Still as we descended, the lake of Derwentwater was screened from our view; but the rich level of three miles wide, that spreads between it and

Bassenthwaite-water in the same vale, lay, like a map, beneath us, chequered with groves and cottages, with enclosures of corn and meadows, and adorned by the pretty village of Crossthwaite, its neat white church conspicuous among trees. The fantastic fells of Derwentwater bordered this reposing landscape, on the west, and the mighty Skiddaw rose over it, on the east, concealing the lake of Bassenthwaite.

The hollow dashings of the Greta, in its rocky channel, at the foot of Skiddaw, and in one of the most wizard little glens that nature ever fancied, were heard long before we looked down its steep woody bank, and saw it winding away, from close inaccessible chasms, to the vale of Keswick, corn and meadows spread at the top of the left bank, and the crags of Skiddaw scowling over it, on the right.

At length, we had a glimpse of the north end of Derwentwater, and soon after entered Keswick, a small place of stone houses, lying at the foot of Castle Rigg, near Skiddaw, and about a quarter of a mile from the lake, which, however, is not seen from the town.

We were impatient to view this celebrated lake, and immediately walked down to Crowpark, a green eminence at its northern end, whence it is generally allowed to appear to great advantage. Expectation had been raised too high: Shall we own our disappointment? Prepared for something more than we had already seen, by what has been so eloquently said of it, by the view of its vast neighbourhood and the grandeur of its approach, the lake itself looked insignificant; and, however rude, or awful, its nearer rocks might have appeared, if seen unexpectedly, they were not in general so vast, or so boldly outlined, as to retain a character of sublimity from comparison. Opposed to the simple majesty of Ullswater, the lake of Derwent was scarcely interesting. Something must, indeed, be attributed to the force of first impressions; but, with all allowance for this, Ullswater must still retain an high preeminence for grandeur and sublimity.

Derwentwater, however, when more minutely viewed, has peculiar charms both from beauty and wildness, and as the emotions, excited by disappointed expectation, began to subside, we became sensible of them. It seems to be nearly of a round form, and the whole is seen at one glance, expanding within an amphitheatre of mountains, rocky, but not vast, broken into many fantastic shapes, peaked, splintered, impending, sometimes pyramidal, opening by narrow vallies to the view of rocks, that

rise immediately beyond and are again overlooked by others. The precipices seldom overshoot the water, but are arranged at some distance, and the shores swell with woody eminences, or sink into green, pastoral margins. Masses of wood also frequently appear among the cliffs, feathering them to their summits, and a white cottage sometimes peeps from out their skirts, seated on the smooth knoll of a pasture, projecting to the lake, and looks so exquisitely picturesque, as to seem placed there purposely to adorn it. The lake in return faithfully reflects the whole picture, and so even and brilliantly translucent is its surface, that it rather heightens, than obscures the colouring. Its mild bosom is spotted by four small islands, of which those called Lords' and St. Herbert's are well wooded, and adorn the scene, but another is deformed by buildings, stuck over it, like figures upon a twelfthcake.

Beyond the head of the lake, and at a direct distance of three or four miles from Crowpark, the pass of Borrowdale opens, guarded by two piles of rock, the boldest in the scene, overlooked by many rocky points, and, beyond all, by rude mountain tops which come partially and in glimpses to the view. Among the most striking features of the eastern shore are the woody cliffs of Lowdore; then, nearer to the eye, Wallow-crags, a title used here as well as at Hawswater, of dark brown rock, loosely impending; nearer still, Castlehill, pyramidal and richly wooded to its point, the most luxuriant feature of the landscape. Cawsey-pike, one of the most remarkable rocks of the western shore, has its ridge scolloped into points as if with a row of corbells.

The cultivated vale of Newland slopes upward from the lake between these and Thornthwaite fells. Northward, beyond Crowpark, rises Skiddaw; at its base commences the beautiful level, that spreads to Bassenthwaite-water, where the rocks in the west side of the perspective soon begin to soften, and the vale becomes open and cheerful.

Such is the outline of Derwentwater, which has a much greater proportion of beauty, than Ullswater, but neither its dignity, nor grandeur. Its fells, broken into smaller masses, do not swell, or start, into such bold lines as those of Ullswater; nor does the size of the lake accord with the general importance of the rocky vale, in which it lies. The water is too small for its accompaniments; and its form, being round and seen entirely at once, leaves nothing for expectation to pursue, beyond the stretching

promontory, or fancy to transform within the gloom and obscurity of the receding fell; and thus it loses an ample source of the sublime. The greatest breadth from east to west is not more than three miles. It is not large enough to occupy the eye, and it is not so hidden as to have the assistance of the imagination in making it appear large. The beauty of its banks also, contending with the wildness of its rocks, gives opposite impressions to the mind, and the force of each is, perhaps, destroyed by the admission of the other. Sublimity can scarcely exist, without simplicity; and even grandeur loses much of its elevating effect, when united with a considerable portion of beauty; then descending to become magnificence. The effect of simplicity in assisting that high tone of mind, produced by the sublime, is demonstrated by the scenery of Ullswater, where very seldom a discordant object obtrudes over the course of thought, and jars upon the feelings.

But it is much pleasanter to admire than to examine, and in Derwentwater is abundant subject for admiration, though not of so high a character as that, which attends Ullswater. The soft undulations of its shores, the mingled wood and pasture, that paint them, the brilliant purity of the water, that gives back every landscape on its bank, and frequently with heightened colouring, the fantastic wildness of the rocks and the magnificence of the amphitheatre they form; these are circumstances, the view of which excites emotions of sweet, though tranquil admiration, softening the mind to tenderness, rather than elevating it to sublimity. We first saw the whole beneath such sober hues as prevailed when

“the gray hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist, in Palmer’s weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus’ wain.”

The wildness, seclusion, and magical beauty of this vale, seem, indeed, to render it the very abode for Milton’s Comus, ‘“deep skilled in all his mother’s witcheries;”’ and, while we survey its fantastic features, we are almost tempted to suppose, that he has hurled his

“dazzling spells into the air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion
And give it false presentments.”
Nay more, to believe
“All the sage poets, taught by th’ heavenly muse

Storied of old, in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimaeras and enchanted isles;”
and to fancy we hear from among the woody cliffs, near the shore,
“the sound
Of riot and ill manag’d merriment,”
succeeded by such strains as oft
“in pleasing slumbers lull the sense,
And, in sweet madness, rob it of itself.”

4.10. SKIDDAW .

ON the following morning, having engaged a guide, and with horses accustomed to the labour, we began to ascend this tremendous mountain by a way, which makes the summit five miles from Keswick. Passing through bowery lanes, luxuriant with mountain ash, holly, and a variety of beautiful shrubs, to a broad, open common, a road led us to the foot of Latrigg, or, as it is called by the country people, Skiddaw's Cub, a large round hill, covered with heath, turf and browsing sheep. A narrow path now wound along steep green precipices, the beauty of which prevented what danger there was from being perceived. Derwentwater was concealed by others, that rose above them, but that part of the vale of Keswick, which separates the two lakes, and spreads a rich level of three miles, was immediately below; Crossthwaite-church, nearly in the centre, with the white vicarage, rising among trees. More under shelter of Skiddaw, where the vale spreads into a sweet retired nook, lay the house and grounds of Dr. Brownrigg.

Beyond the level, opened a glimpse of Bassenthwaite-water; a lake, which may be called elegant, bounded, on one side, by wellwooded rocks, and, on the other, by Skiddaw.

Soon after, we rose above the steeps, which had concealed Derwentwater, and it appeared, with all its enamelled banks, sunk deep amidst a chaos of mountains, and surrounded by ranges of fells, not visible from below. On the other hand, the more cheerful lake of Bassenthwaite expanded at its entire length. Having gazed a while on this magnificent scene, we pursued the path, and soon after reached the brink of a chasm, on the opposite side of which wound our future track; for the ascent is here in an acutely zig-zag direction. The horses carefully picked their steps along the narrow precipice, and turned the angle, that led them to the opposite side.

At length, as we ascended, Derwentwater dwindled on the eye to the smallness of a pond, while the grandeur of its amphitheatre was increased by new ranges of dark mountains, no longer individually great, but so from accumulation; a scenery to give ideas of the breaking up of a world. Other precipices soon hid it again, but Bassenthwaite continued to spread

immediately below us, till we turned into the heart of Skiddaw, and were enclosed by its steeps. We had now lost all track even of the flocks, that were scattered over these tremendous wilds. The guide conducted us by many curvings among the heathy hills and hollows of the mountain; but the ascents were such, that the horses panted in the slowest walk, and it was necessary to let them rest every six or seven minutes. An opening to the south, at length, shewed the whole plan of the narrow vales of St. John and of Nadale, separated by the dark ridge of rock, called St. John's-rigg, with each its small line of verdure at the bottom, and bounded by enormous gray fells, which we were, however, now high enough to overlook.

A white speck, on the top of St. John's rigg, was pointed out by the guide to be a chapel of ease to Keswick, which has no less than five such scattered among the fells. From this chapel, dedicated to St. John, the rock and the vale have received their name, and our guide told us, that Nadale was frequently known by the same title.

Leaving this view, the mountain soon again shut out all prospect, but of its own vallies and precipices, covered with various shades of turf and moss, and with heath, of which a dull purple was the prevailing hue. Not a tree, or bush appeared on Skiddaw, nor even a stone wall any where broke the simple greatness of its lines. Sometimes, we looked into tremendous chasms, where the torrent, heard roaring long before it was seen, had worked itself a deep channel, and fell from ledge to ledge, foaming and shining amidst the dark rock. These streams are sublime from the length and precipitancy of their course, which, hurrying the sight with them into the abyss, act, as it were, in sympathy upon the nerves, and, to save ourselves from following, we recoil from the view with involuntary horror. Of such, however, we saw only two, and those by some departure from the usual course up the mountain; but every where met gushing springs, till we were within two miles of the summit, when our guide added to the rum in his bottle what he said was the last water we should find in our ascent.

The air now became very thin, and the steeps still more difficult of ascent; but it was often delightful to look down into the green hollows of the mountain, among pastoral scenes, that wanted only some mixture of wood to render them enchanting.

About a mile from the summit, the way was, indeed, dreadfully sublime, laying, for nearly half a mile, along the ledge of a precipice, that passed, with a swift descent, for probably near a mile, into a glen within the heart of Skiddaw; and not a bush, or a hillock interrupted its vast length, or, by offering a midway check in the descent, diminished the sear it inspired. The ridgy steeps of Saddleback formed the opposite boundary of the glen, and, though really at a considerable distance, had, from the height of the two mountains, such an appearance of nearness, that it almost seemed as if we could spring to its side. How much too did simplicity increase the sublime of this scenery, in which nothing but mountain, heath and sky appeared.

But our situation was too critical, or too unusual, to permit the just impressions of such sublimity. The hill rose so closely above the precipice as scarcely to allow a ledge wide enough for a single horse. We followed the guide in silence, and, till we regained the more open wild, had no leisure for exclamation. After this, the ascent appeared easy and secure, and we were bold enough to wonder, that the steeps near the beginning of the mountain had excited any anxiety.

At length, passing the skirts of the two points of Skiddaw, which are nearest to Derwentwater, we approached the third and loftiest, and then perceived, that their steep sides, together with the ridges, which connect them, were entirely covered near the summits with a whitish shivered slate, which threatens to slide down them with every gust of wind. The broken state of this slate makes the present summits seem like the ruins of others; a circumstance as extraordinary in appearance as difficult to be accounted for.

The ridge, on which we passed from the neighbourhood of the second summit to the third, was narrow, and the eye reached, on each side, down the whole extent of the mountain, following, on the left, the rocky precipices, that impend over the lake of Bassenthwaite, and looking, on the right, into the glens of Saddleback, far, far below. But the prospects, that burst upon us from every part of the vast horizon, when we had gained the summit, were such as we had scarcely dared to hope for, and must now rather venture to enumerate, than to describe.

We stood on a pinnacle, commanding the whole dome of the sky. The prospects below, each of which had been before considered separately as a

great scene, were now miniature parts of the immense landscape. To the north, lay, like a map, the vast tract of low country, which extends between Bassenthwaite and the Irish Channel, marked with the silver circles of the river Derwent, in its progress from the lake. Whitehaven and its white coast were distinctly seen, and Cockermouth seemed almost under the eye. A long blackish line, more to the west, resembling a faintly formed cloud, was said by the guide to be the Isle of Man, who, however, had the honesty to confess, that the mountains of Down in Ireland, which have been sometimes thought visible, had never been seen by him in the clearest weather.

Bounding the low country to the north, the wide Solway Firth, with its indented shores, looked like a gray horizon, and the double range of Scottish mountains, seen dimly through mist beyond, like lines of dark clouds above it. The Solway appeared surprisingly near us, though at fifty miles distance, and the guide said, that, on a bright day, its shipping could plainly be discerned. Nearly in the north, the heights seemed to soften into plains, for no object was there visible through the obscurity, that had begun to draw over the furthest distance; but, towards the east, they appeared to swell again, and what we were told were the Cheviot hills dawned feebly beyond Northumberland. We now spanned the narrowest part of England, looking from the Irish Channel, on one side, to the German Ocean, on the other, which latter was, however, so far off as to be discernible only like a mist.

Nearer than the county of Durham, stretched the ridge of Crossfell, and an indistinct multitude of the Westmoreland and Yorkshire highlands, whose lines disappeared behind Saddleback, now evidently preeminent over Skiddaw, so much so as to exclude many a height beyond it. Passing this mountain in our course to the south, we saw, immediately below, the fells round Derwentwater, the lake itself remaining still concealed in their deep rocky bosom. Southward and westward, the whole prospect was a ‘“turbulent chaos of dark mountains.”’ All individual dignity was now lost in the immensity of the whole, and every variety of character was overpowered by that of astonishing and gloomy grandeur.

Over the fells of Borrowdale, and far to the south, the northern end of Windermere appeared, like a wreath of gray smoke, that spreads along the mountain’s side. More southward still, and beyond all the fells of the

lakes, Lancaster sands extended to the faintly seen waters of the sea. Then to the west, Duddon sands gleamed in a long line among the fells of High Furness. Immediately under the eye, lay Bassenthwaite, surrounded by many ranges of mountains, invisible from below. We overlooked all these dark mountains, and saw green cultivated vales over the tops of lofty rocks, and other mountains over these vales in many ridges, whilst innumerable narrow glens were traced in all their windings and seen uniting behind the hills with others, that also sloped upwards from the lake.

The air on this summit was boisterous, intensely cold and difficult to be inspired, though the day was below warm and serene. It was dreadful to look down from nearly the brink of the point, on which we stood, upon the lake of Bassenthwaite and over a sharp and separated ridge of rocks, that from below appeared of tremendous height, but now seemed not to reach half way up Skiddaw; it was almost as if

“the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight.”

Under the lee of an heaped up pile of slates, formed by the customary contribution of one from every visitor, we found an old man sheltered, whom we took to be a shepherd, but afterwards learned was a farmer and, as the people in this neighbourhood say, a ‘‘statesman;’’ that is, had land of his own. He was a native and still an inhabitant of an adjoining vale; but, so laborious is the enterprise reckoned, that, though he had passed his life within view of the mountain, this was his first ascent. He descended with us, for part of our way, and then wound off towards his own valley, stalking amidst the wild scenery, his large figure wrapt in a dark cloak and his steps occasionally assisted by a long iron pronged pike, with which he had pointed out distant objects.

In the descent, it was interesting to observe each mountain below gradually reassuming its dignity, the two lakes expanding into spacious surfaces, the many little vallies, that sloped upwards from their margins, recovering their variegated tints of cultivation, the cattle again appearing in the meadows, and the woody promontories changing from smooth patches of shade into richly tufted summits. At about a mile from the top, a great difference was perceptible in the climate, which became

comparatively warm, and the summer hum of bees was again heard among the purple heath.

We reached Keswick, about four o’clock, after five hours passed in this excursion, in which the care of our guide greatly lessened the notion of danger. Why should we think it trivial to attempt some service towards this poor man? We have reason to think, that whoever employs, at Keswick, a guide of the name of Doncaster, will assist him in supporting an aged parent.

4.11. BASSENTHWAITE WATER .

IN a gray autumnal morning, we rode out along the western bank of Bassenthwaite to Ouse Bridge, under which the river Derwent, after passing through the lake, takes its course towards the Sea. The road on this side, being impassable by carriages, is seldom visited, but it is interesting for being opposed to Skiddaw, which rises in new attitudes over the opposite bank. Beyond the land, that separates the two lakes, the road runs high along the sides of hills and sometimes at the feet of tremendous fells, one of which rises almost spirally over it, shewing a surface of slates, shivered from top to bottom. Further on, the heights gradually soften from horror into mild and graceful beauty, opening distantly to the cheerful country, that spreads towards Whitehaven; but the road soon immerges among woods, which allow only partial views of the opposite shore, inimitably beautiful with copses, green lawns and pastures, with gently sweeping promontories and bays, that receive the lake to their full brims.

From the house at Ouse Bridge the prospect is exquisite up the lake, which now losing the air of a wide river, reassumes its true character, and even appears to flow into the chasm of rocks, that really inclose Derwentwater. Skiddaw, with all the mountains round Borrowdale, form a magnificent amphitheatrical perspective for this noble sheet of water; the vallies of the two lakes extending to one view, which is, therefore, superior to any exhibited from Derwentwater alone. The prospect terminates in the dark fells of Borrowdale, which by their sublimity enhance the beauty and elegance, united to a surprising degree in the nearer landscape.

Beyond Ouse Bridge, but still at the bottom of the lake, the road passes before Armithwaite-house, whose copsy lawns slope to the margin of the water from a mansion more finely situated than any we had seen. It then recedes somewhat from the bank, and ascends the skirt of Skiddaw, which it scarcely leaves on this side of Keswick. On the opposite shore, the most elegant features are the swelling hills, called Wythop-brows, flourishing with wood from the water’s edge; and, below the meadows of the eastern bank, by which we were returning, two peninsulae, the one pastoral, yet well wooded and embellished by a white hamlet, the other narrow and bearing only a line of trees, issuing far into the lake. But the shores of

Bassenthwaite, though elegant and often beautiful, are too little varied to be long dwelt upon; and attention is sometimes unpleasantly engaged by a precipice, from which the road is not sufficiently secured; so that the effect of the whole upon the imagination is much less than might be expected from its situation at the foot of Skiddaw, and its shape, which is more extended than that of Derwentwater.

4.12. BORROWDALE .

A SERENE day, with gleams of sunshine, gave magical effect to the scenery of Derwentwater, as we wound along its eastern shore to Borrowdale, under cliffs, parts of which, already fallen near the road, increased the opinion of danger from the rest; sometimes near the edge of precipices, that bend over the water, and, at others, among pleasure-grounds and copses, which admit partial views over the lake. These, with every woody promontory and mountain, were perfectly reflected on its surface. Not a pathway, not a crag, or scar, that sculptured their bold fronts, but was copied and distinctly seen even from the opposite shore in the dark purple mirror below. Now and then, a pleasure-boat glided by, leaving long silver lines, drawn to a point on the smooth water, which, as it gave back the painted sides and gleaming sail, displayed a moving picture.

The colouring of the mountains was, this day, surprisingly various and changeful, surpassing every thing of the same nature, that we had seen. The effect of the atmosphere on mountainous regions is sometimes so sublime, at others so enchantingly beautiful, that the mention of it ought not to be considered as trivial, when their aspect is to be described. As the sunbeams fell on different kinds of rock, and distance coloured the air, some parts were touched with lilac, others with light blue, dark purple, or reddish brown, which were often seen, at the same moment, contrasting with the mellow green of the woods and the brightness of sunshine; then slowly and almost imperceptibly changing into other tints. Skiddaw itself exhibited much of this variety, during our ride. As we left Keswick, its points were overspread with pale azure; on our return, a tint of dark blue softened its features, which were, however, soon after involved in deepest purple.

Winding under the woods of Barrowside, we approached Lowdore, and heard the thunder of his cataract, joined by the sounds of others, descending within the gloom of the nearer rocks and thickets. The retrospective views over the lake from Barrowside are the finest in the ride; and, when the road emerges from the woods, a range of rocks rises over it, where many shrubs, and even oaks, ash, yew, grow in a surprising manner among the broken slates, that cover their sides. Beyond, at some

distance from the shore, appear the awful rocks, that rise over the fall of Lowdore; that on the right shooting up, a vast pyramid of naked cliff, above finely wooded steeps; while, on the opposite side of the chasm, that receives the waters, impends Gowdar-crag, whose trees and shrubs give only shagginess to its terrible masses, with fragments of which the meadows below are strewn. There was now little water at Lowdore; but the breadth of its channel and the height of the perpendicular rock, from which it leaps, told how tremendous it could be; yet even then its sublimity is probably derived chiefly from the cliff and mountain, that tower closely over it.

Here Borrowdale begins, its rocks spreading in a vast sweep round the head of the lake, at the distance, perhaps, of half a mile from the shore, which bears meadow land to the water's brink. The aspect of these rocks, with the fragments, that have rolled from their summits, and lie on each side of the road, prepared us for the scene of tremendous ruin we were approaching in the gorge, or pass of Borrowdale, which opens from the centre of the amphitheatre, that binds the head of Derwentwater. Dark rocks yawn at its entrance, terrific as the wildness of a maniac; and disclose a narrow pass, running up between mountains of granite, that are shook into almost every possible form of horror. All above resembles the accumulations of an earthquake; splintered, shivered, piled, amassed. Huge cliffs have rolled down into the glen below, where, however, is still a miniature of the sweetest pastoral beauty, on the banks of the river Derwent; but description cannot paint either the wildness of the mountains, or the pastoral and sylvan peace and softness, that wind at their base.

Among the most striking of the fells are Glaramara, shewing rock on rock; and Eagle-crag, where, till lately, that bird built its nest; but the depredations, annually committed on its young, have driven it from the place. Hence we pursued the pass for a mile, over a frightful road, that climbs among the crags of a precipice above the river, having frequently glimpses into glens and chasms, where all passage seemed to be obstructed by the fallen shivers of rock, and at length reached the gigantic stone of Bowther, that appears to have been pitched into the ground from the summit of a neighbouring fell, and is shaped, like the roof of a house reversed.

This is one of the spectacles of the country. Its size makes it impossible to have been ever moved by human means; and, if it fell from the nearest of the rocks, it must have rolled upon the ground much further than can be readily conceived of the motion of such a mass. The side towards the road projects about twelve feet over the base, and serves to shelter cattle in a penn, of which it is made to form one boundary. A small oak plant and a sloe have found soil enough to flourish in at the top; and the base is pitched on a cliff over the river, whence a long perspective of the gorge is seen, with a little level of bright verdure, spreading among more distant fells and winding away into trackless regions, where the mountains lift their ruffian heads in undisputed authority. Below, the shrunk Derwent serpentized along a wide bed of pebbles, that marked its wintry course, and left a wooded island, flourishing amidst the waste. The stillness around us was only feebly broken by the remote sounds of many unseen cataracts, and sometimes by the voices of mountaineer children, shouting afar off, and pleasing themselves with rousing the echoes of the rocks.

In returning, the view opened, with great magnificence, from the jaws of this pass over the lake to Skiddaw, then seen from its base, with the upper steeps of Saddleback obliquely beyond, and rearing itself far above all the heights of the eastern shore. At the entrance of the gorge, the village or hamlet of Grange lies picturesquely on the bank of the Derwent among wood and meadows, and sheltered under the ruinous fell, called Castlecrag, that takes its name from the castle, or fortress, which from its crown once guarded this important pass.

Borrowdale abounds in valuable mines, among which some are known to supply the finest wadd, or black lead, to be found in England. Iron, slate, and free stone of various kinds, are also the treasures of these mountains.

4.13. FROM KESWICK TO WINDERMERE .

THE road from Keswick to Ambleside commences by the ascent of Castle-rigg, the mountain, which the Penrith road descends, and which, on that side, is crowned by a Druid’s temple. The rise is now very laborious, but the views it affords over the vale of Keswick are not dearly purchased by the fatigue. All Bassenthwaite, its mountains softening away in the perspective, and terminating, on the west, in the sister woods of Wythorp-brows, extends from the eye; and, immediately beneath, the northern end of Derwentwater, with Cawsey-pike, Thornthwaite-fell, the rich upland vale of Newland peeping from between their bases, and the spiry woods of Foepark jutting into the lake below. But the finest prospect is from a gate about halfway up the hill, whence you look down upon the head of Derwentwater, with all the alps of Borrowdale, opening darkly.

After descending Castle-rigg and crossing the top of St. John’s vale, we seemed as if going into banishment from society, the road then leading over a plain, closely surrounded by mountains so wild, that neither a cottage, or a wood soften their rudeness, and so steep and barren, that not even sheep appear upon their sides. From this plain the road enters Legberthwaite, a narrow valley, running at the back of Borrowdale, green at the bottom, and varied with a few farms, but without wood, and with fells of gray precipices, rising to great height and nearly perpendicular on either hand, whose fronts are marked only by the torrents, that tumble from their utmost summits, and perpetually occur. We often stopped to listen to their hollow sounds amidst the solitary greatness of the scene, and to watch their headlong fall down the rocky chasms, their white foam and silver line contrasting with the dark hue of the clefts. In sublimity of descent these were frequently much superior to that of Lowdore, but as much inferior to it in mass of water and picturesque beauty.

As the road ascended towards Helvellyn, we looked back through this vast rocky vista to the sweet vale of St. John, lengthening the perspective, and saw, as through a telescope, the broad broken steeps of Saddleback and the points of Skiddaw, darkly blue, closing it to the north. The grand rivals of Cumberland were now seen together; and the road, soon winding high over the skirts of Helvellyn, brought us to Leathes-water, to which the

mountain forms a vast side-skreen, during its whole length. This is a long, but narrow and unadorned lake, having little else than walls of rocky fells, starting from its margin. Continuing on the precipice, at some height from the shore, the road brought us, after three miles, to the poor village of Wythburn, and soon after to the foot of Dunmail Rays, which, though a considerable ascent, forms the dip of two lofty mountains, Steel-fell and Seat Sandle, that rise with finely-sweeping lines, on each side, and shut up the vale.

Beyond Dunmail Rays, one of the grand passes from Cumberland into Westmoreland, Helmcrag rears its crest, a strange fantastic summit, round, yet jagged and splintered, like the wheel of a water-mill, overlooking Grasmere, which, soon after, opened below. A green spreading circle of mountains embosoms this small lake, and, beyond, a wider range rises in amphitheatre, whose rocky tops are rounded and scolloped, yet are great, wild, irregular, and were then overspread with a tint of faint purple. The softest verdure margins the water, and mingles with corn enclosures and woods, that wave up the hills; but scarcely a cottage any where appears, except at the northern end of the lake, where the village of Grasmere and its very neat white church stand among trees, near the shore, with Helmcrag and a multitude of fells, rising over it and beyond each other in the perspective.

The lake was clear as glass, reflecting the headlong mountains, with every feature of every image on its tranquil banks; and one green island varies, but scarcely adorns its surface, bearing only a rude and now shadeless hut. At a considerable height above the water, the road undulates for a mile, till, near the southern end of Grasmere, it mounts the crags of a fell, and seemed carrying us again into such scenes of ruin and privation as we had quitted with Legberthwaite and Leathes-water. But, descending the other side of the mountain, we were soon cheered by the view of plantations, enriching the banks of Rydal-water, and by thick woods, mingling among cliffs above the narrow lake, which winds through a close valley, for about a mile. This lake is remarkable for the beauty of its small round islands, luxuriant with elegant trees and shrubs, and whose banks are green to the water’s edge. Rydalhall stands finely on an eminence, somewhat withdrawn from the east end, in a close romantic nook, among old woods, that feather the fells, which rise over their summits, and spread

widely along the neighbouring eminences. This antient white mansion looks over a rough grassy descent, screened by groves of oak and majestic planes, towards the head of Windermere, about two miles distant, a small glimpse of which is caught beyond the wooded steeps of a narrow valley. In the woods and in the disposition of the ground round Rydalhall there is a charming wildness, that suits the character of the general scene; and, wherever art appears, it is with graceful plainness and meek subjection to nature.

The taste, by which a cascade in the pleasure-grounds, pouring under the arch of a rude bridge, amidst the green tint of woods, is shewn through a darkened garden-house, and, therefore, with all the effect, which the opposition of light and shade can give, is even not too artificial; so admirably is the intent accomplished of making all the light, that is admitted, fall upon the objects, which are chiefly meant to be observed.

The road to Ambleside runs through the valley in front of Rydalhall, and for some distance among the grounds that belong to it, where again the taste of the owner is conspicuous in the disposition of plantations among pastures of extraordinary richness, and where pure rivulets are suffered to wind without restraint over their dark rocky channels. Woods mantle up the cliffs on either side of this sweet valley, and, higher still, the craggy summits of the fells crowd over the scene. Two miles among its pleasant shades, near the banks of the murmuring Rotha, brought us to Ambleside, a black and very antient little town, hanging on the lower steeps of a mountain, where the vale opens to the head of

4.14. WINDERMERE,

WHICH appeared at some distance below, in gentle yet stately beauty; but its boundaries shewed nothing of the sublimity and little of the romantic wildness, that charms, or elevates in the scenery of the other lakes. The shores, and the hills, which gradually ascend from them, are in general richly cultivated, or wooded, and correctly elegant; and when we descended upon the bank the road seemed leading through the artificial shades of pleasure-grounds. It undulates for two miles over low promontories and along spacious bays, full to their fringed margin with the abundance of this expansive lake; then, quitting the bank, it ascends gradual eminences, that look upon the vast plain of water, and rise amidst the richest landscapes of its shores. The manners of the people would have sufficiently informed us that Windermere is the lake most frequented; and with the great sublimity of the more sequestered scenes, we had to regret the interesting simplicity of their inhabitants, a simplicity which accorded so beautifully with the dignified character of the country. The next day, we visited several of the neighbouring heights, whence the lake is seen to great advantage; and, on the following, skirted the eastern shore for six miles to the Ferry.

Windermere, above twelve miles long and generally above a mile broad, but sometimes two, sweeps like a majestic river with an easy bend between low points of land and eminences that, shaded with wood and often embellished with villas, swell into hills cultivated to their summits; except that, for about six miles along the middle of the western shore, a range of rocky fells rise over the water. But these have nothing either picturesque or fantastic in their shape; they are heavy, not broken into parts, and their rudeness softens into insignificance, when they are seen over the wide channel of the lake; they are neither large enough to be grand, or wooded enough to be beautiful. To the north, or head of Windermere, however, the tameness of its general character disappears, and the scene soars into grandeur. Here, over a ridge of rough brown hills above a woody shore, rise, at the distance of a mile and half, or two miles, a multitude of finely alpine mountains, retiring obliquely in the perspective, among which Langdale-pikes, Hardknot and Wry-nose,

bearing their bold, pointed promontories aloft, are preeminent. The colouring of these mountains, which are some of the grandest of Cumberland and Westmoreland, was this day remarkably fine. The weather was showery, with gleams of sunshine; sometimes their tops were entirely concealed in gray vapours, which, drawing upwards, would seem to ascend in volumes of smoke from their summits; at others, a few scattered clouds wandered along their sides, leaving their heads unveiled and effulgent with light. These clouds disappearing before the strength of the sun, a fine downy hue of light blue overspread the peeping points of the most distant fells, while the nearer ones were tinged with deep purple, which was opposed to the brown heath and crag of the lower hills, the olive green of two wooded slopes that, just tinted by autumn, seemed to descend to the margin, and the silver transparency of the expanding water at their feet. This view of Windermere appears with great majesty from a height above Culgarth, a seat of the Bishop of Landaff; while, to the south, the lake after sweeping about four miles gradually narrows and disappears behind the great island, which stretches across the perspective.

At the distance of two or three miles beyond Culgarth, from a hill advancing towards the water, the whole of Windermere is seen; to the right, is the white mansion at Culgarth, among wood, on a gentle eminence of the shore, with the lake spreading wide beyond, crowned by the fells half obscured in clouds. To the south, the hills of the eastern shore, sloping gradually, run out in elegant and often well wooded points into the water, and are spotted with villas and varied above with enclosures. The opposite shore is for about a mile southward a continuation of the line of rock before noticed, from which Rawlinson’s-nab pushes a bold headland over the lake; the perspective then sinks away in low hills, and is crossed by a remote ridge, that closes the scene.

The villages of Rayrig and Bowness, which are passed in the way to the Ferry, both stand delightfully; one on an eminence commanding the whole lake, and the other within a recess of the shore, nearly opposite the large island. The winding banks of Windermere continually open new landscapes as you move along them, and the mountains, which crown its head, are as frequently changing their attitudes; but Langdale-pikes, the boldest features in the scene, are soon lost to the eye behind the nearer fells of the western shore.

The ferry is considerably below Christian’s island, and at the narrowest span of the lake, where two points of the shore extend to meet each other. This island, said to contain thirty acres, intermingled with wood, lawn and shrubberies, embellishes, without decreasing the dignity of the scene; it is surrounded by attendant islets, some rocky, but others, beautifully covered with [...], seem to coronet the flood.

In crossing the water the illusions of vision give force to the northern mountains, which viewed from hence appear to ascend from its margin and to spread round it in a magnificent amphitheatre. This was to us the most interesting view on Windermere.

On our approaching the western shore, the range of rocks that form it, discovered their cliffs, and gradually assumed a consequence, which the breadth of the channel had denied them; and their darkness was well opposed by the bright verdure and variegated autumnal tints of the isles at their base. On the bank, under shelter of these rocks, a white house was seen beyond the tall boles of a most luxuriant grove of plane-trees, which threw their shadows over it, and on the margin of the silver lake spreading in front. From hence the road ascends the steep and craggy side of Furness-fell, on the brow of which we had a last view of Windermere, in its whole course; to the south, its tame but elegant landscapes gliding away into low and long perspective, and the lake gradually narrowing; to the north, its more impressive scenery; but the finest features of it were now concealed by a continuation of the rocks we were upon.

Windermere is distinguished from all the other lakes of this country by its superior length and breath, by the gentle hills, cultivated and enclosed nearly to their summits, that generally bind its shores, by the gradual distance and fine disposition of the northern mountains, by the bold sweeps of its numerous bays, by the villas that speckle and rich plantations that wind them, and by one large island, surrounded by many islets, which adds dignity to its bosom. On the other lakes the islands are prettinesses, that do not accord with the character of the scene; they break also the surface of the water where vast continuity is required; and the mind cannot endure to descend suddenly from the gigantic sublimity of nature to her fairy sports. Yet, on the whole, Windermere was to us the least impressive of all the lakes. Except to the north, where the retiring mountains are disposed with uncommon grandeur of outline and magnificence of

colouring, its scenery is tame, having little of the wild and nothing of the astonishing energy that appears on the features of the more sequestered districts. The characters of the three great lakes may, perhaps, be thus distinguished:

Windermere: Diffusiveness, stately beauty, and, at the upper end, magnificence.

Ullswater: Severe grandeur and sublimity; all that may give ideas of vast power and astonishing majesty. The effect of Ullswater is, that, awful as its scenery appears, it awakens the mind to expectation still more awful, and, touching all the powers of imagination, inspires that ‘“fine phrensy”’ descriptive of the poet’s eye, which not only bodies forth unreal forms, but imparts to substantial objects a character higher than their own.

Derwentwater: Fantastic wildness and romantic beauty, but inferior to Ullswater in greatness, both of water and rocks; for, though it charms and elevates, it does not display such features and circumstances of the sublime, or call up such expectation of unimaged and uncertain wonder. A principal defect, if we may venture to call it so, of Derwentwater is, that the water is too small in proportion for the amphitheatre of the valley in which it lies, and therefore loses much of the dignity, that in other circumstances it would exhibit. The fault of Windermere is, perhaps, exactly the reverse; where the shores, not generally grand, are rendered tamer by the ample expanse of the lake. The proportions of Ullswater are more just, and, though its winding form gives it in some parts the air of a river, the abrupt and tremendous height of its rocks, the dark and crowding summits of the fells above, the manner in which they enclose it, together with the dignity of its breadth, empower it constantly to affect the mind with emotions of astonishment and lofty expectation.

4.15. FROM WINDERMERE TO HAWKSHEAD, THURSTON-LAKE AND ULVERSTON .

AFTER ascending the laborious crags and precipices of Furness-fell, enlivened, however, by frequent views of the southern end of Windermere, the road immediately descends the opposite side of the mountain, which shuts out the beautiful scenery of the lake; but the prospect soon after opens to other mountains of Furness, in the distance, which revive the expectation of such sublimity as we had lately regretted, and to Esthwait-water in the valley below. This is a narrow, pleasant lake, about half a mile broad and two miles long, with gradual hills, green to their tops, rising round the margin; with plantations and pastures alternately spreading along the easy shores and white farms scattered sparingly upon the slopes above. The water seems to glide through the quiet privacy of pleasure-grounds; so sine is the turf on its banks, so elegant its copses, and such an air of peace and retirement prevails over it. A neat white village lies at the feet of the hills near the head of the lake; beyond it is the gray town of Hawkshead, with its church and parsonage on an eminence commanding the whole valley. Steep hills rise over them, and, more distant, the tall heads of the Conistonfells, dark and awful, with a confusion of other mountains.

Hawkshead, thus delightfully placed, is an antient, but small town, with a few good houses, and a neat townhouse, lately built by subscriptions, of which the chief part was gratefully supplied by London merchants, who had been educated at the free school here; and this school itself is a memorial of gratitude, having been founded by Archbishop Sandys for the advantage of the town, which gave him birth. Near Hawkshead are the remains of the house, where the Abbot of Furness ‘“kept residence by one or more monks, who performed divine service and other parochial duties in the neighbourhood.”’ There is still a court-room over the gateway, ‘“where the bailiff of Hawkshead held court, and distributed justice, in the name of the aboot.”’

From the tremendous steeps of the long fell, which towers over Hawkshead, astonishing views open to the distant vales and mountains of

Cumberland; overlooking all the grotesque summits in the neighbourhood of Grasmere, the fells of Borrowdale in the furthest distance, Langdale-pikes, and several small lakes, seen gleaming in the bosom of the mountains. Before us, rose the whole multitude of Conistonfells, of immense height and threatening forms, their tops thinly darkened with thunder mists, and, on the left, Furness-fells sinking towards the bay, which Ulverston sands form for the sea.

As we advanced, Conistonfells seemed to multiply, and became still more impressive, till, having reached at length the summit of the mountain, we looked down upon Thurston-lake immediately below, and saw them rising abruptly round its northern end in somewhat of the sublime attitudes and dark majesty of Ullswater. A range of lower rocks, nearer to the eye, exhibited a very peculiar and grotesque appearance, coloured scars and deep channels marking their purple sides, as if they had been rifted by an earthquake.

The road descends the flinty steeps towards the eastern bank of the lake, that spreads a surface of six miles in length and generally three quarters of a mile in breadth, not winding in its course, yet much indented with bays, and presenting nearly its whole extent at once to the eye. The grandest features are the fells, that crown its northern end, not distantly and gradually, like those of Windermere, nor varied like them with magnificent colouring, but rising in haughty abruptness, dark, rugged and stupendous, within a quarter of a mile of the margin, and shutting out all prospect of other mountain-summits. At their feet, pastures spread a bright green to the brim of the lake. Nearly in the centre of these fells, which open in a semicircle to receive the lake, a cataract descends, but its shining line is not of a breadth proportioned to the vastness of its perpendicular fall. The village of Coniston is sweetly seated under shelter of the rocks; and, at a distance beyond, on the edge of the water, the antient hall, or priory, shews its turret and ivyed ruins among old woods. The whole picture is reflected in the liquid mirror below. The gay, convivial chorus, or solemn vesper, that once swelled along the lake from these consecrated walls, and awakened, perhaps, the enthusiasm of the voyager, while evening stole upon the scene, is now contrasted by desolation and profound repose, and, as he glides by, he hears only the dashing of his oars, or the surge beating on the shore.

This lake appeared to us one of the most charming we had seen. From the sublime mountains, which bend round its head, the heights, on either side, decline towards the south into waving hills, that form its shores, and often stretch in long sweeping points into the water, generally covered with tufted wood, but sometimes with the tender verdure of pasturage. The tops of these woods were just embrowned with autumn, and contrasted well with other slopes, rough and heathy, that rose above, or fell beside them to the water's brink, and added force to the colouring, which the reddish tints of decaying fern, the purple bloom of heath, and the bright golden gleams of broom, spread over these elegant banks. Their hues, the graceful undulations of the marginal hills and bays, the richness of the woods, the solemnity of the northern fells and the deep repose, that pervades the scene, where only now and then a white cottage or a farm lurks among the trees, are circumstances, which render Thurston-lake one of the most interesting and, perhaps, the most beautiful of any in the country.

The road undulates over copsy hills, and dips into shallow vallies along the whole of the eastern bank, seldom greatly elevated above the water, or descending to a level with it, but frequently opening to extensive views of its beauties, and again shrouding itself in verdant gloom. The most impressive pictures were formed by the fells, that crowd over the upper end of the lake, and which, viewed from a low station, sometimes appeared nearly to enclose that part of it. The effect was then astonishingly grand, particularly about sun-set, when the clouds, drawing upwards, discovered the utmost summits of these fells, and a tint of dusky blue began to prevail over them, which gradually deepened into night. A line of lower rocks, that extend from these, are, independently of the atmosphere, of a dull purple, and their shaggy forms would appear gigantic in almost any other situation. Even here, they preserve a wild dignity, and their attitudes somewhat resemble those at the entrance of Borrowdale; but they are forgotten, when the eye is lifted to the solemn mountains immediately above. These are rich in slate quarries, and have some copper mines; but the latter were closed, during the civil wars of the last century, having been worked, as we are told in the descriptive language of the miners, from *the day to the evening end,* forty fathom, and to the *morning end* seven score fathom; a sigurative style of distinguishing the western and eastern

directions of the mine. The lake, towards the lower end, narrows and is adorned by one small island; but here the hills of the eastern shore soar into fells, some barren, craggy and nearly perpendicular, others entirely covered with coppice-wood. Two of these, rising over the road, gave fine relief to each other, the one shewing only precipices of shelving rock, while its rival aspired with woods, that mantled from the base to the summit, consisting chiefly of oak, ash and holly. Not any lake, that we saw, is at present so much embellished with wood as Thurston. All the mountains of *High* and the vallies of *Low Furness* were, indeed, some centuries ago, covered with forests, part of which was called the Forest of Lancaster; and these were of such entangled luxuriance as to be nearly impenetrable in many tracts. Here, wolves, wild boars, and a remarkably large breed of deer, called Leghs, the heads of which have frequently been found buried at a considerable depth in the soil, abounded. So secure an asylum did these animals find in the woods of High Furness, that, even after the low lands were cleared and cultivated, shepherds were necessary to guard the flocks from the ravages of the wolves. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the upper forests also were nearly destroyed.

In winter, the shepherds used to feed their flocks with the young sprouts of ash and holly, a custom said to be still observed; the sheep coming at the call of the shepherd and assembling round the hollytree to receive from his hand the young shoots cropped for them* . Whenever the woods are felled, which is too frequently done, to supply fuel for the neighbouring furnaces, the holly is still held sacred to the flocks of these mountains.

Soon after passing the island, the road enters the village of Nibthwaite, rich only in situation; for the cottages are miserable. The people seemed to be as ignorant as poor; a young man knew not how far it was to Ulverston, or as he called it Ulson, though it was only five miles.

On the point of a promontory of the opposite shore, embosomed in ancient woods, the chimnies and pointed roof of a gray mansion look out most interestingly. The woods open partially to the north, and admit a view of the *Swiss* scenery at the head of the lake, in its finest position. On the other sides, the oaks so embower the house and spread down the rocks, as

scarcely to allow it a glimpse of the water bickering between the dark foliage below.

At Nibthwaite, the lake becomes narrow and gradually decreases, till it terminates at Lowick-bridge, where it glides away in the little river Crake, which descends to Ulverston sands. We stopped upon the bridge to take a last view of the scene; the distant fells were disappearing in twilight, but the gray lake gleamed at their base. From the steeps of a lofty mountain, that rose near us on the right, cattle were slowly descending for the night, winding among the crags, sometimes stopping to crop the heath, or broom, and then disappearing for a moment behind the darker verdure of yews, that grew in knots upon the cliffs.

It was night before we reached Ulverston. The wind sounded mournfully among the hills and we perceived our approach to the sea only by the faint roaring of the tide, till from a brow, whence the hills open on either hand with a grand sweep, we could just discern the gray surface of the sea-bay, at a distance below, and then, by lights that glimmered in the bottom, the town of Ulverston, lying not far from the shore and screened on the north by the heights, from which we were to descend.

Ulverston is a neat but ancient town, the capital and chief port of Furness. The road from it to the majestic ruin of Furness Abbey lies through Low Furness, and loses the general wildness and interest of the country, except where now and then the distant retrospect of the mountains breaks over the tame hills and regular enclosures, that border it.

About a mile and a half on this side of the Abbey, the road passes through Dalton, a very antient little town, once the capital of Low Furness, and rendered so important by its neighbourhood to the Abbey, that Ulverston, the present capital, could not then support the weekly market, for which it had obtained a charter. Dalton, however, sunk with the suppression of its neighbouring patrons, and is now chiefly distinguished by the pleasantness of its situation, to which a church, built on a bold ascent, and the remains of a castle, advantageously placed for the command of the adjoining valley, still attach some degree of dignity. What now exists of the latter is one tower, in a chamber of whichthe Abbot of Furness held his secular Court; and the chamber was afterwards used as a gaol for debtors, till within these few years, when the dead ruin released the living one. The present church-yard and the scite of this castle are

supposed to have been included within the limits of a *castellum*, built by Agricola, of the fosse of which there are still some faint vestiges.

Beneath the brow, on which the church and tower stand, a brook flows through a narrow valley, that winds about a mile and a half to the Abbey. In the way thither we passed the entrance of one of the very rich iron mines, with which the neighbourhood abounds; and the deep red tint of the soil, that overspreads almost the whole country between Ulverston and the monastery, sufficiently indicates the nature of the treasures beneath.

In a close glen, branching from this valley, shrouded by winding banks clumped with old groves of oak and chesnut, we found the magnificent remains of

4.16. FURNESS ABBEY .

THE deep retirement of its situation, the venerable grandeur of its gothic arches and the luxuriant yet ancient trees, that shadow this forsaken spot, are circumstances of picturesque and, if the expression may be allowed, of sentimental beauty, which fill the mind with solemn yet delightful emotion. This glen is called the Vale of Nightshade, or, more literally from its ancient title Bekangsgill, the ‘“glen of deadly nightshade,”’ that plant being abundantly found in the neighbourhood. Its romantic gloom and sequestered privacy particularly adapted it to the austerities of monastic life; and in the most retired part of it King Stephen, while Earl of Mortaign and Bulloign, founded, in the year 1127, the magnificent monastery of Furness, and endowed it with princely wealth and almost princely authority, in which it was second only to Fontain’s-abbey in Yorkshire.

The windings of the glen conceal these venerable ruins, till they are closely approached, and the bye road, that conducted us, is margined with a few ancient oaks, which stretch their broad branches entirely across it, and are sinely preparatory objects to the scene beyond. A sudden bend in this road brought us within view of the northern gate of the Abbey, a beautiful gothic arch, one side of which is luxuriantly festooned with nightshade. A thick grove of plane-trees, with some oak and beech, overshadow it on the right, and lead the eye onward to the ruins of the Abbey, seen through this dark arch in remote perspective, over rough but verdant ground. The principal features are the great northern window and part of the eastern choir, with glimpses of shattered arches and stately walls beyond, caught between the gaping casements. On the left, the bank of the glen is broken into knolls capped with oaks, which in some places spread downwards to a stream that winds round the ruin, and darken it with their rich foliage. Through this gate is the entrance to the immediate precincts of the Abbey, an area said to contain sixty-five acres, now called the Deer-park. It is enclosed by a stone wall, on which the remains of many small buildings and the faint vestiges of others, still appear; such as the porter’s lodge, mills, granaries, ovens and kilns that once supplied the monastery, some of which, seen under the shade of the fine old trees, that

on every side adorn the broken steeps of this glen, have a very interesting effect.

Just within the gate, a small manor house of modern date, with its stables and other offices, breaks discordantly upon the lonely grandeur of the scene. Except this, the character of the deserted ruin is scrupulously preserved in the surrounding area; no spade has dared to level the inequalities, which fallen fragments have occasioned in the ground, or shears to clip the wild fern and underwood, that overspread it; but every circumstance conspires to heighten the solitary grace of the principal object and to prolong the luxurious melancholy, which the view of it inspires. We made our way among the pathless fern and grass to the north end of the church, now, like every other part of the Abbey, entirely roofless, but shewing the lofty arch of the great window, where, instead of the painted glass that once enriched it, are now tufted plants and wreaths of nightshade. Below is the principal door of the church, bending into a deep round arch, which, retiring circle within circle, is rich and beautiful; the remains of a winding staircase are visible within the wall on its left side. Near this northern end of the edifice are seen one side of the eastern choir, with its two slender gothic window frames, and on the west a remnant of the nave of the Abbey and some lofty arches, which once belonged to the belfry, now detached from the main building.

To the south, but concealed from this point of view, are the chapter-house, some years ago exhibiting a roof of beautiful gothic sretwork, and which was almost the only part of the Abbey thus ornamented, its architecture having been characterised by an air of grand simplicity rather than by the elegance and richness of decoration, which in an after date distinguished the gothic style in England. Over the chapter-house were once the library and scriptorium, and beyond it are still the remains of cloisters, of the refectory, the locutorium, or conversation-room, and the calefactory. These, with the walls of some chapels, of the vestry, a hall, and of what is believed to have been a school-house, are all the features of this noble edifice that can easily be traced: winding staircases within the surprising thickness of the walls, and door-cases involved in darkness and mystery, the place abounds with.

The abbey, which was formerly of such magnitude as nearly to fill up the breadth of the glen, is built of a palered stone, dug from the

neighbouring rocks, now changed by time and weather to a tint of dusky brown, which accords well with the hues of plants and shrubs that every where emboss the mouldering arches.

The finest view of the ruin is on the east side, where, beyond the vast, shattered frame that once contained a richly-painted window, is seen a perspective of the choir and of distant arches, remains of the nave of the abbey, closed by the woods. This perspective of the ruin is * said to be two hundred and eighty-seven feet in length; the choir part of it is in width only twenty-eight feet inside, but the nave is seventy: the walls, as they now stand, are fifty-four feet high and in thickness five. Southward from the choir extend the still beautiful, though broken, pillars and arcades of some chapels, now laid open to the day; the chapter-house, the cloisters, and beyond all, and detached from all, is the school-house, a large building, the only part of the monastery that still boasts a roof.

As, soothed by the venerable shades and the view of a more venerable ruin, we rested opposite to the eastern window of the choir, where once the high altar stood, and, with five other altars, assisted the religious pomp of the scene; the images and the manners of times, that were past, rose to reflection. The midnight procession of monks, clothed in white and bearing lighted tapers, appeared to the ‘“mind’s eye”’ issuing to the choir through the very door-case, by which such processions were wont to pass from the cloisters to perform the matin service, when, at the moment of their entering the church, the deep chanting of voices was heard, and the organ swelled a solemn peal. To fancy, the strain still echoed feebly along the arcades and died in the breeze among the woods, the rustling leaves mingling with the close. It was easy to image the abbot and the officiating priests seated beneath the richly-fretted canopy of the four stalls, that still remain entire in the southern wall, and high over which is now perched a solitary yew-tree, a black funereal memento to the living of those who once sat below.

Of a quadrangular court on the west side of the church, three hundred and thirty-four feet long and one hundred and two feet wide, little vestige now appears, except the foundation of a range of cloisters, that formed its western boundary, and under the shade of which the monks on days of high solemnity passed in their customary procession round the court. What was

the belfry is now a huge mass of detached ruin, picturesque from the loftiness of its shattered arches and the high inequalities of the ground within them, where the tower, that once crowned this building, having fallen, lies in vast fragments, now covered with earth and grass, and no longer distinguishable but by the hillock they form.

The school-house, a heavy structure attached to the boundary wall on the south, is nearly entire, and the walls, particularly of the portal, are of enormous thickness, but, here and there, a chasm discloses the staircases, that wind within them to chambers above. The schoolroom below, shews only a stone bench, that extends round the walls, and a low stone pillar in the eastern corner, on which the teacher’s pulpit was formerly fixed. The lofty vaulted roof is scarcely distinguishable by the dusky light admitted through one or two narrow windows placed high from the ground, perhaps for the purpose of consining the scholar’s attention to his book.

These are the principal features, that remain of this once magnificent abbey. It was dedicated to St. Mary, and received a colony of monks from the monastery of Savigny in Normandy, who were called Gray Monks, from their dress of that colour, till they became Cistercians, and, with the severe rules of St. Bernard, adopted a white habit, which they retained till the dissolution of monastic orders in England. The original rules of St. Bernard partook in several instances of the austerities of those of La Trapp, and the society did not very readily relinquish the milder laws of St. Benedict for the new rigours imposed upon them by the parent monastery of Savigny. They were forbidden to taste flesh, except when ill, and even eggs, butter, cheese and milk, but on extraordinary occasions; and denied even the use of linen and fur. The monks were divided into two classes, to which separate departments belonged. Those, who attended the choir, slept upon straw in their usual habits, from which, at midnight, they rose and passed into the church, where they continued their holy hymns, during the short remainder of the night. After this first mass, having publicly confessed themselves, they retired to their cells, and the day was employed in spiritual exercises and in copying or illuminating manuscripts. An unbroken silence was observed, except when, after dinner, they withdrew into the locutorium, where for an hour, perhaps, they were permitted the common privilege of social beings. This class was consined to the boundary wall, except that, on some particular days, the members of

it were allowed to walk in parties beyond it, for exercise and amusement; but they were very seldom permitted either to receive, or pay visits. Like the monks of La Trapp, however, they were distinguished for extensive charities and liberal hospitality; for travellers were so scrupulously entertained at the abbey, that it was not till the dissolution that an inn was thought necessary in this part of Furness, when one was opened for their accommodation, expressly because the monastery could no longer receive them.

To the second class were assigned the cultivation of the lands and the performance of domestic affairs in the monastery.

This was the second house in England, that received the Bernardine rules, the most rigorous of which were, however, dispensed with in 1485 by Sixtus the Fourth, when, among other indulgences, the whole order was allowed to taste meat on three days of the week. With the rules of St. Benedict, the monks had exchanged their gray habit for a white cassock with a white caul and scapulary. But their choir dress was either white or gray, with caul and scapulary of the same, and a girdle of black wool; over that a mozet, or hood, and a rochet* . When they went abroad they wore a caul and full black hood.

The privileges and immunities, granted to the Cistercian order in general, were very abundant; and those to the Abbey of Furness were proportioned to its vast endowments. The abbot, it has been mentioned, held his secular court in the neighbouring castle of Dalton, where he presided with the power of administering not only justice but injustice, since the lives and property of the villain tenants of the lordship of Furness were consigned by a grant of King Stephen to the disposal of my lord abbot! The monks also could be arraigned, for whatever crime, only by him. ‘“The military establishment of Furness likewise depended on the abbot. Every mesne lord and free homager, as well as the customary tenants, took an oath of fealty to the abbot, to be true to him against all men, excepting the king. Every mesne lord obeyed the summons of the abbot, or his steward, in raising his quota of armed men, and every tenant of a whole tenement furnished a man and horse of war for guarding the coast, for the border-service, or any expedition against the common enemy of the king and kingdom. The habiliments of war were a steel coat, or coat

of mail, a falce, or falchion, a jack, the bow, the bill, the cross-bow and spear. The Furness legion consisted of four divisions: — one of bowmen horsed and harnessed; bylmen horsed and harnessed; bowmen without horse and harness; bylmen without horse and harness† .”’

The deep forests, that once surrounded the Abbey, and overspread all Furness, contributed with its insulated situation, on a neck of land running out into the sea, to secure it from the depredations of the Scots, who were continually committing hostilities on the borders. On a summit over the Abbey are the remains of a beacon, or watchtower, raised by the society for their further security. It commands extensive views over Low Furness and the bay of the sea immediately beneath; looking forward to the town and castle of Lancaster, appearing faintly on the opposite coast; on the south, to the isles of Wanley, Foulney, and their numerous islets, on one of which stands Peel-castle; and, on the north, to the mountains of High Furness and Coniston, rising in grand amphitheatre round this inlet of the Irish Channel. Description can scarcely suggest the full magnificence of such a prospect, to which the monks, emerging from their concealed cells below, occasionally resorted to sooth the asperities, which the severe discipline of superstition inflicted on the temper; or, freed from the observance of jealous eyes, to indulge, perhaps, the sigh of regret, which a consideration of the world they had renounced, thus gloriously given back to their sight, would sometimes awaken.

From Hawcoat, a few miles to the west of Furness, the view is still more extensive, whence, in a clear day, the whole length of the Isle of Man may be seen, with part of Anglesey and the mountains of Caernarvon, Merionethshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire, shadowing the opposite horizon of the channel.

The sum total of all rents belonging to the Abbey immediately before the dissolution was 946l. 2s. 10d. collected from Lancashire, Cumberland, and even from the Isle of Man; a sum, which considering the value of money at that period; and the woods, meadows, pastures, and sisheries, retained by the society in their own hands; the quantity of provisions for domestic use brought by the tenants instead of rent, and the shares of mines, mills, and saltworks, which belonged to the Abbey, swells its former riches to an enormous amount.

Pyle, the last abbot, surrendered with twenty-nine monks, to Henry the Eighth, April the 9th 1537, and in return was made Rector of Dalton, a situation then valued at thirty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence a year.

4.17. FROM ULVERSTON TO LANCASTER .

FROM the abbey we returned to Ulverston, and from thence crossed the sands to Lancaster, a ride singularly interesting and sublime. From the Carter’s house, which stands on the edge of the Ulverston sands, and at the point, whence passengers enter them, to Lancaster, within the furthest opposite shore, is fifteen miles. This noble bay is interrupted by the peninsula of Cartmel, extending a line of white rocky coast, that divides the Leven and Ulverston sands from those of Lancaster. The former are four miles over; the latter seven.

We took the early part of the tide, and entered these vast and desolate plains before the sea had entirely left them, or the morning mists were sufficiently dissipated to allow a view of distant objects; but the grand sweep of the coast could be faintly traced, on the left, and a vast waste of sand stretching far below it, with mingled streaks of gray water, that heightened its dreary aspect. The tide was ebbing fast from our wheels, and its low murmur was interrupted, first, only by the shrill small cry of sea-gulls, unseen, whose hovering flight could be traced by the sound, near an island that began to dawn through the mist; and then, by the hoarser croaking of sea-geese, which took a wider range, for their shifting voices were heard from various quarters of the surrounding coast. The body of the sea, on the right, was still involved, and the distant mountains on our left, that crown the bay, were also viewless; but it was sublimely interesting to watch the heavy vapours beginning to move, then rolling in lengthening volumes over the scene, and, as they gradually dissipated, discovering through their veil the various objects they had concealed — fishermen with carts and nets stealing along the margin of the tide, little boats putting off from the shore, and, the view still enlarging as the vapours expanded, the main sea itself softening into the horizon, with here and there a dim sail moving in the hazy distance. The wide desolation of the sands, on the left, was animated only by some horsemen riding remotely in groups towards Lancaster, along the winding edge of the water, and by a muscle-fisher in his cart trying to ford the channel we were approaching.

The coast round the bay was now distinctly, though remotely, seen, rising in woods, white cliffs and cultivated slopes towards the mountains

of Furness, on whose dark brows the vapours hovered. The shore falls into frequent recesses and juts out in promontories, where villages and country seats are thickly strewn. Among the latter, Holker-hall, deep among woods, stands in the north. The village and hall of Bardsea, once the site of a monastery, with a rocky background and, in front, meadows falling towards the water; and Conishead priory, with its spiry woods, the paragon of beauty, lie along the western coast, where the hills, swelling gently from the isle of Walney, nearly the last point of land visible on that side the bay, and extending to the north, sweep upwards towards the fells of High Furness and the whole assemblage of Westmoreland mountains, that crown the grand boundary of this arm of the sea.

We set out rather earlier than was necessary, for the benefit of the guide over part of these trackless wastes, who was going to his station on a sand near the first ford, where he remains to conduct passengers across the united streams of the rivers Crake and Leven, till the returning tide washes him off. He is punctual to the spot as the tides themselves, where he shivers in the dark comfortless midnights of winter, and is scorched on the shadeless sands, under the noons of summer, for a stipend of ten pounds a year! and he said that he had fulfilled the office for thirty years. He has, however, perquisites occasionally from the passengers. In early times the Prior of Conishead, who established the guide, paid him with three acres of land and an annuity of fifteen marks; at the dissolution, Henry the Eighth charged himself and his successors with the payment of the guide by patent.

Near the first ford is Chapel Isle, on the right from Ulverston, a barren sand, where are yet some remains of a chapel, built by the monks of Furness, in which divine service was daily performed at a certain hour, for passengers, who crossed the sands with the morning tide. The ford is not thought dangerous, though the sands frequently shift, for the guide regularly tries for, and ascertains, the proper passage. The stream is broad and of formidable appearance, spreading rapidly among the sands and, when you enter it, seeming to bear you away in its course to the sea. The second ford is beyond the peninsula of Cartmel, on the Lancaster sands, and is formed by the accumulated waters of the rivers, Ken and Winster, where another guide waits to receive the traveller.

The shores of the Lancaster sands fall back to greater distance and are not so bold, or the mountains beyond so awful, as those of Ulverston; but they are various, often beautiful, and Arnside-fells have a higher character. The town and castle of Lancaster, on an eminence, gleaming afar off over the level sands and backed by a dark ridge of rocky heights, look well as you approach them. Thither we returned and concluded a tour, which had afforded infinite delight in the grandeur of its landscapes and a reconciling view of human nature in the simplicity, integrity, and friendly disposition of the inhabitants.

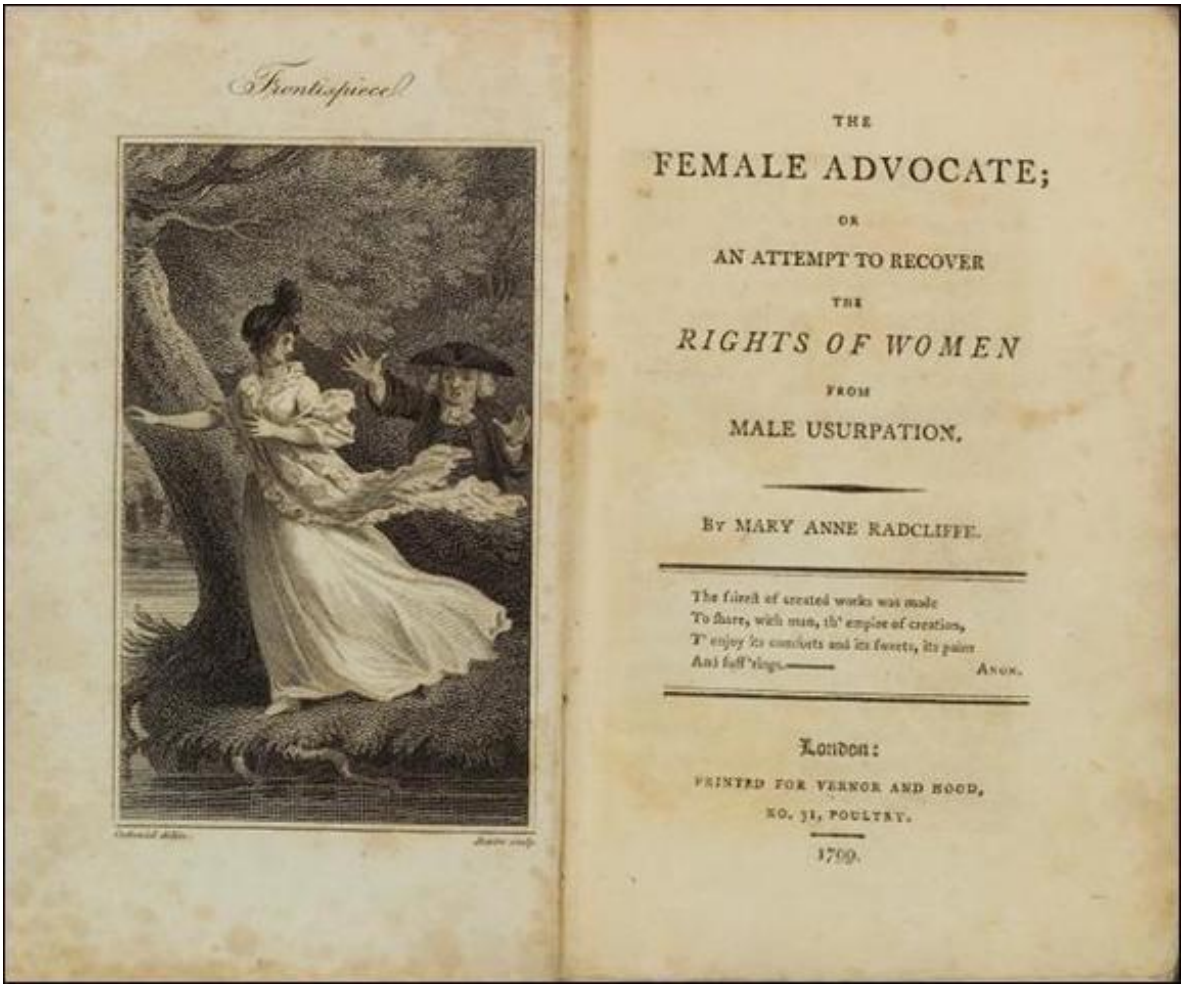
FINIS.

THE FEMALE ADVOCA TE

OR AN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER THE *RIGHTS OF WOMEN* FROM MALE USURPATION.

The Female Advocate was published in 1799 for Vernor and Hood and written by Radcliffe because she was indignant about the inferior earning opportunities possible for women in the late eighteenth century. Radcliffe calls for the protection of oppressed women, believing that they should be educated to the same degree as men, whilst also arguing that if that is not possible, as was true of the situation in Britain during that period, then it is the responsibility of men to protect women if they are going to claim the right to govern over them. Radcliffe's argument is not as radical as Mary Wollstonecraft's in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* , and asks not for women to have power, or to assume equality with men, but that they should be offered protection. She states that this will result in contentedness in women because it will lift them out of depression. She suggests British women are very docile through either habit or compulsion and they will be easily satisfied with men just offering protection.

Radcliffe's tone in the introduction is conciliatory and almost apologetic at presuming to even write about the subject. A subject of contention is men appropriating women's professions and denying them an avenue against destitution by means of employment. She also believes that certain professions were just unsuitable for men and that it was unpleasant for a woman to have her hair attended to by a man. Radcliffe approaches the topic of virtue and proffers arguments that oppose the notion that virtue in women is mainly determined by disposition; she suggests that often behaviour that shows a lack of virtue is due to unfortunate circumstances. This interesting non-fiction work offers an insight into Radcliffe's beliefs, allowing us to understand her as a working woman at a time when females quickly realised that 'the world was not their friend, nor the world's laws'.


Frontispiece

THE

FEMALE ADVOCATE;

OR

AN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER

THE

RIGHTS OF WOMEN

FROM

MALE USURPATION.

BY MARY ANNE RADCLIFFE.

The fairest of created works was made
To share, with man, th' empire of creation,
T' enjoy its comforts and its sweets, its pains
And suff'rings.—— ANON.

London:

PRINTED FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,

NO. 31, POULTRY.

1799.

The first edition

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The fairest of created works was made
To share, with man, th’ empire of creation,
T’ enjoy its comforts and its sweets, its pains
And suff’rings. —

ANON.

TO THE READER.

SO various and complicated are the scenes of this life, that seven years have elapsed since the following pages were written, a period, perhaps, more favourable for publishing than the present; but timidity, or other hinderances have repeatedly prevented their appearing before the public; during which time the author hoped some more able advocate would have taken up the cause, to do justice to a subject of such importance to society at large, and particularly a much injured part thereof. For, alas! it is too well known, that female education, in general, is confined within very narrow limits, and seldom permitted to extend to classical accomplishments. The writer of this volume being a female, with only a female’s education, is sufficiently aware of her inadequacy to the undertaking, but trusts the importance of the subject will claim some attention ; at the same time, reposing a full confidence in the candour and unbounded goodness of some part of her readers at least, she is once more encouraged to resume the pen, to add, or amend such remarks as the nature of the times and circumstanccs require, and, at length, has so far surmounted her timidity, as to submit the following sheets, with all their imperfections, perfections, to the inspection of a generous public, who are more ready to appreciate the works of individuals from the rectitude of intention, than the beauty of composition. The attempt, she must acknowledge, has cost her many a painful emotion ; for a first attempt, surrounded by all the disadvantages peculiar to the sex, seems, to her, to require no small share of courage, and which, indeed, nothing but the importance of the subject should have induced her to encounter.

The subject of the following pages is an attempt to delineate the situation of those poor, helpless, females whose sufferings, from a variety of causes, are too grievous to be borne; the sources and dire consequences of which the exalted in life cannot form the least conception, unless they

condescend to examine for themselves, when, it is to be hoped, their grievances will be sought into and redressed. The munificence of the people of Great Britain, which is ever ready and adequate to the support, aid, and comfort, of the afflicted, when their troubles are fully investigated; and the great number of unfortunate women, who, doubtless, would rejoice to become virtuous and useful members of society, in some lawful employment, have encouraged the author to offer this feeble representation. Nor can she despair of eventual success to the cause she has engaged in, if she is but so happy as to excite the attention of those whose souls are enlarged with the exalted ideas of Christian charity.

Indeed, it is a work which, as a duty to our fellow creatures, she has long, very long, wished to see executed by a more able pen; but the silence of others, the liberality of a generous public, and a most ardent wish to see miscry alleviated, and virtuous industry crowned with abundant success, have been the principal motives to her engaging in so arduous an undertaking. Conscious, however, that whatever good may be the result, the praise alone is due to the benevolent principles of humanity.

The author, at the same time, wishes it to be understood, that she has not been stimulated, from vain and ambitious views, to appear in print, but rather from the pure philanthropic motive of throwing in her humble mite towards the much-wished-for relief of these most pitiable objects of distress; numbers of whom, from the want of a fair representation of their case, she greatly fears, are unable to obtain shelter under the auspicious shade of Christian charity; and, consequently, are compelled to share the fate of the most wretched of human beings. She wishes to represent the case of those who would be industrious, if they might, but are held down by the most powerful influence of custom and misrepresentation; and, consequently, are incapable, without the kind assistance of humanity, to find redress, or even again to tread the paths of virtue. But, alas! finding herself so feeble an advocate, she can only hold the pen of Truth, whilst Reason and Justice plead their cause.

Kennington Cross, March 6th, 1799.

INTRODUCTION .

“Say, sirst of God above, or man below,
“What can we reason from, but what we know?”

POPE.

LET not the fair fame of this country be tarnished with an unnoticed appeal; in particular, an appeal of such magnitude as to involve, at once, the peace, the happiness, and the welfare of every individual. The author’s design is by no means to contend for power, but protection for this oppressed people; imagining that to be the sirmest basis on which to establish the happiness of both sexes.

It must be allowed, however, when custom has given permanency to any practice, however evil in its tendency, it is next to impossible to effect its removal, or to succeed in any reasonable claim; therefore I contend not with the lords of the creation, for any other privilege than that protection, which they themselves avow to be the *real rights of women.* I would not have it understood, that the generality of women, any more than men, are incapable of acquiring the same degree of knowledge and improvement in literature; and happy am I to learn, that this state of prohibition is not general; and that a classical education, in some parts, is not confined to men alone; for, if the author is not misinformed, it is upwards of seven years since there was an establishment formed in Philadelphia, where youth and innocence find protection from the guardian genius, Instruction, whose emblematical trophy may very well be formed of Knowledge gaining the victory over Ignorance.

But these advantages, in Britain, being monopolized by the male sex, permit me to ask, if it is not their duty, at least, to afford protection in their slead; for, surely, if they refuse to protect, they have no right whatever to govern.

“Britons, attend! be worth like this approv’d,
“And shew you have the virtue to be mov’d.”

Therefore I am led to keep firmly to the assertion, that it is not power, but protection, which is required; for the generality of women, *natives of*

this country, are so perfectly tamed, either through custom or compulsive submission, that, let but the lenient hand of protection be stretched out to their aid, and, doubtless, content and happiness will resume their seat, and cheerfulness form the leading feature, to bespeak the tranquillity of those souls, which have been so long depressed.

All women possess not the Amazonian spirit of a Wolstonecraft. But, indeed, unremitted oppression is sometimes a sufficient apology for their throwing off the gentle garb of a female, and assuming some more masculine appearance; yet, when the curtain of misrepresentation is once withdrawn, it is to be hoped, (not donbted) that the cause of complaint will quickly be removed,

It seems, however, very necessary to call in some able assistants, and consequently I make my appeal to reason, justice, and truth, which, in checking the spirit of malevolence, should it rear its hydra head to the prejudice of the cause, will also be the means of shielding the writer from the common censure which the narrow-minded, in general, bestow on a first production.

A serious statement of facts, it is to be hoped, will be productive of good to great numbers, who would be happy to relieve their fellowcreatures, but whose exalted situations in life too generally preclude them the opportunity of obtaining a knowledge of the real wants of the wretched, or the causes of their sufferings; by exhibiting, though feebly, a complicated picture of misery and distress.

Yet, it may not be amiss to observe, that having made my remarks chiefly on real, and not imaginary grievances, should any thing in these pages do violence to the critical abilities of any of my readers, whose superior education exalts them above the level of the interior ranks of society, it is the writer’s request, that the intention may be kept in remembrance.

Still, methinks, I hear the voice of reason reproaching me, after the many acknowledged disadvantages, for attempting to write on a subject of such weighty importance. Indeed, considering the great number of eminent writers that are daily displaying their erudition in a variety of subjects, and in styles so very far superior to my poor abilities, the undertaking were presumption itself. But, amidst the abundant shew of publications which are daily ushered into the world, I have not seen one on a subject similar to

this. This alone is the exciting cause to my undertaking, in which it will be my utmost ambition to be the humble means of directing the tender eye of benevolence to worthy objects of commiseration; or, inducing some more able advocate to take up the cause of a much-injured and oppressed part of the community.

Doubtless, in their journey through life, a number of my fellow travellers have made the same observations with myself, though they have not made them public; yet, willing to suppose *that* silence did not proceed from a want of those philanthropic dispositions which have, at all times, distinguished Britons, [...] will suppose this great omission, for undoubt edly great it will appear, when properly in vestigated, cannot possibly have been occasioned from any other cause than the force o [...] custom, by which the greatest part of the community have been so long hoodwinked; and those grievances passed by in silence, of which I am about to speak. Many excellent charities this country supports, and many worthy individuals seem to exult in stepping forward to the aid of the distressed ; nor is it to be doubted, that many more would as cheerfully contribute in support of the still unfortunate and oppressed, were they made acquainted with the real objects: but, alas! when keen adversity strikes its pointed dart into the bosom of the afflicted, the pain is too great to admit of an explanation ; and when past, their only endeavour is to bury its remembrance in oblivion: therefore, unless some friendly hand take up the pen, how can those, who are enabled by fortune and prompted by compassion, stretch forth the hand of clemency to distresses, of which they never heard; or, like the good Samaritan, pour oil into wounds which they never saw. In the mean time, then, let mine be the painful, though voluntary, task; and even, should the design not immediately meet with the desired success, no doubt, but in a short time it may, by the kindly interference of the great, powerful, and humane investigators of human calamities, to the emancipation of this oppressed part of the human kind.

At the commencement of the Magdalen charity, it is true, an objection was started, which was founded upon this candid question: “What will you do with such poor creatures, when you have them?” But the difficulty was as soon solved by Robert Dingley, Esq. the first humane proposer of the charity. Nor is there a doubt, were a similar enquiry to take place, it would as soon be solved; for what undertaking is too bold for man to attempt,

when a restoration of happiness to his fellow creatures is the object. I shall, then, cheerfully proceed to offer the following general hints, which, it is hoped, will be improved upon to the good of society.

PART FIRST. THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF MEN TRADERS ENGROSSING WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONS .

TO detail human misery in all its various shapes is not in the power of any individual: so complicated and numerous are the ills of this life, and so various its misfortunes, that we need not have recourse to the airy regions of fiction or romance, to find out objects of distress, to pourtray the woes of our fellow creatures; yet, from motives of delicacy, beg leave to withhold names, lest the suffering objects should feel hurt at the melancholy recital of their tale of woe; and shall therefore only select a few instances, and leave the candid moralist to take a comparative view of the rest, through all the wonderful mazes and wide tracts, to which a part of our fellow mortals have been condemned. — And by what? not by divine law, which is, or ought to be, the standing rule of all our action, but by an evil precedent, which happens to fall with all its force upon that part of the community, whose feeble powers of resistance, joined to an habitual passive submission, are the least able to defend them. Consequently it has never yet been thought a business worth investigation, although so many others, of much less moment, have been sought out, and redressed.

When we look around us, nothing is more conspicuous in the eyes of the world, than the distresses of women. I do not say those whom a kind Providence hath placed under the immediate care of a tender father, or an affectionate and kind husband; or, *by chance*, a friend, or brother. But these, alas! comprise only one part of the community. Notwithstanding all are of the same nature, and were formed by the same Divine Power, yet their comforts differ very widely indeed. Still, as women seem formed by nature to seek protection from man, why, in the name of justice, refuse the boon? Does it not become highly worthy the attention of men in general, to consider in what manner to redress the grievances *already within their notice?*

Perhaps it may be said, and very justly, that, considering human frailty, there is amongst women, as well as men, a vast number of vicious and undeserving. Granted; still, is it not better to pass over a hundred guilty,

than let punishment fall upon one innocent person? — Besides, IS THERE NOT A POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A PLAN OF DISCRIMINATION, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE ONLY WHO MERIT SUCH HUMANE AND FRIENDLY INTERFERENCE?

Some years ago, who would have been made believe, so many persons could be restored to life, as the Royal Humane Society, for the recovering of drowned persons, has effected? Yet so it is; which proves to a demonstration, the practicability of this design. But before I proceed with my Hint for e [...]ecting any established plan, for the restoration of peace and happiness to the, perhaps, once happy, but now most miserable of beings, I cannot help making a remark, that, in order to lay a good foundation, every builder must find it necessary, first, to remove the rubbish out of his way — So let us proceed to the groundwork of the design; and. before any further sleps are taken, ask, What can be said in favour of men-milliners, men-manu [...]a-makers, and men stay-makers? besides all the numerous train of other prosessions, such as hairdressers, &c. &c.; all of which occupations are much more calculated for women than men. But, thanks to the fashions of the times, for once, which have nearly exploded that disgraceful custom of men dressing ladies' hair, by the introduction of all the brutuses and chignons, of every denomination, which have found their way to the [...]lets of all descriptions of females. —

Where is there a Stevens now? was there ever a wider field for the display of his talents? Yet, if perukes are the fashion of the day, what is to prevent a woman from displaying her taste upon a lady's head as well as a man, who seems much better calculated for a more masculine employment.

"Look," says an observer, "to the shops of perfumers, toymen, and others of a similar occupation; and, above all, look to the haberdashery magazines, where from ten to twenty fellows, six feet high, may be counted in each, to the utter exclusion of poor females, who could sell a tooth-pick, or a few ribbons, just as well."

A tax upon these fellows would be very salutary, so say I ; yet, for a poor female individual to attack so numerous a body of men, however insignificant by custom, is a bold stroke, no doubt; yet, having thrown these sentiments together, in defence of the oppressed, even the censure of

malevolence itself *will* not prevent the truth, which, like a huntsman's whip, cannot give pain to any *but* those it touches : for, as no rule can be established without exceptions, so in this case more than one must be granted, which shall be treated of in a subsequent part of these pages. To class the innocent with the guilty would be doing injustice to the cause.

But, in the mean time, where are these fathers, husbands, brothers, and professed friends to virtue and happiness, who step not forward in the business? No doubt but there are many men of great probity and humanity, and yet, through the progressive course of custom, have not adverted *either* to the cause or its fatal consequences; or, in fine, are not aware of the real distresses of our fellowcreatures; from which idea it is so frequently wished a reference to facts may take place, since neither the sufferings of these poor women, nor the cause of their sufferings can possibly be known, but by investigation.

It is not to be supposed but all, in some degree, share the: common misfortunes in life; and few there are, however wretched their situations, who cannot single out other beings as bad, if not in a more deplorable state.

But, in the case of these poor women, where is there a state nearly equal to theirs? borne down by fate's afflicting hand, they are not able to act, or seck redress; and this, by the unfeeling part of the world, we have too great reason to fear, is termed idleness and profligacy.

What a littleness of mind ! what an unfeeling and despicable meanness must lurk in the breasts of those, who can, with impunity, insult over distress! Into what fits of desperation have numbers of helpless females fallen through these contemptible insults and revilings, and even neglects! for, it is in those dark moments of distress, when the senses are all alive to the fine feelings of nature, that every nerve is relaxed and ready to receive the fatal dart.

Then indeed it is, that she stands exposed in the field of adversity, surrounded by every disadvantage, without the aid of education, or the guardian hand of protection; that is to say, without either weapon or shield of defence: a situation which, it is natural to suppose, would draw pity from the most obdurate hearts. Yet, how many are the instances of the censorious part of the creation, dastardly and cruelly assassinating and murdering the character of these poor unfortunate victims, and those of all

murderers are the worst under heaven. The common and detected murderer stands exposed to the laws of his country, but the assassin, who, under a cloak of hypocrisy, can persecute and desame the characters of oppressed females, are no longer worthy the invaluable title of Christian.

Then, pass no longer, so unconcernedly and without notice, the distressed and wretched situation of the most helpless part of the creation, who are not impowered by any means whatever to defend themselves; having, by the strong power of custom, so long been deemed unworthy of notice.

O! may that auspicious day arrive. when the curtain may be withdrawn, and the tragic scene exposed to open view; when every true Briton who reveres his Maker, or his king, may cheerfully exert himself in the general cause.

What greater satisfaction can the good heart feel, than to be the instrument of drawing distress from the dark shades of obscurity and wretchedness? In addition to which, are we not fully convinced, from the words of our blessed Teacher, that a kind and charitable disposition towards our fellowcreatures, is one of the greatest precepts of our religion? Does he not say, by this the world shall know you to be my disciples, if you love one another. Then, on the strength of divine exhortation, let us comfort these poor women in the words of the immortal Milton:

“Be not disheartened then, nor cloud those looks,

“That wont to be more cheerful and serene.”

But with joyful expectation wait a relief to those trying hardships which the unfortunate part of poor females have so long sustained; not doubting but some friendly and humane wellwisher to the distressed, *and the public in general*, will zealously undertake the cause, whether individually, or in general, matters not; for it is not to be supposed, all men are in the same mind at once, or can obtain a sull knowledge of the case at first view; but when once begun, doubtless others will as quickly join in the grand cause, and from a serious survey, discover some mode of regulating this complex business, which carries such a vast train of grievances after it, and which is deeply interwoven with the happiness of the greatest part of the people, connected with the whole, will manifest itself to every serious enquirer, and shall be more fully enlarged upon, as we explore the dreary scene. But

I can never force myself to a belief, that woman, the mother of all mankind, was ever intended by Divine Providence to become a butt, or mark, to receive so many piercing darts from the sons of her bosom, as her only reward for all that maternal affection and kindness which the helpless state of infancy and childhood render so necessary: independently, does it not seem a social interest in nature, to give aid and succour to one another?

No: it was never intended that women should be left destitute in the world, without the common necessaries of life, which they so frequently experience, even without any lawful or reputable means of acquiring them, through the vile practice of men filling such situations as seem calculated, not only to give bread to poor females, but thereby to enable them to tread the paths of virtue, and render them useful members, in some lawful employment, as well as ornaments to their professions and sex. This lovely appearance, alas! is but too often thrown aside, and, frequently, *not* from vicious inclinations, but the absolute necessity of bartering their virtue for bread.

Then, is it not highly worthy the attention of men, men who profess moral virtue and the strictest sense of *honour,* to consider in what mode to redress these grievances! for women were ultimately designed for something better, though they have so long fared otherways.

That there should he a mixture of characters in the world is, beyond a doubt, for wise and good reasons, which we poor short-sighted mortals know not, more than that it is a principle in which all reflecting persons have agreed, that our present state, on this side the grave is certainly designed for improvement, in order to fit us for a better. This being admitted, where can the well-disposed find a better opportunity, than by desending the innocent and unprotected, selecting them from the noxious part of mankind, with whom they are, through keen adversity, obliged to associate; and placing them in such situations, as will enable them, to pursue the paths of virtue, by means of some honest employment?

But to accomplish so laudable a design rests both with the humane and the opulent, by whose investigation, there is not a doubt, but it will be found a work of the utmost importance, not only in the present state of things but in looking forward to a succession. For in times like the present, is not the aid and assistance of men required in the military and naval

departments? And in more peaceable times, which we have to look forward to, are not, or ought not, the manufactories of the country to be the first object considered? In either of these cases, it evidently appears, that men may be much better employed than in filling women's occupations. For, in the words of St. Luke, these poor females may very justly say, "to dig I cannot, to beg I am ashamed." From this evil precedent, there is no other alternative for these poor women, but beggary or vice !

Let us then, if you please, select one of these distressed females, out of the prodigious multitude, and pursue her through the humiliating scene of beggary: I believe it is granted, that pride is well known to be the predominant passion of the human breast, and consequently any comments on that head are needless; but certain it must be, that after, perhaps, a life of ease and affluence, to be compelled to such a mortifying situation, requires more than a common share of fortitude to support. Still this prevailing passion, with all its train of attendants, must be subdued, in the dreadful situation of beggary which cannot fail to bring down the spirits of these unhappy victims, with more oppressive force than it is in the power of words to express, or pen to paint, and can only be conceived, *in part,* by the silent sensations of those who can adopt another's woes, and trace the passions of the human mind. For what must not be the perturbation of a mind like this, when dire necessity compels the poor, neglected victim to pursue such degrading steps, in order to support a miserable existence! See her trembling limbs, which are scarcely able to support her load of wretchedness, whilst she asks an alms from the casual passenger. She who, perhaps, a short time since, charmed her acquaintance with her sprightly conversation and vi [...]tuous example, by one adverse stroke, is nevertheless so soon become the contempt, the scorn, and the outcast of mortals! Nor is this wretched doom confined to youth alone; but, by the cruel hand of fate, the poor, dejected mother, as well as daughter, is condemned to share the same direful misfortunes, and be reduced to the same low state of wretchedness, from which their characters are stigmatized with infamy, and to which they unavoidably fall a sacrifice. In this miserable state they must for ever remain, until the spirit of oppression and mistaken prejudice is eradicated, and the heavy cloud of misrepresentation cleared away, through a proper investigation of the cause, which, doubtless, will lead to a conviction; that the distress and

wretchedness of these poor, abandoned creatures originate chiefly from the avaricious and mercenary views of that set of beings, who are “Eating the bread of the hungry, and drinking the drink of the thirsty.” Nor are these poor women allowed “to pick up the crumbs,” which will appear in the sequel.

In the mean time, let us, if you please, take another view of this poor mother and her miserable daughter, in this forlorn and distressing state of beggary, and there see what relief they obtain, from their piercing accents and broken sighs — little more, it is to be feared, than contempt or insults. Even the hand of charity, accustomed to bestow on the needy, no sooner observes the appearance of youth, or a capability of industry, than it is instantly withdrawn, and kept in reserve (as it is thought) for some more proper object.

Good heavens, what a scene of woe! when the poor mother and her helpless daughter are turned adrist, to the mercy of an unfeeling world ; which neither their genteel education, or delicate constitutions, broken down by poverty and hardships, can prevent. O! what distress, in a situation like this! The mother, the fond mother, in the full bitterness of maternal affection, takes another, and another view of her darling child; perhaps the only remaining pledge of a late kind partner! sees her still laden with the fruits of a pious education at least; views her with unutterable fondness, “whilst all the soft passions of her tender soul throb through her breast with unavailing grief,” at the near approach of their destruction! In vain do they supplicate their former friends, for the voice of censure has pointed them out as infamous! Good God ! what grief can equal this? Abandoned by friends, and left to the reproach, contempt, and censure of a cruel world, without a provision, or any probable means of gaining a subsistence, or even the smallest glimpse of distant hope.

And, though shocking to relate, yet such is the miserable situation of thousands of desenceless women.

Nor let the unfeeling and censorious part of mankind refute the assertion, until provision is made for the relief of all those who would be both industrious and virtuous, had they the means. After which, the remaining few may justly be reckoned in the class of incorrigible sinners, and be a sufficient mode of forming a discrimination.

But until that provision is made, it is inhuman, base, and cruel, and beneath the dignity of a Christian, to load with infamy the poor, neglected female, who suffers through misfortunes, and the continuation of an evil precedent; and whose passive virtue is, perhaps, at the very instant of calumny, offering up the divine petition of, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;” and endeavouring to arm with Christian fortitude herself and beloved child, according to the advice of the wise man, who says, “Has thou children, instruct them from their youth.” She remonstrates with the child of her bosom not with standing she is her partner in wretchedness, and still encourages her to persevere i [...] virtue, and live in joyful hope.

“Let us, my dear child,”; says she, “form our estimation of the world and its objects at they deserve; remembering we are pilgrim; and strangers here. Let us keep in view the glorious prize; and let us soar above the crowd of human difficulties, and rejoice tha [...] the hand which made us is divine. Then, let not our feet tread in the muddy paths of vice nor suffer the purity of our good intentions to be stained with a single act of disobedience to a Supreme Power.”

And under these and such like reviving comforts, the effects of a religious and pious education, she still endeavours to persevere in virtue, though in the midst of poverty; a state which, without the interference of the humane, not any thing can hide them from but the silent grave. Oh! let not then our ears be polluted by the envenomed breath of censure, but endeavour to remove the cause, as well as stigma, which, like the pendulum to a clock, sets every wheel of wretchedness in motion; and by seriously investigating the cause, searching deeply into the state of facts, and the origin of this tribulation, let the censure rest where it is due. For, is it not enough, enough indeed! for the innocent to struggle with the hardships of penury and want, without the double load of malevolence? Alas! even in this despicable state, they are still liable to sorrows they never yet felt, nor are even aware of; for the very means they are driven to use, to obtain the trisling pittance which they sue for, renders them exposed to the merciless hand of any avaricious russian, who may be base enough to drag these poor victims they know not where.

What says the Vagrant Act?— “Persons who beg in the streets are idle and disorderlv; and any person who apprehends and carries such a beggar

before a justice, shall receive five shillings, when the said justice may commit them to a house of correction.”

However shocking the sentence, what num¦bers of these poor objects have been drag¦ged away by the ruthless hand of the unfeeling savage, to some loathsome prison, without regard to the more refined or delicate sensation [...] of one or another? Good heavens! there surely needs no Siddonian powers to heighten such a tragic scene. She who, perhaps, was reared with all the gentle softness and maternal care of a fond parent; she, who so lately was looked upon as an ornament to her sex, until the pressure of misfortunes compelled her to seek for bread, to be at once confined in a dark prison, there to be obliged to hear all the opprobrious language of the very lowest set of beings, and that under a storm of oaths and imprecations, which, of itself, must pierce her very soul. There to have her ears grated with the rattling of bolts and bars, and all the adamantine setters of misery. Good God! is it possible we can see our fellow creatures debased so low ! Can we see the tender and delicate frame, which was formerly accustomed to ease and tranquillity, and which was formed by nature to participate in others misfortunes! can we let these innocent and helpless beings pass unnoticed, and not commiserate their distress, and ask, from whence the cause? — No! it is impossible the eyes can any longer be shut to their sufferings, or the ears to their piercing cries of, “Have pity on me! Oh! ye, my friends, have pity on me!”

Is not this real distress? Surely there cannot be any thing more wretchedly miserable than the situation of these poor women, who are prohibited from sharing in industry, or the common necessaries of life, or even tasting the very dregs of comfort. For let us but figure to ourselves this wretched pair upon their bed of straw, with all their innocence, with all their tenderness, and quick sensations of distress, still laden with the fruits of a pious education,

“They shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,

“And wake to all the ills they left behind.”

And thus they linger out a wretched exile in this miserable dungeon, until the law hath had its course, and they again are liberated. When see, the fond mother, the poor mother, taking another, and another review of her wretched offspring, groaning out a miserable existence on the narrow verge of life! her sorrow surrounds her like the stern winter’s blast, and

she feels her worn-out senses just bordering upon desponding madness; for, when Hope no longer offers her consolation, despondency must take place; and with all the bitter pangs of distress, she, like the poor widow in sacred writ, sets about to prepare her last handful of meal, that “they may eat it and die.” A release they most ardently wish for, whilst in a state of innocence, rather than keep life upon such wretched terms as are now presented: for, alas! by this time, they see that period near at hand, which must determine the great and shocking alternative between vice or death. And what must be the conflict at this long-dreaded moment, to a heart which, in early youth, was taught to serve its great Creator, and still retains an ardent wish to be virtuous! Can any state under heaven be more distressing to a delicate and susceptible mind, than that between good and evil? And, how shocking it must be, at length, to hear these poor victims of wretchedness, defend themselves, by exclaiming, “I sought not redress in vice, till urged to it by selfdefence, in order to support an existence, which, though I no longer covet, it is my duty to preserve: nor is there any other remedy for ills like mine; for, as the wise Solomon says, “extreme oppression maketh us desperate!”

What a horrid and shocking state! to be driven, by absolute necessity, to support a wretched existence by the forfeiture of every thing she holds most dear in this life, and at the hazard of what is still more precious, her immortal soul !

Besides, what must not be the agonies of her soul in this wretched state, on the dreadful approach of death? a death which, though so much desired in innocence, is dreaded with so great horror in guilt, when all her crimes appear at once to her distracted view. Worn out with intemperance and disease, she feels the dreadful period near at hand, when she must appear before the grand tribunal! How many are her penetential tears in such a horrid situation? She calls, and calls again, upon her great Creator, “O Lord, rebuke me not in thy fury, nor chastise me in thy wrath ; for who can stand before the face of thy indignation?” And thus surrounded with all these dismal and heart-piercing sensations, without a friend to comfort, or the still more invaluable consolations of a dying Christian ; her every sense is racked with horror, and little unlike the infernal regions is her wretched situation.

Whilst her associates in vice are revelling in drunkenness, in order to banish from their reflections all ideas of the horrid scene, and thus she lies, “Groaning out the poor remains of life,” her limbs bathed in sweat, and struggling with convulsive throws, pains insupportable throbbing in every pulse, and innumerable darts of agony transfixing her conscience.

“In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
“Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
“Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help,
“But shrieks in vain. How wishfully, she looks
“On all she’s leaving, now no longer her’s.
“A little longer, yet a little longer.”

Thus her exhausted breath expires, and she dies in all the bitterness of woe. And this alike must continue to be the fate (as it has been so long to numbers) of both parents and children, unless the kind hand of interference shall sever the chain of misery, by which they have so long been held down.

But will not a serious investigation into these scenes of horror be sufficient to arouse the most callous of mankind? for who would not use their utmost endeavours to relieve such unheard-of distress? Or, what is still better, prevent such dire calamities, and all such complicated scenes of misery and wretchedness: for, is it not always granted, that prevention is better than cure?

Then let it not be said, that a country so samed for its justice and humanity, should suffer a continuance of such distress; or that any of our fellow creatures should be compelled to take shelter under the baneful shades of vice, in order to support a miserable existence.

Much, *very much*, indeed, may be said or this subject, but it is not my wish or intention to delineate, or dwell longer upon the tragica history, than may serve to lead to the avenue of investigation ; when a small part of these ftriking truths, to a reflecting mind, will be sufficient to conciliate, and cause them to exert a cheerful readiness to serve our fellow, creatures; by doing which we are well assure [...] it is performing a threefold duty, *viz.* to God to our neighbour, and ourselves. I am fully persuaded, it will appear equally as politic [...] as humane; for the poor, miserable, and oppressed creatures cannot say with *Job*, “I have erred,

mine error remains with myself.” No : their crimes are contagious, and their errors extend and spread their baneful influence through cities, towns, and whole countries, [...] the utter destruction of families of all descriptions; in which case, is it possible unwary youth should escape ?

What numbers of unguarded young men, even with hearts inclined to virtue, have unhappily been drawn on to vice, by the powerful insinuations of these poor abandoned females, who, like Eve in Paradise, is no sooner fallen herself, than, by deceitful artifice, she spreads the net of destruction to catch others. For example: need we go any farther than the theatres, the resort of all, both good and bad, and where abandoned females, of all ages and degrees of profligacy, attend to make their harvest, and gather in their unlawful plunder, to supply the ordinary wants of the ensuing day ? And what can better answer the purpose of decoy than the drama? for, should it be comedy, the obscenity which prevails in many of our modern plays, cannot fail to act as poison upon the young mind : or is it tragedy, what can have a greater influence upon the feelings of sensibility, or sooner awaken the tender passions, which these miserable women take special care to translate to their own evil purposes ? Perhaps, in drawing a simile of their own distress, or by some other artful representation or pretence, by which such numbers of innocent and inexperienced young men are artfully led astray, in their most unguarded moments, whilst seeking a rational and innocent amusement, as a relaxation from the toils of the day, from which too many have found themselves, at once, immerged in destruction, and ingulphed in the quicksands of vice.

Horrid destruction! if all, or the greatest part, of this originates from women being precluded from supporting themselves by means of some lawful employment, who will continue to countenance a precedent, big with so much destruction?

How many unhappy young men have fallen a sacrifice, both in mind and body, to the diabolical artifices which these poor, miserable, abandoned women are driven to practice for bread! And how many Barnwells, who, not able to support, by honest industry, the wants of a favourite mistress, have forcibly pursued such methods as have brought them to misery, shame, and death, and their distracted parents with sorrow to their graves! leaving behind them the remainder of an unprovided family, to toil up the

steep of difficulty; and, *if females*, with all the tribulations before them which we have been just tracing in others!

Nor does the dreadful calamity end here; for, notwithstanding so many unfortunate females have been obliged to seek bread in the paths of vice, and so many young men have fallen victims to their solly and wickedness, still the same devouring jaws of destruction are open for its future prey; nor can they ever possibly close, until the grievous precedent of men usurping females' occupations is entirely done away, *or some proper substitute provided*, so as to enable women to share the common necessaries along with their fellowcreatures: till then, we need not wonder at the vast number of pickpockets and housebreakers which, at all times, infest the streets, to the disturbance of all civil society; for we may again repeat with Milton, when night

"Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons

"Oh Belial, flush'd with insolence and wine."

For when "young men, void of understanding," are seduced by such lawless and licentious methods to squander away, in riot and drunkenness, what they have obtained by unlawful plander, it is no difficult talk to find out the cause of these nocturnal depredations; for we may naturally suppose, these poor unhappy women are always ready to benumb and drown their reflections with intoxicating liquors, the effects of which must lead them, with their wretched associates, into every excess of sin and wickedness, to the utter demolition of public happiness and safety, as well as incurring a heavy burden of expences upon the inhabitants.

It is said, the city of London alone pays upwards of twenty thousand pounds annually to patrols, beadles, and watchmen; and it may be a much greater sum; yet, that of itself seems a vast sum indeed, to be raised by levy, in which the honest trader must unavoidably contribute a large share. Would not that contribution answer a much better purpose in providing for the necessitous poor, such as we have just been treating of, and who are judged unfit objects to be received into a parish workhouse; being, *as it is termed*, able enough to earn their own bread out of the house?

Yet, so long as there continues a prohibition against women having an employment, it is to be feared, double the sum already raised by the inhabitants will be found inefficacious. But such is the link of progression, arising from this dreadful usurpation; which shews the necessity of

entering into the origin of these melancholy truths, that so the chain of connection may be found whole; otherways, far be it from me to entertain a wish to offer to the generous part of my readers a work fraught with so many tragic representations: but, least the want of a full narrative should leave the subject dark to comprehend, I still pursue my plan; and even should my zeal in the cause of happiness lead into an eccentric mode of writing, be it remembered it is an eccentric cause, but with a most sanguine wish to see all the inhabitants of this favoured isle become useful and happy members of society, instead of being the harpies of destruction.

That political and private happiness are invariably connected, is beyond a doubt; and that the morals of this nation are very corrupt, is but too visible, from the vast numbers of disgraceful women who infest the face of the country. As for the number of these miserable serable beings, it cannot be an easy matter to ascertain : but suppose, from the prodigious numbers, that are seen scattered about, like sheep having no shepherd, that in London, for example, there are five or six thousand: Nay; I have either read, or heard it said, ten thousand! but how that calculation can be made, I shall not take upon me to say ; yet, suppose we call it half that number; are not five thousand destitute females too many to suffer through so poor a cause, and will not a much less number suffice to contaminate the morals of more than half the youths in town, and prove a source of destructive oppression to a vast number of inhabitants? for, without morals, how can we expect happiness, or what is to support the public good?

Then, what sort of beings are they, who can, with impunity, oppress these unfortunate women, to the entire destruction of all happiness, both national and domestic? Or where is the breast, truly warm in the cause of virtue and a country’s good, who will suffer the continuance of a precedent so destructively oppressive, without exerting themselves in the cause? for granting it is a great part of the Christian religion, to assilt our neighbours as far as we are empowered. To neglect an investigation of these grievances admits no excuse, when once the clouds of obscurity are dispersed; for enquiry is the great source of knowledge.

From the holy scriptures we learn, that “Wisdom is justified in all her children;” and from what but wisdom and justice is derived the support of our common weal, by investigating which, will not the judicious quickly discover a numerous train of oppressive grievances not yet told. Let him

but enquire the cause of such vast numbers of convicts having been sent abroad, to the great expence of the nation; and see if their connection with these necessitous women has not been a great means of their misfortunes: for, alas! young men, upon their first entrance into the world, are too often inebriated with the pleasing, but baneful, draught of pleasures, till their senses are so much intoxicated, that they run they know not where, and at length find themselves ensnared in the net, which these poor abandoned women, or rather the instigators of their misery, have so artfully set to entrap the unwary.

Yet, a serious consideration, no doubt, will prompt an enquiry, and a perseverance in the pursuit; and surely we may hope, an undertaking, founded on such a basis as the laws of humanity, and a general good, can never fail of success. Nor will the more generous part of men-traders, such as are before described, delay to resign a privilege, maintained upon such unjust principles; for far, very far, be it from me to suppose, or entertain a with to insinuate a supposition, that all effeminate tradesmen are equally guilty of a known violation. Nor is any individual accused for involuntary crimes: yet, does it not behove every member of society to inform themselves, especially when the object of enquiry is of such great magnitude, as to extend beyond the interest of individuals, and affect a whole community?

It is beyond a doubt, that many men, through the force of custom, are ignorant of the injury they are doing their neighbour, and mankind in general, the details of which I have very scrupulously collected, and may say with Shakespeare, I have “nothing extenuated, nor set down aught in malice.”

Indeed, I have not a wish to accuse, or call in question, the conduct or motive of any individual. No: suffice it that Pappeal to their own feelings, to humanity, and the gospel truths; after which, let the inward monitor of the guilty say, ‘Thou art the man.’ But permit me to infer, this self accusation only extends to one part of the oppressive body; yet, what is to be said for the remainder, who shall still persevere in perfecuting these poor helpless women, to the subversion of all civil society? for, are we not told by the inspired writer, “It is not the will of our Father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” Then, in compliance with our threefold obligation, are we not strictly enjoined to exhort our

brethren to turn from their evil ways. What says St. Matthew, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his faults: but if he will not hear thee, then take wit [...] thee one or two more, that in the mouth o [...] two or three witnesses, every word may b [...] established; and if he shall neglect to hea [...] them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto the [...] as an heathen man and a publican.

But by what means, less than enquiry, ar [...] we to know who our offending brother is? o [...] why, in this enlightened age, is a business of so much consequence neglected! a business on which nothing less than the ruin or prosperity of a state depends; independent of Christianity or humanity, the great characteristic of the nation. Then, in a case where the whole is so strongly connected, why delay a single moment in the research. Indeed, it is a wellknown maxim, and must be allowed, that those who are not forward in a cause, may be justly said to be against it; o [...], in o [...]her words, whoever is not the encourager of virtue, must unadvoidably be the encourager of vice. But let the breast of sympathy participate in the sufferings of their fellow creatures. Let the tender eye of pity, which can so soon dissolve at an imaginary tragedy, a me [...]e mock representation in a theatre, be truly melted into pity at real calamity.

That great numbers would be happy in contributing to the aid and relief of those who appear to be objects of distress, is beyond a doubt: but, alas! for helpless, injured females! the heavy clouds of prejudice and misrepresentation have thrown so dark a veil between them and the pity of the world, that they are despised by all. Yet, when the curtain is once withdrawn, and the tragic scene exposed to open view, leading these poor creatures from obscurity into open light, then will be the crisis, when every good Christian may be impowered to soften the affliction of another’s woes; and though it may not be in the power of every sympathising breast to contribute towards their temporal wants, they may still be impowered to sooth their sorrows, rather than drive the envenomed arrows of censure still deeper into their afflicted bosoms.

What kind of monument did the immertal [...]ervey make choice of for himself? “Let me,” says he, “leave a memorial in the breasts of my fellowcreatures. Let surviving friends bear witness, that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted series of beneficent offices be the insc [...]iption, and the

best interests of my acquaintance the plate that exhibits it. Let the poor, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge, there lies the man, whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances. How often were his councils a guide to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected spirits."

And why may not the same inscriptive monument belong to many? It is in the power of any one to merit it, even by the good offices and tender concern for these poor objects, who, like a foot-ball, are still rolling upon the surface, ready to receive the next stroke, without being able to make the smallest resistance. Nor is there any other set of being under the heavens, who stand in greater need of consolation, than these poor unfortunate women: or who, through vile censure, receive less; consequently, the more desperate and distre [...] # ing the case, the sympathy and condo [...]ence the more welcome; and will always, in some degree, soften and alleviate afflictions.

Indeed, it is not any, but the luke-warm, o [...] misinformed, who requires to be reminded of su [...]h distress; for, where is the breast, truly warm in the cause of happiness, that is not hurt at the very sight of so many shocking spec [...]cles in the streets. Even under the appearance of guilt, it is horrid to see human nature debased so low: but how much greater the sensations of pity, when it appears, the greatest part of the distress we see, is not through a [...]icious or depraved disposition, but absolute compulsion; through the encouragement given to a destructive custom, which permits men to enj [...]y a privilege, which nature never assigned them; and they are thereby encouraging vice to predominate, and holding virtue in [...]tters.

Consequently, whether this evil be persisted in through ignorance, from its being an ancient custom, or whether from the interested narrow views of a malignant passion for gain; or from whatever cause, seeing it robs such a number of helpless women of employment and bread, it is a privilege, which, in justice to every tie of honour or conscience, ought to be relinquished, unless — I repeat it — a substitute is found. — Can it be termed either ma [...]ly, honourable, or humane, to oppress industry and helpless innocence, and place them under the absolute necessity of sac [...]ificing their virtue, their happiness, and every thing they hold dear, at

the shrine of the avaricious, *and* (for the sake of distinction) *effeminate tradesmen;* and flying to the rendezvous of sin and wickedness, to support a miserable existence; and after, perhaps, having fallen a sacrifice to discase or compunction of mind, are possibly so fortunate as to gain the privilege of an asylum* ; a charity, which will ever redound honour to its illustrious patrons and benefactors, and will be a lasting monument of British munificence: and, it is hoped, and fervently wished, the noble example, and the many proofs of its utility, may extend its influence over the remaining part of the benevolent, who are blessed with affluence, and that we may shortly see a similar institution take place, as an asylum of prevention, until a more effectual relief can be procured or given; for, whilst such salutary benefits may be derived from protecting the repenting sinner, how much greater will be the satisfaction in protecting innocence!

The Orphan Hospital also, is undoubtedly a most excellent charity, and preserves numbers of poor young creatures from the devouring jaws of seduction; and, to the immortal honour of its liberal benefactors, is most nobly and spiritedly supported: yet, it can but contain a small number out of the many who are left destitute; and even admitting the Orphan Asylum and the Magdalen Charity could contain the whole number of these unfortunate fugitives, there is still certain ages of admission and dismission, the extent of which, though I am not certain, I presume seldom exceeds five or six and twenty years.

Give me leave then to ask, what provision there is for unfortunate women, who are turned of that period, amongst whom are great numbers of widows, but just in the meridian of their days, who, after a life of affluence, and, perhaps, every ease and comfort, are now wandering about through this vale of tears, in the abject and forlo [...] condition just described; possibly driven from their homes by keen adversity, naked and destitute, in the most inclement season of the year, without a prospect, or means of any sort, for providing the common necessaries of life, since every branch of trade is occupied by these usurpers of a female’s right, till, at length, quite weary with fatigue and pining with hunger, the dreaded period arrives, “when, like a hunted bird, she becomes quite exhausted with fatigue,” and weariness obliges her to fall t [...] the ground, and become the prey or sport o [...] every school-boy.

Poor, helpless creatures! will no one fly [...] their relief? They assuredly have a claim o [...] the assistance and compassion of every one and, I [...]latter myself, the generous feelings [...] the humane will no sooner be sensible of their sufferings, than *all*, who wish well to the cause of virtue, will lend their assistance towards abolishing so destructive a precedent; and every lady, that has a wish to support the general character of her sex, will retire with indignation, when offered to be served by any of these authors of female destruction.

The efficacy of these reflections to a feeling and generous mind that can participate in another's woes, cannot be doubted; yet what will all that pity or all that sympathy avail, unless some exertions are used towards effecting a redress?

Suppose no lady would su [...]er herself to be served, in the shops of these esseminate traders, by any of the short [...]clothed gentry, would it not be a means of compelling all those who chuse to carry on the tragi-comic sarce, to effect the business under the disguise of gown and petticoat?

But joking apart: believe me, ladies, it is past a joke, when poor, unfortunate f [...]mal [...]s are compelled to go without clothing, in order to support an army of Herculian figures at the back of a counter, displaying the beauties of a lady's bandeau, or commenting upon the device of a fan.

Fie upon such conduct! let men act like men, and, as men of honour, support the dignity of their character. To hear them talk, they profess the finest feelings; but what do all these professions tend to? is it not an apparent solecism, that the same person, in the very moment they profess to be friends to civil society, should be loading the defence [...] with unheard-of oppression? But let us, [...] you please, develope these assertions in the full light of impartial truth.

TRUTH AND REASON.

An Imitation from Horace.

"WHAT applause is not due to that excellent youth,
"(The last and the best of Da [...]ius's pages)
"Who wisely and nobly contended that truth

“Is the majesty, kingdom, and power of all ages.”

“How different the wretch, who to right prefers wrong

“To the guilt of his lie adding treason.

“For surely the [...]screant, whose treacherous tongue

“Rebels against Truth, is a traitor to Reason.

“Together they sprung from th’ Eternal great mind,

“The honour, the peace, and the bond of mankind.

Since truth and reason closed the last sentence, what is there forbids making the next appeal to justice? and enquire, why these poor, helpless women are to be cut off from all civil society, and that at a period of life which might have been to them the most happy. Instead of rendering them noxious to community, they might have been useful members, as well as good Christians, and, in the end, have died the death of the just, having calmly passed through life, instead of being the dupes of an avaricious set of useless members, who, by their professions, are a degradation to the honourable title of MAN.

What is life? a bare existence, when compared with a life of civil security and freedom, neither of which do these unfortunate women experience: for, notwithstanding, sometimes even difficulties are instructive, and, in many cases, may prevent a number of unforeseen troubles, they cannot profit by their knowledge, from their not being empowered to exercise their talents. It is truly shocking to see such numbers of miserable wretches wandering about without employment, or any human comfort, either dressed up at the cost of their virtue and peace of mind, or in so wretched, forlorn, and abject a state, that they scarely retain an appearance of their sex; thus dragging on a miserable existence, which nothing but the effects of a religious education can induce them to preserve. For, what is life without hope? and where is there the smallest glimpse of hope for them? they cannot fly from the frowns of the world, which on all sides attack them. Yet how astonishing is it, that the oppressions of these men, who are the authors of so much mischief, should so long have been passed unnoticed!

“But, every one that doeth evil hateth the light;” therefore the sufferings of these poor creatures are hid by the dark shade of misrepresentation. Did every one candidly deliver their sentiments without restraint, would it not be a means of affording a light to the discerning eye of impartiality to

examine into these heinous gri [...]vances? for where no [...] than private interest is the foundation of so much misery, dragging after it the most dreadful consequences, the origin of which, may we not suppose, proceeds from one of the three following causes, *viz.* A want of reflection, from its being a precedent of long standing; a wilful blindness, through avaricious views; or a downright want of understanding. The latter of which we hope is the case, that it may rest in their favour; for, where little is given, little may be required.

But ye of the world, whose understandings have so long been carried down the stream of misrepresentation, suffer not yourselves to be any longer led away by false and mistaken prejudice, nor let the innocent suffer with the guilty; for pity's sake, spare the innocent, although it be at the risk of suffering the guilty to go unpunished; mercy is Heaven's distinguished attribute, and contains a greatness next to celes [...]ial.

In searching for a date to the era of this [...]est [...]uctive precedent, wherein men have been [...]ade substitutes in women's occupations, it [...]ill be [...]ound to be of very long standing; and in its infancy might not, nor, perhaps, was not attended with the evils it has since produced; for, in those days, when manufactures and commerce were not so extensive, every situation and scene in life were in a more contracted state, and while the father and the brother were employed in trade, the mother and daughters were employed in the domestic concerns of the household. In fact, they were then the manufacturers also, and consequently were never at a loss for employment; they found enough to do in spinning, knitting, and preparing necessaries for the use of the family, which, being common, was not looked upon as any degradation.

But were the tradesman, in this refined age, to employ his wife or daughters in any such low capacity, what would the world suppose, or where would be his credit? Therefore, in exploring the case and its evil consequences, shall we not be well convinced, it is not custom alone which ought to constitute a right; for what precedent or practice ought to be supported upon unjust principles. Doub [...]less there have been various precedents, which seemed good at the beginning, and yet have been productive of much evil in the end, as the one in question; at the commencement of which, as I before observed, it might be, and was, a very laudable pursuit; for, in those days, when all things were in a more

contracted state, and trade not so universally extended, the father of a family was glad to dispose of his sons to such mechanical branches of trade as first presented, that his son might be empowered to improve or increase his little fund, and be able to make a provision, not only for himself, but for a wife which, in primitive times, he was obliged to endow.

Alas! how much unlike our modern days, when women endow their husbands, and, with large portions, frequently purchase a very heavy bondage.

In fact, the generality of things appear to be diametrically opposite to what they were in former times.

We need but look back about three centuries, and then see the vast change; [...]or example: What would be the consequence, were a labourer, in the present times, to receive no better wages than a penny a day, which used to be the standard even in the reign of Henry VII* and in the reign of Henry VIII. it did not exceed three halspence? Must not every one allow, so small a recompence, in the present times, insufficient to exist upon, and much less to support a family. Still, in those days, it was found a sufficient provision, and they could live comfortably upon it; but the reason is evident; every article of provision at that time bore a very inferior price to what it does now. Wheat, for example, which we may call the first grand article of provision, sold in King Henry VII.'s reign† at so low a price as three shillings per quarter, and every other article equally cheap; which enforces a conviction, that through time all things alter. Therefore, to come to the point in view, whilst all things cha [...]ge according to the state of times and conting [...]ncies, why exclude poor females from a small share in the improvements? it is well known they cannot defend themselves.

Were a body of miserable women, be they really virtuous or not, to assemble with a petition to parliament, where is the person who would be persuaded to present it, particularly when they are all considered as worthless wretches.

But were a body of men a [...]tificers (be their conduct or morals as they may) to offer a representation of grievances, doubtless their case would be hea [...]d, and considered, in every sense of the word, both political and humane.

Yet I would gladly believe, these differences must alone proceed from the defect of not knowing the true state of grievances; for, in every other case of oppression, except the one in question, do we not always find a protection from the police of the country? consequently, there is no fear, but a serious investigation will throw open the iron gates of misrepresentation, and lead to the avenues of happiness, both for these poor women and the community in general.

I acknowledge, we are too apt to call things just, that have been long in practice; and, through ancient custom, these oppressive tradesmen act in open defiance of either equity or conscience, thinking none will call them to account, and they may still ride triumphant upon the stream of avarice. But let not a precedent, abounding with so much mischief, any longer disgrace the age; let not virtue and happiness any longer be bartered, which, in the present case, they evidently are, to the abuse of all civil society, and disuniting the very bands of mutual benefit and preservation; nor suffer these men to monopolize the whole from the female part of the creation, unless there is a provision made to secure them from penury.

Nothing, it is presumed, can be more reasonable and just, than that those who deprive others of subsistence should contribute to their support. For what law, either divine or human, will justify the continuance of a precedent, which has influence sufficient to prevail over the virtue of individuals? What statute is there, which grants that men alone shall live, and women scarcely exist? — Is it not an usurpation which every violator must blush at, when considered in the light it ought to be, as an act of the greatest injustice? Then, drive hence all such distress: let it not be said, that Britons can cherish a wish to oppress their sisters, wives, and mothers, but rather that they are merciful to the fatherless and the widow; and though the mischief of this iniquitous precedent should lie too deep to be cured by any thing less than a total suppression, can it be called an invasion of right? No; it is only the supp [...]ession of an usurped prerogative; and cannot fail to be productive of every good, not only in clearing the streets of prostitutes, but in providing a sufficient number of proper and fit hands, *in time of peace*, for the various manufactories which, it must be granted, it is always the interest of Britain to cherish; and in such calamitous times as these, by having ready a sufficient number of soldiers and sailors fit for service, without being driven to so many

expensive and oppressive expedients: independent of the little need there is of throwing any thing in the way to send such colonies abroad, to the prodigious expence of the nation, or suffering such numbers of men idling at the back of a counter, when they might be employed to so much better advantage. The enormous expence attending all these things, must be visible to every one who will take the trouble to look; therefore, it is unnecessary to weary my readers with a recital of these heavy expences or grievances, far [...]her than is absolutely necessary; for a short reflection must convince every enquirer, that to countenance this evil precedent, is not only robbing poor females of their birthrights, which they are not empowered to contend for, but is actually robbing the whole country of its right, as well as safety and happiness, and doubtless is tending to impoverish the nation.

“But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,
“E’en liberty itself is barter’d here.”

GOLDSMITH.

These are facts, not founded on theory alone, which might be greatly enlarged upon, were the pen of information in the hand of one of those humane, generous, and learned philanthropists, who distinguish themselves by a cheerful and ready exertion in the cause of justice and retribution, and who, being conversant in the language of the law, might trace all the precedents, acts, and repeals, with their conveniencies and inconveniencies, from Adam to Magna Charta, and from thence to the present day; when, alas! it is a female’s province only (if a mother) to nurse, cherish, and watch over her darling son, who, perhaps, in maturity, may be the foremost in adding to the weight of this oppressive burden. “Art thou one of them!” said Julius Caesar to his son, when he saw him amongst those that murdered him. That went deeper to his heart than the swords of all his enemies.

Let then the claim to these female occupations be developed; let not an indelible stain be fixed on the character of men; for, when the affair is finally discussed, will these grievances sound credible to the ear of poslerity? Let not then our annals be stained with suffering a longer

continuance of so much misery, but let an immediate interference take place. Why shall the deliberate destroyers of happiness be suffered to continue, without some notice being taken of their in human and avaricious guilt? To refuse a compliance with this request, is to become enemies to peace and happiness: to enjoy the necessaries of life is an invaluable right, which each individual expects to share in common with his neighbour; and, in fact, is what all do share, mo [...]e or less, except the identical women in question.

The very poor, who are born in an abject state, are taught from their inf [...]ncy to struggle through life in the same manner they see their needy connections: bread must be had, and all the instructions they can possibly get, is in what way to obtain it. Consequently, if by labour and industry, they can acquire a sufficiency to exist upon, they are perfectly at case, without bestowing a single thought upon tomorrow.

But the poor, unfortunate woman, who has seen better days, and been reared and educated with tenderness and care, she it is that feels her broken slumbers can no longer give relief to her weary limbs. Her inability to wrestle with difficulties are great indeed; especially when she finds her whole endeavours fruitless: and, what is still as bad, by running to and fro, in pursuit of some means for bread, (which she is not able to obtain) the shrill voice of censure, or the destructive whisper of calumny, having breathed such a poisonous vapour over her character, she is despised by all, in the manner described in the foregoing pages, and irremediably doomed to sink, never more to rise; for, who will admit a woman of lost reputation into their house? O, cruel censure! what must be the sensations of oppressed innocence, under the censure of guilt! Even what is it they do not feel, on the bare appellation of idle and disorderly, when they have tried every expedient to obtain employment, though to no effect?

Under such a pressure of misfortunes, they must bear their sorrows in silence, unknown and unpitied! and must frequently put on a face of cheerful serenity, when their hearts are [...]orn with secret grief. Thus they pass their time in sorrow, till they meet the fatal alternative, either to be passive under the horrors of a prison, or compound for their preservation, by entering under the infernal roof of vice for protection.

When such an alternative is presented, what is to be expected? Should they evade the latter by conforming to the former, what is to be the

advantage? I believe, it is generally allowed, that all prisons, or places of confinement, are but poor schools for virtue; and that youth and inexperience, or even those of a more advanced age, seldom return to the world without being, in some degree, contaminated; for it is not to be supposed, that these poor, miserable mortals are invulnerable. Indeed, should they even pass through these tracts unpolluted, it is next to impossible they should still escape destruction. After the death of kindred, faithlessness of friends, misfortunes, and disgrace, where are they to find a plan [...] to save them from the wreek, where they see so many tossing up and down before them [...] and may very applicably say, with Pope's Sappho,

"Shall fortune still in one sad tenor run,
"And still increase the woes so soon begun?"

But it is yet to be hoped, the charitable and humane will step forward in the cause, and no longer suffer the noble faculties of the understanding to remain buried in a torpid state of acquiescence to outward appearances, whilst such numbers are labouring under the most pitiable distress, and so many honest, industrious tradesmen and mechanics are obliged to contribute to the cause, which the profligacy of these distressed women brings upon the community. — Although it be supposed the most judicious cannot foresee or provide against every fraud or accident, yet, from the deep penetration and strict justice of such as are in power, there is not a doubt, but some plan will be adopted for the benefit of the whole, and some expedient thought of, as a temporary relief, for these distressed women, until a more permanent arrangement of things can take place. Indeed, it is possible some difficulties may a [...]ise, from the complication of the undertaking, yet what is it human efforts cannot effect, when aided by divine promise? which says, "Whatever you do unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

An undertaking commenced upon such grounds, must infallibly be productive of great good, and in that step alone, can we fail to see many of these usurpers drop away in confusion and shame, whi [...]st the remainder, being held up to public ridicule, which they so justly merit, must quickly follow? for, should they be suffered to continue in their

effeminate and unmanly employment, and neither be forced nor shamed out of their evil courses, where will they stop, or what will be the consequence?

"But whatsoever thou findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest* "

PART SECOND. CONTINUATION OF THE FOREGOING. WHICH DEMONSTRATES THAT THE FRAILTY OF FEMALE VIRTUE MORE FREQUENTLY ORIGINATES FROM EMBARRASSED CIRCUMSTANCES, THAN FROM A DEPRAVITY OF DISPOSITION .

HAVING given a saint sketch of the grand cause which precludes women from partaking in the comforts of life, let us next proceed to the avenue which leads to so much misery. Doubtless, through the vicissitudes of human affairs, neither great riches nor great happiness are always permanent; the dark and crooked paths of fate are, by the unerring hand of Divine Providence, hid from mortal eyes: nor can we see into futurity. “To-day we are here, and tomorrow in the grave;” or, according to the Proverbs, chap. xxvii. v. 1. “Who knoweth what a day may bring forth?” For how often does death, insatiable death, unexpectedly snatch, in a moment, the indulgent parent from the beloved child, who is at once left at large in the wide world, perhaps in the morning of her days, and in all the simplicity of artless youth, without a provision, or any means of obtaining one. Pitiable object! thy fate seems hard indeed: yet so it but too frequently happens to hundreds, besides thyself. Where wilt thou go, to secure thee from real want? A parish workhouse is but a poor consolation for so great a loss, at a period when neither reason nor religion is ripened into maturity, to moderate the grievance. But, if, perhaps, a friend step forward, the Asylum for the protection of Orphan Girls may receive the poor fugitive; in which blessed and happy institution, through time, the memory of her woeful loss, in parents and provision, may, in some degree, be wiped away in the benevolence of her new protectors, who not only provide for her temporal, but also for her spiritual concerns, in instructing her as a good Christian and a useful member. But, alas! small is the number which this institution can admit, when compared with the vast numbers left in similar situations. And for those, who are more advanced in age, to what standard can they repair? It is true, necessity will teach

people to exert themselves, who have nothing but their own industry to depend upon, and consequently they seek for a female occupation. But how great their surprise, and inexpressible their grief, to find, like the rest, that they are repulsed in every pursuit of industry, whereby they might expect a maintenance!

Good Heavens! what course can a poor, young creature pursue, when, from the quick transition from good to evil, at that early period of life, when discernment has not made its way to a knowledge of the world, she is at once on the verge of the precipice, where so many have unhappily been lost? Without a pilot, she finds herself launched out into the ocean of the world, where she floats about so awhile, until she perceives her danger, and would gladly retreat; but neither meeting pro¦tection nor aid, necessity drives her back, and she shortly engages in the dissipation of the age, and at once becomes the object of sco [...] and contempt, and the real food for scandal in which deplorable state she finds herself in¦volved, even before she is aware of her dan¦ger, which no sooner presents itself to he view, but she endeavours to retreat and clea [...] away the black vapour; but, alas! though short-lived the experiment, it is now too late for the misty cloud of obloquy has discoloure [...] her reputation, and she is now doubly distan from a friend to defend her, or point out mode of redress; for the unfeeling part of the world exclaims, in the words of a much admired writer,

“How shall I then your helpless fame defend?

“‘Twill then be infamy to seem your friend.”

POPE

No: her supplication is not noticed, not withstanding “God hath given to every one the charge of his neighbour.”

This excellent charge being so very seldom put in practice, superadded to her youth and inexperience, she not being sufficiently armed with that fortitude, which is so necessary in her time of trial, and seeing the frowns of the world against her, she naturally perseveres, and even launches out still farther in the stream of those false and mistaken pleasures, which cannot fail to terminate in her destruction; and, perhaps, at length, she triumphs in obtaining (what she thinks) protection from those whose acknowledged right it is to guard the weaker sex.

But here, alas! under the specious name of friendship, she too soon sees her mistake, and finds herself the real object of distress, abandoned by the

world, and left to her own bitter reflections; until the kind hand of Providence once more takes her under protection, and admits her a member of that humane charity, the Magdalen; where, in a small degree, she is once more permitted to taste a portion of comfort, by the cheering rays of Christian charity; and her oppressed spirits are somewhat enlivened by the following sweet and comfortable discourse from the Matron, on her admission into that most excellent charity.

“You cannot be insensible of the kindness of providence in bringing you hither; the wretched situation you are reduced to seems to offer you no other relief. Your interest and ours is the same; we mean to do you all the good we can, and you to have good done to you; we mean to render you happy in this world, and what is of much greater moment, in the next also* .”

How can charity be better employed than in taking care of the soul as well as the body? This is, perhaps, the most comfortable discourse she has heard since death closed the lips of her dear parents. Yet how much greater would be the charity for protecting the innocent, than in reclaiming the guilty? Prevention must certainly be better than cure; and were there a capacious establishment for industry, built upon such a basis as would form a discrimination between the well-bred female, who is reduced by the unseen hand of fate, and the very poor and abject, whose birth has deprived them of the knowledge of resinement or delicacy; what crouds of unprovided women would slock to the standard!

But, in the mean time, it cannot fail to afford infinite satisfaction to the humane contributors, by enabling the poor penitent to repeat the following hymn of admission.

“Rise, O my soul! the hours review,
“When aw’d by guilt and fear,
“Thou durst not heaven for mercy sue,
“Nor hope for pity here.
“Dried are thy tears, thy griefs are fled,
“Dispell’d each bitter care;
“See, heaven itself has lent its aid,
“To raise thee from despair.

“Here then, O God! thy work fulfil,
“And from thy mercy’s throne,
“Vouchsafe me strength to do thy will,
“And to resist my own.

“So shall my soul each power employ,
“Thy mercies to adore,
“Whilst heav’n itself proclaims with joy,
“One pardon’d sinner more.”

How nearly do the humane contributors to this excellent charity imitate the compassionate sentence of our blessed Lord, when he bade the offending woman “Go, and sin no more?” For there is scarcely a period in life, when the most irregular characters may not be reclaimed. It is through misfortunes and a want of employment, that such as these poor, helpless, young creatures have brought so great an additional load of heavy misfortunes upon their guilty heads; yet, we are told, there is joy in heaven at the repentance of a sinner: — What a blessed institution, then, to provide a means for that purpose!

Human nature is undoubtedly liable to corruption, yet it is impregnated with the seeds of virtue; and when the mind is properly cultivated, they will quickly grow up and ripen into good works. It must afford a most lively and pleasing sensation to the humane and sympathising breast, in contributing their endeavours, to let the memory of former woes be lost in the enjoyment of present blessings.

Compassion is a heaven-born virtue, and not only consoles the innocent, but is the first step to reclaim the guilty: a kind and gentle treatment must ever be efficacious, when harsh proceedings, in general, drive to desperation. For the truth of this, we need but scrutinize our own hearts, (the golden rule is a most excellent guide) and there see, on a serious investigation, if any one of us is not more ready to comply, in any case whatever, by lenient means, than from the force of peremptory methods.

Yes: the most obdurate sinner, if possessed of one single spark of grace, on the repeated calm admonitions of a good Christian, cannot suppress that spark from kindling into a flame of gratitude, at least, and must blush

at their perfidy; whereas the hardened wretch, by constant upbraidings and severe treatment, becomes callous to every thing.

Therefore, these poor young women, who have, through extreme necessity, been driven to criminal and unlawful pursuits, are not to be despised or sunk beneath our care, but cherished and supported, in order to reclaim their wicked course of life. What says the oracle of truth? — Whilst we have time, let us do good, for the night cometh, when no man can work.

For the opulent, and those in power, to suppose they have done their part, in helping to relieve their spiritual wants only, is a mistake; so long as the soul and body act in unison, provision must be made for their temporal necessities also. What says St. James, chap. ii. v. 15 and 16. “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?”

But in the humane charity of the Magdalen, as well as in others, the wants of the needful are plentifully supplied, both as to soul and body, and as many destitute objects received as the foundation of the institution will admit; and, in general, such as these it is of whom we have been discoursing (if in London) who reap the benefit. Their ages of admission being from sixteen to twenty-six years, between which periods they, in general, find their fatal mistake, and are happy to find an asylum under so beneficent an institution. Or if, unhappily, their situations in life are too far distant, or other casual accidents prevent them from obtaining the benefit, they must inevitably fall a victim to their misfortunes and vice, and the world’s contempt. Which brings to my remembrance a poem, entitled The Country Church Yard.

“Where the long grass obscures yon briery grave,
“And antique yews their branches sadly wave,
“A wretched female, with the silent dead,
“Unnotic’d, unlamented, [...]ests her head.
“No weeping friend is seen to deck her bier,
“Or o’er her ashes shed the t [...]nder t [...]ar:

“But, buried in the tomb’s sad mouldering heap,
“Her sorrows and her fate in silence sleep.
“‘Tis beauteous Jeffey’s frail, neglected shade,
“Whose pale [...]orm swells the solitary glade.
“Ah, haple [...]s fair! I hear the still slow gale,
“Which bo [...]e thy death-b [...]ll through the hollow vale,
“When thy sad spirit, freed from misery’s load,
“In trembling expectation, sought its last abode.
“Though vice awhile obscur’d thy rising fame,
“And stamp’d with early infamy thy name.
“Yet o’er thy grave, mid sober evening’s shade,
“The muse with pitying tear shall swell the glade,
“And tell the villain’s guilt, whose perjur’d art,
“From virtue’s path allur’d thy simple heart,
“When without parents, in that early day,
“When youth most wants a guide to lead the way,
“Then false to honour, truth, and promis’d love,
“Left thee alone in life’s wide course to move.”

Notwithstanding the misfortunes of such poor young creatures are truly pitiable, others there are whose case is still more lamentable. But to conduct my readers to the various avenues which lead to the destruction and misery of the female part of the creation, would swell this volume to a greater bulk than is intended; therefore shall content myself with just touching upon a few characters, who have been plunged into this dreadful pit of destruction, by the known misconduct of connections, or the mishap of human events. From such as these it is we must gather our information. Doubtless, imagination might lead to a number of visionary flights, but, by engaging with personalities, the faculties are confined, and external appearances must distinguish the objects.

Let us then commence with a gentleman of small, independent fortune; for, as it is the general maxim through life, that every one should endeavour to outvie his neighbour, the gentleman also must keep up appearances for the benefit of his family (as he is pleased to term it;) and, in the present day, where do we see the father or mother of a family, with an independent fortune, be it ever so small, who would not be shocked at the bare idea of placing their daughter in the world in such situations as

would enable them to rise, through their own industry and merit, or [...]it them for becoming wives to some honest and industrious tradesman? — No: that would be a degradation which must not take place. It is the etiquette of the times for the daughters to be bred fine ladies, although it be without a fortune, either dependent or independent, to support it. As for trade, that is out of the question. The sons indeed are differently provided: the eldest, in course, inherits the paternal estate and the younger ones are placed in the church the army, the navy, or at the bar; and others again are genteelly situated in the mercantile world: the whole of which are fit professions for a gentleman, and by which, if they have merit and success, they may acquire a competency.

But for the female part of the family, what appears in their favour? what prospects have they in life? — The parents die, and leave them, without a provision, a burden upon their connections; which forms the first step to deprive them of friends as well as subsistence. A miserable inheritance, to be their best and only portion! What can be said in behalf of such parents? can their easy compliance with the fashion of the times form any apology for such a mistaken conduct? — This surely cannot be called true paternal affection, to entail upon these helpless young creatures such a succession of misery as must eventually ensue. Is not this a sufficient definition of the second divine commandment, that “the sins of the father shall descend to their children, to the third and fourth generation.” Which under such circumstances is justly verified; for, what less than a miracle can destroy the entail of misery brought upon helpless innocence, by the sins of their parents? which, however harsh the term, is worse than Herod’s cruelty; that could only affect the body, but by a compliance with this mistaken folly of the day, there is a great chance of its affecting the soul also.

What was it brought ruin upon the first distressed female, who was admitted into the Magdalen Charity; and what but a miracle led her to taste comfort* ?

What numbers of helpless and destitute young women there are, who, seeing themselves neglected and despised by their connections, notwithstanding all the refined and delicate ideas which their education and mode of bringing up have possessed them with, would gladly endeavour, through necessity, to make up the deficiency of their parents’

neglect, by putting themselves forward in the world, in order to obtain a support. But, alas! to their sorrow, they quickly see it is not in their power; for, under their present circumstances, “the world is not their friend, nor the world’s laws;” and what was not effected by their parents, cannot possibly be obtained by an inexperienced young woman.

Indeed, it is frequently said, the female part of the creation are by far the most ready in censuring their own sex. But permit me to ask, would it not be highly reprehensible in any lady to countenance even the appearance of a guilty conduct? By so doing, it is not only the means of encouraging vice, but must unavoidably incur censure upon herself, which, above all other misfortunes in life, is the most to be dreaded, since a female character, once lost, is for ever irretrievable. But, in justice to my own sex, I would gladly hope, there is not a female, who really considers the many horrid mischiefs which are the attendants upon censure, who will ever suffer the smallest intimation thereof to escape the bounds of her own breast, unless through the most flagrant proofs of guilt.

Out of the many, some there are, no doubt’ who, to colour their own vicious lives, are ever ready to murder the character of any one, without taking the smallest thought or concern as to the consequences, nor even sparing the innocent with any greater degree of lenity than they would the guilty. But of this class we hope there are but few; for, why should it be supposed that female objects in distress, particularly those who have youth and beauty on their side, must unavoidably be objects of contempt rather than pity? From what motive can this certain part of the sex continue to load the sufferings of these poor, helpless women with reviling and contempt? None other, must repeat it, but to draw a veil over their own vicious lives; for neither religion nor vir [...]ue ever countenanced so much injustice. To cad the poor sufferer with calumny, is cruel indeed; suffice it, she has to struggle with the hardships of penury!

Let them be traced along from the moment that fate’s afflicting hand is stretched out against them: trace them through every stage of life and then see if they are not the most pitiab [...] of all mortals! Then, how can the time of th [...] opulent part of the sex be better employed, tha [...] in searching into the source of their sorrow and endeavouring to obtain redress? To in vestigate the cause will be speak a remedy [...] at hand. But for a continuation of the various distresses which poor females are subject

to, we need but take a general review, an represent the case as it evidently is, which will save the unpleasant task of using names: for, it is to be feared, few there are who have any knowledge of life, but can reason upon this subject, if not through fatal self-experience, yet through experimental observations on others. For example: how often do we see whole families entirely ruined by the improper conduct of a husband or father, who, through giving way to some predominant vi [...], at once overwhelms the whole of his family [...] ruin and distress, or, at least, the female [...] of it, who, not being able to defend themselves, or seek redress, are liable to every misfortune.

How far the wife was intended to be the slave to her husband, I know not, but certain we are, she was designed to be his friend, his companion, and united part; or, according to the gentlemen's phrase, his *better part;* and yet how often do we see her sinking under the burden of a household load, whilst the unfeeling husband is lavishing away the substance which ought to be for the comfort and support of a family? Yet such unnatural beings there are, who, by giving way to some unlawful passion, can, without scruple or remorse, trample under foot all laws, divine and human, and with impunity bring wretchedness upon those he is bound to support: notwithstanding St. Paul tells us, "if any one provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Let us but look at the many unhappy females, who come to ruin through mercenary marriages. How many are the instances of young women, who have been brought up in affluence, and reared with all the tender care and attention, which are in the power of maternal affection to bestow; yet, perhaps, through her youthful follies and credulity, she is led away by the artifice and false pretensions of one of these mercenary men, on whom she cheerfully bestows her patrimony, whether acquired by inheritance, or the smiles of fortune upon the honest industry of her deceased parents, avails not, for her expected happiness is vanished in empty air, and she is quickly exposed to all the ills of fate.

"O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
"Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.

“Sudden their honours shall be snatch’d away,
“And doom’d for ever this victorious day.”

POPE.

As leading to a further explanation, let us represent a case which very frequently happens. A gentleman’s daughter, one of these well-bred young ladies, which was spoken of at the beginning of this discourse; or be it a tradesman’s daughter, it matters not, they being equally trained up in the same liberal plan of female education, married to a respectable and worthy tradesman, who, we will say, according to the common run of the times, has made choice of a very proper partner for superintending the domestic concerns of his household, and conducting a table with taste; which, according to the beau monde, must undoubtedly be complied with, since his credit in trade so greatly depends upon appearances; and however great may be his dislike to the practice, yet *he* it is that is absolutely obliged to comply with the custom of the times, and make a figure in life, in order to support the credit of his trade; a precedent big with every evil consequence, yet he must comply, and act like his neighbour, if he expects to receive neighbour’s fare. Therefore, before we censure or condemn such conduct in any one individual, let us, if you please, place choice and necessity in the scales of justice, and see which will preponderate.

I recollect an observation upon this subject some time ago, made by a noble and very learned man, the Earl of — . Says his lordship, “it is the tradesman and mechanic who are under the necessity of making a figure in life, in order to catch notice and obtain credit in their line of business.” But, continued his lordship, “for such as me there is no occasion, and consequently we can save whilst they are obliged to spend: we can live as we please, dress as we please, and, in fine, act as we please; for our independence and ancestry will always command respect, and enable us to do as we like.”

I must confess, I thought it was a hard case, that so many sensible, clever men, of an inferior class, with regard to pecuniary matters, should absolutely be held down for what was not a fault; but, after a moment’s consideration, I could not help joining in the validity of his lordship’s opinion. Although I knew, at the same time, his lordship was frequently

ridiculed for the meanness of his table and dress; yet, it occurred to me, that *did not* erase any names from his lordship’s rent-roll; though the same conduct might occasion a great deficiency in a tradesman’s ledger.

In fine, need we advance any further than Change-alley for a confirmation, that it is in compliance with evil customs, and a conformity to destructive precedent, that bring on such a train of misfortunes, with the greatest force, which is sure to fall where there is the least resistance? How frequent and sudden are the fluctuations in the stocks, owing to the artifices of stock-jobbers, under some false pretence or other: notwithstanding it is a practice so highly detested, both by government and the generality of the parties concerned, yet appearances take the lead; so that, however wrong the practice, since the tradesman finds the absolute necessity of acting like his neighbour, no doubt but a generous public will either point out an expedient, or absolve *him*, at least, from censure, let the consequence prove how it may. Pope says.

“True consciencious honour is to feel no sin,
“He’s arm’d without that’s innocent within:”

and very justly so, *with regard* to men; but for poor women, the weight of all these grievances must unavoidably rest upon them, as the weakest sex; who, having struggled through the labyrinth of misfortunes, no sooner arrive at the gate of industry, *viz. female occupations*, than they find it shut, and men, so much stronger, and in power, the porters at the door. So, begging pardon for the digression, we will leave these poor unfortunate women at the gate, and peeping through the wicket to no effect, till we proceed with our young couple, who journey on a few years through this maze of life, a life that seems calculated for felicity, happy in each other, and blessed with a rising progeny, which, in course becomes the mother’s care, whilst the father, attentive to the interest of his family, endeavours to extend his trade for the mutual advantage of all; and thus tied with the silken bands of unity, they pass their days in one continued round of bliss, actuated by the amiable endearments of the affectionate father, the fond husband, and the generous friend. But, alas! how frequently does the malice of fate unseen, pursue, and often blast, the happiness of human enjoyments.

“Ah gentle pair! ye little think how nigh
“Your change approaches, when all these delights
“Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,
“More woe, the more your taste is now of joy.”

MILTON.

Next, let us suppose, which supposition too is frequently realized, that the father of this happy family. whom we have just left in the sunshine of prosperity, and in the full enjoyment of conjugal and paternal bliss, is snatched away by the hand of death, and leaves his disconsolate widow, in the meridian of her days, surrounded by her innocent offspring, who must now look up to her alone for protection, which even herself may stand in need of.

How keen, how poignant must be her grief at such a separation, when, at once, she is robbed of a tender husband, and her children of an indulgent father! Yet, like a true Christian, she endeavours to arm herself with such fortitude as is necessary to support her in the time of trial; and by the help of reason and religion, she begins to revive, and slatters herself with new hopes, in the many comforts she is to receive from her darling children.

Short-fighted mortal! she now begins to take new courage, from having subdued her stubborn heart to submit, as she thinks, to her greatest affliction; which, alas! is no more than a prelude to her future misfortunes: for her late husband’s concerns come next to be adjusted, when it is found there is a very small provision, if any, left for herself and helpless children: for the deceased husband, having been under the necessity of deceiving the world by the vile pretext of appearances, has now involved his family in the unavoidable necessity of seeing the world had deceived him; the dreadful consequences of which they are now left to struggle with. These are real trials: yet how frequently do they happen! and now, at once, are all her expectations of future happiness blasted; an intervening cloud has darkened the scene, and that maternal triumph which used to gladden the face of the fond mother, is now done away by the dark gloom of adversity; and her sorrows are like the impetuous torrent. A family, brought up and educated with the idea of being gentlemen and ladies, who

have just been figuring away in the gaieties of life, to find themselves entangled in a wilderness of misery, without money, and consequently without friends, or any means of support, requires more than human strength to combat; for, in such a melancholy situation, independent of real want, the struggles of reluctant nature are not easy to suppress. The parent, the virtuous and tender mother, sees her darling offspring, with all their innocence about them, upon the verge of destruction, yesterday, in the full enjoyment of all the happiness this world can bestow, and to-day turned ad [...]ist into the wide world, attended with all those fine and delicate feelings which nature, education, and a pious example could bestow. Yet, all cannot save them from the cruel hand of fate, the die is cast, and they must now bid adieu to the comforts of life, and plunge forward in an ocean of misery; for[a] by this time, their small fund being nearly, if not quite, exhausted, the distressed mother finds the absolute necessity of making her unhappy situation known to some relation, or former acquaintance, which she had used to call friend. But, alas! she has yet to learn, the world in general takes but little concern for the fate of individuals, and too oft, will sooner upbraid than relieve distress; and so precarious is the possession of friendship, that, *in general*, on the approach of distress, it dissolves like snow under the rays of the sun, or evaporates, like ether, at the approach of poverty: yet, such an unfeeling class there are, who, in prosperity, used to extol her conduct; and are, perhaps, at the very moment decking out themselves, table, and family after her example, and yet can be the first to brand her name with obloquy.

O, cruel censure, are not the pangs of distress and poverty enough to bear! is this Christian charity! is this acting the part of the good Samaritan! Yet, yet, it is past dispute, that such distress does afflicted poverty experience, although the cordial of friendship, and the benevolent sympathy of fellow mortals would so very much alleviate: however, by woeful experience, beginning to see the world in its true colours, she fees her only resource is in the consolation of religion, and in an humble submission to the Divine Will; and with this shield, she endeavours to guard herself and innocent suffering offspring from the impending, storm which appears ready to burst upon their unfortunate heads. Still their pious and laudable endeavours will not alone supply the necessity of extreme want; they are mortal, and consequently both nature and duty press hard

upon the unhappy mother, to look into the world for a means of support; for now every prospect of happiness to her future days is blackened by anxious care, and, perhaps, at a period which might have been expected the happiest of her life: but since adversity has taught her submission, and she finds she has to climb up the sleep of difficulty, with her children dragging after her like so many clogs at her feet, to retard her progress, her first step is to look out for situations for her sons, to whom Providence having denied an education, so as to command such situations in life as the generality of men are enabled to look up to, and without the aid of connections, or friends, to lead them out into the world; if the poor mother can obtain for them a situation at the back of a counter, it is the highest step in life which she can sue for, *or expect; and such as these,* indeed, are an exception as to filling women's occupations; for, if nothing else presents, what are they to do? But for the poor mother, who perhaps has not yet attained her thirty-fifth year, and her still unfortunate daughters, what is there in their favour? without money, friends, character, or means of industry, they are unavoidably doomed to wretchedness, if any thing on earth can be wretched, notwithstanding her utmost exertions, as well as her pious and exemplary conduct to her children, who not insensible to her merit, endeavour to soothe her sorrows by their tender regard and fond affections.

Alas! what can they do, they all seem to look up to the poor mother for aid, who I as it not in her power even to help herself. She now takes a serious retrospect of her past [...]ie, and the mode of education in which herself and children have been trained, and most ardently does she wish they had been reared with industry at least, instead of all those bright accomplishments, which must unavoidably be lost in their misfortunes. But, since there is no recalling past time, their only redress is, to try to get into some situation where their endea [...]ou [...]s and exertions, at least, will make up the deficiency of their want of knowledge. What, but such distress as this, and the want of a proper education, *or trade,* is it which [...]ill the papers daily with wants of every kind? "Wants a situation to superintend;" or, "A person who has seen better days, would be glad to undertake;" or, "Wants a situation, as companion or assistant, &c.;" little supposing how frequently these advertisements get answered by that arrogant set of mortals we before spoke of, with the common phrase of, "I

want no gentlewomen, or gentlewomen's daughters;" and although this assertion may found harsh to the ears of the humane and sympathising part of the community, be assured, this and such like unfeeling cruelty is exercised over the unfortunate, even by their own sex, and those whose professed feelings are so sine, as to shed tears over a novel, or saint at the rehearsal of a tragedy; however, of these we hope the number is small. — Seeing these women are excluded all benefit in trade, what else can they have recourse to, but to seek an asylum under the roof of the asslu [...]nt, in some menial capacity? which brings to my memory the contents of the tenth letter of the first Magdalen who was admitted into that most excellent charity.

"I was reduced," says she, "to the manifest danger of starving. I would have attempted the most laborious work, but no one would try me, although I offered my labour at half price; but even my industry was made an argument against me: I must, they said, be very bad to be reduced to that, and they supposed, I intended to steal the other part of my wages.

"To be willing and able to work, and yet to starve for want of employment, seemed a hard fate, yet it touched no heart but my own."

What a miserable prospect for helpless innocence! What a shocking case, that poor unfortunate females should be denied the privilege of obtaining a support by servitude, after being precluded earning an honest maintenance, by any other means of industry, merely to make way for a set of beings who are much better calculated for more manly employments; and, in particular, at a time when so many men are required in defence of their country. Besides, if there is not employment for the whole, and some must feel the inconveniencies, are not men much better calculated to bear hardships than women? at least, is it not always supposed and considered by men, that women are not equal to any thing great, then surely they may be permitted to fill some inferior department in life, whereby, at least, they may be prevented from becoming burdensome, or pining away for want of real necessaries? And, however shocking to the sympathising part of mankind may be the recital of these melancholy truths, yet the vast numbers of poor unhappy mothers and daughters, who are daily labouring under the weight of these cruel oppressions are innumerable. Nor is it possible for words to express, or pen to paint, the grief of one of these

unhappy mothers, who, with her helpless children, is reduced to such extreme misery and want: can any thing be more distressful or pitiable!

O, that men would be wise unto salvation, and not prefer fordid gain to the more substantial happiness of conforming to the precepts of the Supreme Judge, who cannot deceive nor be deceived! namely “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone wer [...] hanged about his neck, and he were cast int [...] the sea.” A sentence one cannot think upo [...] without horror, seeing so many little one offended daily and hourly, and left helples [...] and forlorn in all the storms and trials of the world, to work their passage through mortality, still floating about, like a bubble upon the surface, in all the delicacy and softness of their sex, without money, friend, or prospect of any human comfort, or even relief, to enable them to drag on a miserable existence the ensuing day; surely, there is not any thing can equal the horrors of a state like this: yet what numbers experience it all, before they will condescend so low as to shrink from the paths of virtue. Surely this does not men [...] censure: yet, astonishing it is, the smallest feature of poverty is almost sure to be branded with the names of infamy and vice. What [...] trying situation after a life of affluence! yet [...] where is the mind of sensibility, under such circumstances as these, who would not feel it almost as great an affliction to discover their poverty as to sustain it; for, thus miserably situated, to have any of their former acquaintance witness their wretchedness, must be a very trying circumstance indeed, and especially since, by woeful experience, they are taught to know that little more than censure will be derived from it.

Indeed, amidst the great variety of complicated ills which are attendant upon all mankind, and from which not any are exempt, there will appear several in the world, the origin of whose woe is scarcely to be traced; and who, as a much admired author (Dr. Gregory) observes, will find none to compassionate, or even understand their sufferings: witness amongst the prodigious numbers of unhappy females in the married state, whom the adversity of fate has left alone to wander through all this labyrinth of difficulties, and, perhaps, surrounded by a numerous train of children, who alike must feel the supercilious sneers of taunt and reprobation, for they know not what. Indeed, this subject would alone open a very wide and dreary field to range in, so various and complicated are the calamities

brought upon mortals by the unseen hand of fate, to which all must submit, since it is not in the power of human skill to prevent: but all must allow, it is in the power of any one to moderate these afflictions by our best aid, or sympathy at least, instead of heightening the sorrows of this unfortunate and oppressed part of the community, and with that wellknown philanthropist, *Goldsmith,* may we say, and firmly believe,

“Every want that stimulates the breast,
“Becomes a source of pleasure when redress’d:”

for what can add greater pleasure to the sensations of humanity, than to sympathise with the distressed? consequently to them I need not address this discourse, but chiefly to tho [...]e whose feelings are less warmed by the misery of their fellow creatures, for a mixture of both sorts there is in the world, is beyond a doubt. Witness a paragraph I have this day, the 17th of August 1798, copied from a wellknown daily paper, the Morning Herald, which runs exactly as follows:

Mr. Editor,

My friend and self, a few days ago, having dined with an officer at his barracks, returned home between ten and eleven: in Panton-street we were accosted by an unfortunate woman, who first solicited our charity in English; but overhearing us, in our progress speak French, she renewed her suit in that language, probably thinking we might be foreigners, and therefore did not understand the nature of her first application. You will own, it is by no means astonishing, that hearing an English mendicant, *especially a female*, beg in different languages should excite our admiration, particularly as she spoke both fluently and elegantly, the evident result of a liberal education.

Under this idea, we listened to her petition delivered in French, which, being now so common an acquisition, made us desirous of knowing whether her learning was confined to that tongue only; my friend, therefore, replied to her in Italian, and we were not a little surprised to find her not only mistress of that language, but also well versed in Latin.

Shocked to discover such extensive learning in one who seemed to profit so little by its possession, and conceiving her an object of the greatest pity, probably abandoned by unfeeling, sordid relations, we delayed not instantly affording her some temporary relief; but in the moment of so doing, I was so unfortunate as to be recognized by my parents, who were returning from a friend's house, where they had supped. In such a place, at such an hour, and with a female, what could be thought? We were immediately adjudged criminal; and, upon our joining them, were accordingly reproached, as if their suspicions had been true. Such is the power of prejudice, that it was in vain we protested our innocence, in vain we informed them of the nature of our conversation with this woman; these availed us nothing: we were not only censured for the immorality of the affair itself, but also despised for the meanness and vulgarity of our taste.

Unfortunately, what tends to confirm them in this their premature opinion, is the circumstance of my friend's stepping aside immediately, on perceiving their approach. But how easy is that accounted for? in such a situation, where all direct proof of the innocence of the individual is, by the peculiar nature of the circumstance, excluded, what avails, except to yourself, the cons [...]ious rectitude of the heart.

Mens sibi conscia recti? It is impossible to impart to others the internal feelings, except by words; and when people are predetermined to disbelieve every syllable you urge in your own justification, how are you to effect your own exculpation? This action, therefore, of my friend is by no means a confirmation of our guilt, as it was extremely natural, that he should with to avoid being seen in such a situation, in which appearances were so much against him. His motives being now explained, I beg leave for once to differ from that proverb, that *Innocence hath nothing to fear.*

I am, Sir, yours, &c. W. R.

A striking proof indeed, in addition to the many, that *unprotected* innocence has *every human* thing to fear. But whose conduct of the four, think ye, was the most commendable, or pleasing in the fight of God or man?

Supposing, or even admitting, this poor unfortunate woman to be one of the wretched tribe, of whom we have been speaking. is it not evident, her education was not calculated either for beggary or vice? Nor can it be

supposed, from the distress which always seems attendant upon this abject state of beggary alone, that it can be by choice preferred to some laudable and reputable employment. No: it is not in nature.

Then, in the name of reason, justice, and truth, permit me to ask, from whence originates, and what is it that countenances, the cause of all these evils? Are they incurable? Are not women, by nature, of a more gentle and delicate composition than men, and less able to bear the hardships which so frequently are forced upon them? Has it not, in all ages, been the task, or rather the avowed choice, of the male part of the creation, to protect and defend the weaker sex? and is not the male part of the creation better able to bear cold, hunger, fatigue, and hardships than women are? Poor helpless women! who no sooner meet the heavy fate of indigence, than, from their appearance, they are bound to support a load of infamous censure along with it.

Although, at the same time, permit me to infer, there is not the least necessity for men to undergo the smallest part of these handships, even bad they relinquished their claim to women's occupations, since there is such a number of branches in trade, beside arts and sciences, which are only calculated for men. Surely, then, women ought to be permitted to occupy the remaining few, nor any longer suffered to be bound down by these oppressive chains; for, does not generous Pity demand a hearing in their behalf? Does not common decency forbid they should be insulted in the manner they are? Is it manly, is it noble, is it generous, or humane? Would not one think, from such oppressions, that men had determined to exert themselves for the misery and torture of their fellowcreatures.

I allow this kind of reasoning, to the interested parties, may sound rather grating to the ear: but, be it remembered, I have not undertaken the task of panegyric, but plain truth, which needs no high-slown language to express it: nor have I a wish to make an invidious remark upon the conduct or behaviour of any man, and much less to include a whole body of them[a] But what success in trade, if such they have, can make the smallest atonement, on a deathbed, or come nearly adequate to the loss of a poor soul, whom they may have been the means of casting into the utmost misery and distress, and forcing to seek an asylum in the jaws of perdition? Would but a mind, capable of the smallest feelings of humanity, reflect on the many

sacrifices made to this voluptuous avarice, and, in time, spare themselves that pungent remorse due to such severe reflections.

But, says the reasonable enquirer, with regard to suppressing this ancient custom, which is pointed out as productive o [...] so much evil, supposing an expedient is found out, will it not be attended with such a number of inconveniencies, as thereby to render the remedy as bad as the disease. To which I beg leave to reply: I do not presume to instruct the learned, but simply to communicate my ideas; for, a complicated business like this, which has taken so deep root, requires a greater knowledge in human affairs to discuss than the writer is possessed of; and a general knowledge of the causes which facilitate or obstruct the happiness of the community is absoloutely requisite, which discovers the many convincing reasons why a business of so much consequence should be properly investigated; and, upon these considerations, as all things, whether great or small, must have a beginning, I have taken some pains to be informed as to the nature of the subject. But as it is not expected a female can have much knowledge in judicature, I go upon the grounds of common sense and reason, and not actuated by any other motive than a wish to see happiness prevail, I shall accordingly beg leave to proceed to the following considerations; for, as in the estimation and choice of things, it is always granted we are to prefer better to worse, and such things as are grounded in reason, to others that hold no comparison therewith: we will, therefore, suppose the very worst supposition on which the argument can be founded, which is, What are this body of men to do, or how are they to be disposed of, if deprived of their present employment? Which may be briefly answered:

That although there may be some men, like women, of a timorous disposition, and thereby may experience some inconveniencies, yet it is not possible the whole body of them can suffer, by reason that, as I before observed, men can turn themselves so many ways in the world, which, were a woman to attempt, she would be pointed at as ridiculous and frantic: independent of which, after having stated the heavy grievances under which, not only the female part of the creation are oppressed, but the community in general, it may justly be replied, that no man, or body of men can, in reason, lay claim to a privilege that is absolutely repugnant to all civil society: after which, will not all other reasons appear to have little

weight? In other cases, has it [...]ad any weight with the police of the country? How many repeated instances have we seen of men, and even bodies of men, who, by certain obligations, have been obliged to give up public or private property, when a general good could not be otherwise obtained?

Then, why is there any distinction to be made between relinquishing property and privilege, when the public good requires it, which in all exigencies must confessedly be just? for, if change of circumstances were to have no weight with the legislature in directing human affairs, what would the intercourse of mankind end in, but contention between private interest and public good? But so long as we are blessed with a happy constitution, and rulers possessing humanity united with wisdom, what have we to fear?

Were the desire of procuring liberty or happiness for this, or any other set of people, at the [...]azard of injuring the community, or any part of it, the request would not only be unreasonable but unjust: but after summing up, under each respective head, all the evidences I have collected, with a very gentle hint at the enormous expence, as well as danger, and other inconveniencies attending a continuance of this precedent, and considering the many great advantages which would accrue, not only to the community, but to themselves, by engaging in more manly employments, I shall leave the impartial reader to draw the conclusion, and rest the basis of my observatio [...]s with those in power, for there are few, if any, precedents of arbitrary commitments, except the one in question, which have not come under the watchful eye of the legislature, whose vigilance and impartiality have, at all times, been a strong barrier and shield against any infringements upon the rights and privileges of the British nation; and, I presume, an investigation into the grievances of these poor suffering females will quickly be a means of doing away the precedent of encouraging, or countenancing, effeminate tradesmen, which, it is evident, are not only the origin of such unheard of distresses to poor helpless females, and preventing parents, who may be desirous of breaking through the fashions of the times, from placing their daughters to trades, but is absolutely leading to the dissolution of all good government.

Nor is there the smallest danger, when once the business is commenced, that the deep penetration and humanity of the guardians of the common

weal will ever be baffled in so laudable a pursuit. For, notwithstanding the subtlety of the enemy of mankind may invent a number of false and artful reasonings, yet what will all that avail, when the curtain is drawn aside, for then the spirit of justice and retribution is to be no longer appeased by such artifice; for neither law nor equity will admit of mending their fortunes by fraud or violence. And, although some of the offensive body may endeavour, by little artful chican [...]ry, to gloss over their crimes, and endeavour to palliate them with idle excuses, yet the only real plea these oppressive traders can make, being that of private interest, as I before observed, it has at all times been judiciously ordered to be given up for a public good.

What can possibly be deemed a more efficacious good, than to relieve the oppressed, and preserve so many poor miserable souls from perdition. Yet it is greatly to be feared these considerations to men, who are grown torpid by custom, or blind by ignorance, will give but little room for reflection.

Have we not every reason to believe, to the disgrace of such part of the community as call themselves Christians, that there are some, though we will hope but a small part, whose hearts are too much contracted and bound down by avarice, to admit of any humane sensations, which, in a quarter of the globe, where the refinements of the age are cried up by all nations, is unaccountably strange; for, in a scrupulous search for facts, which confirms the writer’s opinion on this subject, certain it is, there is not a single page in the New Testament which does not explicitly, or on the fairest inference, condemn such conduct, either by the example or precepts of Christ and his apostles.

Then, since these men have become apostates from Christianity, why any longer suffer their arbitrary power to be a subterfuge for fraud and oppression? Let the falutary laws of Great Britain provide means for suppressing a precedent, which, through time and unforeseen events, has become productive of so much mischief. Or let them appear and shew cause, why they are entitled to oppress these poor women, in order to enjoy indolence and ease. And let their claims to the flagrant violation of the rights of our fair countrywomen be developed.

Although, at the same time, permit me to infer, I cannot flatter myself these modes of proceeding are expected entirely to eradicate the sin

against the seventh commandment. But, from the prodigious numbers, which are by compulsion driven to the paths of wickedness, will it not be a means of saving thousands of miserable creatures from sin and sorrow, and enable magistrates, and men in power, to exercise justice and authority over the wicked, without fear of punishing the innocent with the guilty? for, believe me, it is not the incorrigible sinner I take upon me to commiserate, but the encouraged, or rather the compelled, sinner; and still more those who suffer in innocence, which is the hapless, wretched fate of thousands. And although I cannot recal to my memory the trifling observations I have made on this occasion, I am conscious they are my real sentiments; and flatter myself, however bad the composition, the design will be adopted by the generous and humane; when there is not a doubt, but the heavy burden, which these children of misery have so long supported, will quickly be thrown off, and the stumbling block to virtue and happiness be rolled away.

Have we not had sufficient proofs, that the happiness and welfare of mortals have at all times been thought worthy the attention of a Briton. Witness the poor slaves; wha [...] exertions have not been used by the humane friends of liberty in their behalf? Yet less, much less, are their sufferings to be lamented than the poor females I speak of, who have been bred up and educated in the school of Christianity, and fostered by the tender hand of Care.

The slave is little acquainted with the severe pangs a virtuous mind labours under, when driven to the extreme necessity of [...]orfeiting their virtue for bread. The slave cannot feel pain at the loss of reputation, a term of which they never heard, and much less know the meaning. What are the untutored, wild imaginations of a slave, when put in the balance with the distressing sensations of a British female, who has received a refined, if not a classical, education, and is capable of the finest feelings the human heart is susceptible of. A slave, through want of education, has little more refinement than cattle in the field; nor can they know the want of what they never enjoyed, or were taught to expect; but a poor female, who has received the best instruction, and is endowed with a good understanding, what must not she feel in mind, independent of her corporeal wants, after the adversity of fate has set her up as a mark, for the ridicule, the censure,

and contempt of the world? Her feelings cannot be described, nor her sufferings sufficiently lamented.

I recollect some observations, made some years ago, by a late honourable, humane, learned, and truly worthy member of the House of Commons* , respecting the business of the slave-trade, which doubly confirms my opinion of the great necessity there is for an investigation into the grievances I have been speaking of, since it leads to a clear demonstration, that the most judicious and benevolent may still remain in the dark, as to the sufferings of our Christian slaves at home.

“There is,” said the honourable gentleman, “no state in human nature but had its compensations. What was a slave? a happy slave was a degraded man; his happiness consisted in having no thought of the past, or the future, and this deficiency of mind it was which lessened the dignity of man, and conserred happiness on the African.”

A very striking and just observation, with regard to the African, it must be granted; yet I cannot but differ in opinion, when it is said, that all mankind are capable of a compensation. For, admitting the same mode of reasoning to stand good, if the oppressions of one part of the creation are moderated through their ignorance, how much must the other be heightened by their sensibility and the refinements of education. Nor can I see the smallest trait of compensation remaining for these miserable females, since the very education they have received in youth, re [...]ounds to their misfortunes in maturity.

Then, if an investigation into the business of the slave-trade has been sounded on such humane and generous principles, how much greater pleasure must it give the feeling heart, to patronize the poor, unfortunate women of our own nation, who labour under the very worst kind of slavery, and must continue to languish under the fetters of a painful bondage, till death, or the kindly hand of interference, has severed the chain?

But the justice of retribution taking place, shall we not see these poor, helpless, and forlo [...]n women set on a level with their fellowcreatures, and not be under the shocking and cruel necessity of starving in a land of plenty? And when the face of sorrow is enlivened with the smile of happiness and content, and the weary tradesman can lie down in peace,

without fear or danger of being annoyed, by the lawless plunderer; when all are united in the bands of mutual benefit and preservation, and the memory of former woes is lost in the blessings of a future age; it is then we may reasonably expect, that less than half the immense sums which are now required, will be sufficient to encourage honest industry.

But to detail the extent of human woes in so small a compass is impossible, so various and so fluctuating are the events of human life, and its ills so numerous: so many sudden deaths, losses in trade, and other casualties daily happen within our knowledge, the bare recital of which is not only painful to the narrator, but revives the melancholy tale of woe in the ears of the suffering parties; therefore, as the fate of an unknown individual seems so much on a par with the rest of mankind, permit the foregoing pages to suffice; and, instead of adding the distressing history of the unfortunate Mrs — , the writer begs leave to introduce the story of Fidelia, which being picturesque, and well adapted to the design, by permission, may serve as a kind of background to the piece, without wounding again the heart of sensibility, by the recital of past misfortunes.

2.1. THE STORY OF FIDELIA .

SAYS FIDELIA* , I shall make no apology for the trouble I am about to give you, since I am sure the motives that induce me to give it will have as much weight with you as they have with me; I shall, therefore, without farther preface, relate to you the events of a life, which, however insignificant and unentertaining, affords a lesson of the highest importance; a lesson, the value of which I have experienced, and may therefore recommend.

I am the daughter of a gentleman of good family, who, as he was a younger brother, purchased, with the portion that was allotted him, a genteel post under government. My mother died when I was but twelve years old, and my father, who was excessively fond of me, determined to be himself my preceptor, and to take care that my natural genius, which his partiality made him think above the common rank, should not want the improvements of a liberal education.

He was a man of sense, with a tolerable share of learning. In his youth he had been a free liver, and, perhaps, for that reason took some pains to become a free thinker. But whatever fashionable frailties he might formerly have allowed in himself, he was now in advanced life, and had, at least, worldly wisdom enough to know, that it was necessary his daughter should be restrained from those liberties, which he had looked upon as trifling errors in his own conduct. He therefore laboured with great application to inculcate in me the love of order, the beauty of moral recti [...]ule, and the happiness and self-reward of virtue; but, at the same time, professed it his design to free my mind from vulgar prejudices and superstition, for so he called revealed religion. As I was urged to chuse virtue and reject vice, from motives which had no necessary connection with immortality. I was not led to consider a future state either with hope or fear. My father, indeed, when I urged him upon that subject, always intimated that the doctrine of immortality, whether true or false, ought not at all to influence my conduct, or interrupt my peace, because the virtue which secured happiness in the present state, would also secure it in a future state: a future state, therefore, I wholly disregarded, and, to confess the truth, disbelieved: for I thought I could plainly discover, that it was

disbelieved by my father, though he had not thought fit explicitly to declare his sentiments. As I had no very turbulent passions, a ductile and good disposition, and the highest reverence for his understanding, as well as the tenderest affection for him, he found it an easy talk to make me adopt every sentiment and opinion which he proposed to me, as his own, especially as he took care to support his principles by the authority and arguments of the best writers against Christianity.

At the age of twenty, I was called upon to make use of all the philosophy I had been taught, by his death; which not only deprived me of a parent I most ardently loved, but with him of all the ease and affluence to which I had been accustomed. His income was only for life, and he had rather lived beyond than within it; consequently, there was nothing left for me, but the pride and helplessness of genteel life, a taste for every thing elegant, and a delicacy and sensibility that has doubled my sufferings. In this distress, a brother of my mother’s, who was grown rich in trade, received me into his house, and declared he would take the same care of me as if I had been his own. When the first transports of my grief were abated, I found myself in an easy situation, and from the natural cheerfulness of my temper, I was beginning once more to taste of happiness. My uncle, who was a man of narrow understanding and illiberal education, was a little disgusted with me for employing so much of my time in reading; but still more so, when happening to examine my books, he found, by the titles, that some of them were what he called blasphemy, and tended, as he imagined, to make me me an atheist. I endeavoured to explain my principles, which I thought beneath the dignity of virtue to disguise or disavow; but as I never could make him conceive any difference between a deist and an atheist, my arguments only served to confirm him in the opinion, that I was a wicked wretch, who, in his own phrase, believed neither God nor devil, As he was really a good man, and heartily zealous for the established faith, though more from habit and prejudice than reason, my errors gave him great affliction. I perceived it with the utmost concern; I perceived too, that he looked upon me with a degree of abhorrence mixed with pity, and that I was wholly indebted to his good nature for that protection, which I had flattered myself I should owe to his love. I comforted myself, however, with my own integrity, and even felt a conscious pride, in suffering this persecution from ignorance

and folly, only because I was superior to vulgar errors and popular superstition. And that Christianity deserved these appellations, I was not more convinced by my father's arguments, than my uncle's conduct, who, as his zeal was not according to knowledge, was by no means qualified to "adorn the doctrine which he professed to believe."

I had lived a few months under the painful sensibility of receiving continual benefits from a person whose esteem and affection I had lost, when my uncle one day come into my chamber, and after preparing me for some unexpected good fortune, told me, he had just had a proposal of marriage for me, from a man to whom I could not possibly have any objection. He then named a merchant with whom I had often been in company at his table. As the man was neither old nor ugly, had a large fortune, and a fair character, my uncle thought himself sufficiently authorised to pronounce as he did, that I could not possibly have any objection to him. An objection, however, I had, which I told my uncle was to me insuperable; it was, that the person whom he proposed to me as the companion, the guide, and director of my whole life, to whom I was to vow, not only obedience, but love, had nothing in him that could ever engage my affection: his understanding was low, his sentiments mean and indelicate, and his manner unpolite and unpleasing. "What stuff is all this?" interrupted my uncle, "sentiments indelicate, unpolite, his understanding forsooth, not equal to your own! Ah! child, if you had less romance, conceit, and arrogance, and more true discretion and prudence, it would do you more good than all the fine books you have confounded your poor head with, and, what is worse, perhaps, ruined your poor soul. I own it went a little against my conscience to accept my honest friend's kind offer, and give him such a pagan for a wife. But I know not, whether the believing husband may not convert the unbelieving wife? As to your slighty objections, they are such nonsense, that I wonder you can suppose me fool enough to be deceived by them. No, child, wife as you are, you cannot impose upon a man who has lived as many years in the world as I have. I see your motive; you have some in [...]idel libertine rake in your eye, with whom you would go headlong to perdition. But I shall take care to have your soul to answer for, as well as your person. Either I shall dispose of you to an honest man that may convert you, or you shall dispose of yourself how you please for me; for I disclaim all farther care or trouble

about you. So I leave you to consider, whether or no the kindness I have shewn you, entitles me to some little influence over you, and whether you chuse to seek protection where you can find it, or accept of the happy lot Providence has cut out for you."

He left me at the close of this fine harangue, and I seriously set myself to consider, as he bade me, which of the two states he had set before me, I ought to chuse. — To submit to a legal sort of prostitution, with the additional weight of perjury on my conscience, or to expose myself to all the distress of friendless poverty and unprotected youth. After some hours of deliberation, I determined on the latter, and that more from principle than inclination; for, though my delicacy would have suffered extremely in accepting a husband, at least indifferent to me, yet as my heart was perfectly disengaged, and my temper naturally easy, I thought I could have been less unhappy in following my uncle's advice than I might probably be by rejecting it. But then I must have submitted to an action I could not think justifiable, in order to avoid mere external distresses. This would not have been philosophical. I had always been taught, that virtue was of itself sufficient to happiness; and that those things which are generally esteemed evils, could have no power to disturb the felicity of a mind governed by the eternal rule of right, and truly enamoured of the charms of moral beauty, I resolved, therefore, to run all risques, rather than depart from this glorious principle. I felt myself raised by the trial, and exulted in the opportunity of shewing my contempt of the smiles or frowns of fortune, and of proving the power of virtue to sustain the soul under all accidental circumstances of distress.

I communicated my resolution to my uncle, assuring him at the same time of my everlasting gratitude and respect, and that nothing should have induced me to offend or disobey him, but his requiring me to do what my reason and conscience disapproved; that supposing the advantages of riches to be really as great as he believed, yet still those of virtue were greater, and I could not reslove to purchase the one by a violation of the other; that a false vow was certainly criminal; and that it would be doing an act of the highest injustice, to enter into so solemn an engagement without the power of fulfilling it; that my affections did not depend on my own will; and that no man should possess my person, who could not obtain the first place in my heart.

I was surprised that my uncle’s impatience had permitted me to go on thus far; but looking in his face, I perceived that passion had kept him silent. At length the gathering storm burst over my head in a torrent of reproaches; my reasons were condemned as romantic absurdities, which I could not myself believe. I was accused of designing to deceive, and to throw myself away on some worthless fellow, whose principles were as bad as my own. It was in vain for me to assert, that I had no such design, nor any inclination to marry at all. My uncle could sooner have believed the grossest contradiction, than that a young woman could so strenuously refuse one man, without being prepossessed in favour of another. As I thought myself injured by his accusations and tyranny, I gave over the attempt to mitigate his anger. He appealed to Heaven for the justice of his resentment, and against my ingratitude and rebellion; and then giving me a note of fifty pounds, which he said would keep me from immediate indigence, he bade me leave his house, and see his face no more. I bowed in sign of obedience, and collecting all my dignity and resolution, I arose, thanked him for his past benefits, and, with a low curtsey, left the room.

In less than an hour, I departed, with my little wardrobe, to the house of a person who had formerly been my father’s servant, and who now kept a shop and let lodgings. From thence I went the next day to visit my father’s nephew, who was in possession of the family estate, and had lately married a lady of great fortune. He was a young gentleman of good parts, his principles the same as my father’s, though his practice had not been quite agreeable to the strict rules of morality. However, setting aside a few of those vices which are looked upon as genteel accomplishments in young fellows of fortune, I thought him a good sort of man; and, as we had always lived in great kindness, I doubted not that I should find him my friend, and meet with approbation and encouragement, at least, if not assistance, from him. I told him my story, and the reasons that had determined me to the refusal that had incurred my uncle’s displeasure; but how was I disappointed, when, instead of the applause I expected for my heroic virtue and unmerited persecutions, I perceived a smile of contempt on his face, when he interrupted me in the following manner:

“And what in the devil’s name, my dear cousin, could make a woman of your sense behave so like an ideot? What! forfeit all your hopes from your uncle, refuse an excellent match, and reduce yourself to beggary because,

truly, you were not in love? Surely one might have expected better from you even at fifteen. Who is it, pray, that marries the person of their choice? For my own part, who have rather a better title to please myself, with a good fifteen hundred a year, than you who have not a shilling, I found it would not do; and that there was something more to be sought after in a wife, than a pretty face or a genius. Do you think I cared three farthings for the woman I married? — No, faith; but her thirty thousand pounds were worth having; with that I can purchase a seraglio of beauties, and indulge my taste in every kind of pleasure. And, pray, what is it to me, whether my wife has beauty, or wit, or elegance, when her money will supply me with all that in others? You, cousin, had an opportunity of being as happy as I am. The men, believe me, would not like you a bit the worse for being married; on the contrary, you would find, that for one who took notice of you as a single woman, twenty would be your admirers and humble servants, when there was no danger of being taken in: thus you might have gratified all your passions, made an elegant figure in life, and have chosen out some gentle swain, as romantic and poetical as you pleased, for your cecisbeo. The good John Trot husband would have been easily managed."

My indignation could be contained no longer, and I was leaving the room in disdain, when he caught me by the hand. "Nay, prithee, my dear cousin, none of these violent airs: I thought you and I had known one another better. Let the poor souls who are taught by the priests and their nurses to be afraid of hell-fire, and to think they shall go to the devil for following nature, and making life agreeable, be as outrageously virtuous as they please, you have too much sense to be frightened at bugbears. You know that the term of our existence is but short, and it is highly reasonable to make it as pleasant as possible."

I was too angry to attempt confusing his arguments; but, bursting from his hold, told him, I would take care not to give him a second opportunity of insulting my distress, and a [...]ronting my understanding; and so left [...] house with a resolution never to enter it again.

I went home mo [...]ified and disippointed; my spirits sunk into a dejection which took from me, for many days, all inclination to stir out of my lodging, or to see a human face. At length I resolved to try whether indigence and friendship were really incompatible, and whether I should

meet with the same treatment from a female friend, whose affection had been the principal pleasure of my youth. Surely, thought I, the gentle Amanda, whose heart seems capable of every tender and generous sentiment, will do justice to the innocence and integrity of her unfortunate friend; her tenderness will encourage my virtue, and animate my [...] her praises and endearments will compensate all my hardships. Amanda was a single woman, of a moderate independent fortune, which I heard she was going to bestow on a young officer, who had little or nothing besides his commission. I had no doubt of her approbation of my refusing a mercenary match, since she herself had chosen from motives so opposite to those which are called prudent. She had been in the country some months, so that my misfortunes had not reached her [...]ar, till I myself related them to her.

She heard me with great attention, and answered with politeness enough, but with a coldness that chilled my very heart.

“You are sensible, my dear Fidelia,” said she, “that I never pretended to set my understanding in competition with yours. I know my own inferiority, and though many of your notions and opinions appeared to me very strange and particular, I never attempted to dispute them with you. To be sure, you know best: but it seems to me a very odd conduct, for one in your situation to give offence to so good an uncle; first, by maintaining doctrines which may be very true for ought I know, but which are very contrary to the received opinions we are brought up in, and therefore are apt to shock a common understanding; and secondly, to renounce his protection, and throw yourself into the wide world, rather than marry the man he chose for you; to whom, after all, I do not find you had any real objection, nor any antipathy for his person.”

“Antipathy, my dear,” said I, “are there not many degrees between loving and honouring a man preferably to all others, and beholding him with abhorrence and aversion. The first is, in my opinion, the duty of a wife, a duty voluntarily taken upon herself, and engaged in under the most solemn contract. As to the difficulties that may attend my friendless, unprovided state, since they are the consequences of a virtuous action, they cannot really be evils, nor can they disturb that happiness which is the gift of virtue.”— “I am heartily glad,” answered she, “that you have found out the art of making yourself happy by the force of imagination. I wish

your enthusiasm may continue, and that you may still be farther convinced, by your own experience, of the folly of mankind, in supposing poverty and disgrace to be evils."

I was cut to the soul by the unkind manner which accompanied this sarcasm, and was going to remonstrate against her unfriendly treatment, when her lover came in, with another gentleman, who, in spite of my full heart, engaged my attention, and, for a while, made me forget the stings of unkindness. The beauty and gracefulness of his person caught my eye, and the politeness of his address, and the elegance of his compliments, soon prejudiced me in favour of his understanding. He was introduced by the captain to Amanda as his most intimate friend, and seemed desirous to give credit to his friend's judgment, by making himself as agreeable as possible. He succeeded so well, that Amanda was wholly engrossed by the pleasure of his conversation, and the care of entertaining her lover and her new guest. Her face brightened and her good humour returned. When I arose to leave her, she pressed me so earnestly to stay dinner, that I could not, without discovering how much I resented her behaviour, refuse. This, however, I should probably have done, as I was naturally disposed to shew every sentiment of my heart, had not a secret wish arisen there to know a little more of this agreeable stranger. This inclined me to think it prudent to conceal my resentment, and to accept the civilities of Amanda. The conversation grew more and more pleasing; I took my share in it; and had more than my share of the charming stranger's notice and attention. As we all grew more and more unreserved, Amanda dropped hints in the course of the conversation relating to my story, my sentiments, and unhappy situation. Sir George Freelove, for that was the young gentleman's name, listened greedily to all that was said of me, and seemed to eye me with an earnest curiosity, as well as admiration. We did not part till it was late; and Sir George insisted on attending me to my lodgings. I strongly refused it, not without a sensation, which more properly belonged to the female than the philosopher, and which I condemned in myself, as arising from dishonest pride.

I could not, without pain, suffer the polite Sir George, upon so short an acquaintance, to discover the meanness of my abode. To avoid this, I sent for a chair, but was confused to find that Sir George and his servants prepared to attend it on foot, by way of guard. It was in vain to dispute: he

himself walked before, and his servants followed it. I was covered with blushes, when, after all this parade, he handed me in at the little shop door, and took leave with as profound respect, as if he had guarded me into a palace. A thousand different thoughts kept me from closing my eyes that night. The behaviour of Amanda wounded me to the soul: I found that I must look on her as no more than a common acquaintance, and that the world did not contain one person whom I could call my friend. My heart felt desolate and forlorn. I knew not what course to take for my future subsistence. The pain which my pride had just given me, convinced me that I was far from having conquered the passions of humanity, and that I should feel too sensibly all the mortifications which attend on poverty. I determined, however, to subdue this pride, and call to my assistance the example of ancient sages and philosophers, who despised riches and honours, and felt no inconveniencies from the malice of fortune. I had almost reasoned myself into a contempt for the world, and fancied myself superior to its smiles or frowns, when the idea of Sir George Freelove rushed upon my mind, and destroyed, at once, the whole force of my reasoning. I found that, however I might disregard the rest of the world, I could not be indiffernt to his opinion; and the thought of being despised by him was insupportable. I recollected that my condition was extremely different from that of an old philosopher, whose rags, perhaps, were the means of gratifying his pride, by attracting the notice and respect of mankind: at least, the philosopher’s schemes and wishes were very different from those which, at that time, were taking possession of my heart. The looks and behaviour of Sir George, left me no doubt, that I had made as deep an impression in his favour as he had done in mine. I could not bear to lose the ground I had gained, and to throw myself into a state below his notice. I scorned the thought of imposing on him with regard to my circumstances, in case he should really have had favourable intentions for me; yet to disgrace myself for ever in his eye, by submitting to servitude, or any low way of supporting myself, was what I could not bring myself to resolve on.

In the midst of these reflections. I was surprised, the next morning, by a visit from Sir George. He made respectful apologies for the liberty he took; told me he had learned from my friend, that the unkindness and tyranny of an uncle had cast me into uneasy circumstances; and that he

could not know that so much beauty and merit were so unworthily treated by fortune, without earnestly wishing to be the instrument of doing me more justice. He entreated me to add dignity and value to his life, by making it conducive to the happiness of mine; and was going on with the most fervent offers of service, when I interrupted him, by saying that there was nothing in his power that I could with honour accept, by which my life could be made happier, but that respect which was due to me as a woman and a gentlewoman, and which ought to have prevented such offers of service from a stranger, as could only be justified by a long-experienced friendship; that I was not in a situation to receive visits, and must decline his acquaintance, which, nevertheless, in a happier part of my life would have given me pleasure.

He now had recourse to all the arts of his sex, imputing his too great freedom to the force of his passion, protesting the most inviolable respect, and imploring on his knees, and even with tears, that I would not punish him so severely, as to deny him the liberty of seeing me, and making himself more and more worthy of my esteem. My weak heart was but too much touched by his artifices, and I had only just fortitude enough to persevere in refusing his visits, and to insist on his leaving me, which at last he did; but with such a profusion of tenderness, prayers, and protestations, that it was some time before I could recal my reason enough to reflect on the whole of his behaviour, and on my own situation, which compared, left me but little doubt of his dishonourable views.

I determined never more to admit him to my presence, and accordingly gave orders to be denied, if he came again. My reason applauded, but my heart reproached me, and heavily repined at the rigid determination of prudence. I knew that I acted rightly, and I expected that that consciousness would make me happy; but I found it otherwise, I was wretched beyond what I had ever felt, or formed any idea of. I discovered that my heart was entangled in a passion which must for ever be combated, or indulged at the expence of virtue. I now considered riches as truly desirable, since they would have placed me above disgraceful attempts, and given me reasonable hopes of becoming the wife of Sir George Freelove. I was discontented and unhappy, but surprised and disappointed to find myself so, since hitherto I had no one criminal action to reproach

myself with; on the contrary, my difficulties were all owing to my regard for virtue.

I resolved, however, to try still farther the power of virtue to confer happiness, to go on in my obedience to her laws, and patiently wait the good effects of it. But I [...] stronger difficulties to go through than any I had yet experienced: Sir George was too much practised in the arts of seduction to be discouraged by a first repulse, every day produced either some new attempt to see me, or a letter full of the most passionate protestations and entreaties for pardon and favour: it was in vain I gave orders that no more letters should be taken in from him: he had so many different contrivances to convey them, and directed them in hands so unlike, that I was surprised into reading them, contrary to my intentions. Every time I stirred out, he was sure to be in my way, and to employ the most artful tongue that ever ensnared the heart of woman, in blinding my reason and awakening my passions.

My virtue, however, did not yet give way, but my peace of mind was utterly destroyed. Whenever I was with him, I summoned all my fortitude, and constantly repeated my commands, that he should avoid me: his disobedience called for my resentment, and, in spite of my melting heart, I armed my eyes with anger, and treated him with as much disdain as I thought his unworthy designs deserved. But the moment he left me, all my resolution forsook me, I repined at my fate, I even murmured against the Sovereign Ruler of all things, for making me subject to passions I could not subdue, yet must not indulge. I compared my own situation with that of my libertine cousin, whose pernicious arguments I had heard with horror and detestation; who gave the reins to every desire; whose house was the seat of plenty, mirth, and delight; whose face was ever covered with smiles; and whose heart seemed free from sorrow and care. Is not this man, said I, happier than I am? and if so, where is the worth of virtue? Have I not sacrificed to her my fortune and my friends? Do I not daily sacrifice to her my darling inclination; yet, what is the compensation she offers me? What are my prospects in this world but poverty, mortification, disappointment, and grief? Every wish of my heart denied, every passion of humanity combated and hurt, though never conquered! Are these the blessings with which Heaven distinguishes it favourites? Can the King of Heaven want power or will to distinguish them? or does he leave his

wretched creatures the sport of chance, the prey of wickedness and malice? Surely no. Yet is not the condition of the virtuous often more miserable than that of the vicious? I myself have experienced that it is. I am very unhappy, and see no likelihood of my being otherwise in this world — and all beyond the grave is eternal darkness. Yet why do I say that I have no prospect of happiness? does not the most engaging of men offer me all the joys that love and fortune can bestow? Will not he protect me from every insult of the proud world that scoffs at indigence? Will not his liberal hand pour forth the means of every pleasure, even of that highest and truest of all pleasure, the power of relieving the sufferings of my fellowcreatures, of changing the tears of distress into tears of joy and gratitude, of communicating my own happiness to all around me? Is not this a state far preferable to that in which virtue has placed me? But what is virtue? Is not happiness the laudable pursuit of reason? Is it not then laudable to pursue it by the most probable means? Have I not been accusing Providence of unkindness, whilst I myself only am in fault for rejecting its offered favours? Surely, I have mistaken the path of virtue: it must be that which leads to happiness. The path which I am in is full of thorns and briars, and terminates in impenetrable darkness; but I see another that is strewed with flowers, and bright with the sun shine of prosperity: this, surely, is the path of virtue and the road to happiness. Hither then let me turn my weary steps, nor let vain and idle prejudices fright me from felicity. It is surely impossible that I should offend God, by yielding to a temptation which he has given me no motive to resist. He has allotted me a short and precarious existence, and has placed before me good and evil. What is good but pleasure? What is evil but pain? Reason and nature direct me to chuse the first, and avoid the last. I sought for happiness in what is called virtue, but I found it not: shall I not try the other experiment, since I think I can hardly be more unhappy by following inclination, than I am by denying it?

Thus had my frail thoughts wandered into a wilderness of error, and thus had I almost reasoned myself out of every principle of morality, by pursuing, through all their consequences, the doctrines which had been taught me as rules of life and prescriptions for felicity, the talisinans of truth, by which I should be secured in the storms of adversity, and listen without danger to the syrens of temptation; when, in the fatal hour of my

presumption, sitting alone in my chamber, collecting arguments on the side of passion, almost distracted with doubts, and plunging deeper and deeper into falsehood, I saw Sir George Freelove at my feet, who had gained admittance, contrary to my orders, by corrupting my landlady. It is not necessary to describe to you his arts, or the weak effects of that virtue which had been graciously implanted in my heart, but which I had taken impious means to undermine by false reasoning, and which now tottered from the foundation: sussice it that I submitted to the humiliation I have so well deserved, and tell you, that, in the pride of human reason I dared to condemn, as the effect of weakness and prejudice, the still voice of conscience, which would yet have warned me from ruin; that my innocence, my honour was the sacrifice to passion and sophistry; that my boasted philosophy, and too much slattered understanding, preserved me not from the lowest depth of insamy, which the weakest of my sex with humility and religion would have avoided.

I now experienced a new kind of wretchedness: my vile seducer tried in vain to reconcile me to the shameful life to which he had reduced me, by loading me with finery, and lavishing his fortune in procuring me pleasures which I could not taste, and pomp which seemed an insult on my disgrace. In vain did I recollect the arguments which had convinced me of the lawfulness of accepting offered pleasures, and following the dictates of inclination. The light of my understanding was darkened, but the sense of guilt was not lost: my pride and my delicacy, if, criminal as I was, I may dare to call it so, suffered the most intolerable mortification and disgust every time I reflected on my infamous situation. Every eye seemed to upbraid me, even that of my triumphant seducer. O depth of misery! to be conscious of deserving the contempt of him I loved, and for whose sake I was become contemptible to myself.

This was the state of my mind during a year which I passed in Sir George’s house: his fondness was unabated for eight months of the time; and as I had no other object to share my attention, neither friend nor relation to call off any part of my tenderness, all the love of a heart naturally affectionate centered in him. The first dawnings of unkindness were but too visible to my watchful eyes. I had now all the torments of jealousy to endure, till a cruel certainty put an end to them; I learnt, at length, that my false lover was on the brink of marriage with a lady of

great fortune. I immediately resolved to leave him, but could not do it without first venting my full heart in complaints and reproaches. This provoked his rage, and drew on me insolence, which, though I had deserved, I had not learnt to bear. I returned with scorn, which no longer became me, all the wages of my sin, and the trappings of my shame, and left his house in the bitterest anguish of resentment and despair.

I returned to my old lodgings; but unable to bear a scene which recalled every circumstance of my undoing, ashamed to look in the fac [...] of any creature who had seen me innocent, wretched in myself, and hoping from change of place some abatement of my misery, I p [...]t myself into a post-chaise at two in the morning, with orders to the driver to carry me as far from town as he could before the return of night, leaving it to him to chuse the road.

My reason and my senses seemed benumbed and stupified during my journey. I made no reflections on what I was about, nor formed any design for my future life. When night came, my conductor would have stopped at a large town, but I bid him go on to the next village: there I alighted at a paltry inn, and dismissed my vehicle, without once considering what I was to do with myself, or why I chose that place for my abode. To say truth, I can give no account of my thoughts at this period of time: they were all confused and distracted. A short frenzy must have filled up those hours, of which my memory retains such imperfect traces. I remember only, that without having pulled off my clothes, I left the inn as soon as I saw the day, and wandered out of the village.

My unguided feet carried me to a range of willows by a river’s side, where, after having walked some time, the freshness of the air revived my senses, and awakened my reason. My reason, my memory, my anguish, and despair returned together. Every circumstance of my past life was present to my mind; but most the idea of my faithless lover, and my criminal love tortured my imagination and rent my bleeding heart, which, in spite of all its guilt and all its wrongs, retained the tenderest and most ardent affection for its undo [...]r. This unguarded affection, which was the effect of a gentle and kind nature, heightened the anguish of resentment, and compleated my misery. In vain did I call off my thoughts from this gloomy retrospect, and hope to find a gleam of comfort in my future prospects. They were still more dreadful: poverty, attended by infamy, and

want groaning under the cruel hand of oppression, and the taunts of insolence were before my eyes. I, who had once been the darling and the pride of indulgent parents, who had once been beloved, respected, and admired, was now the outcast of human nature; despised and avoided by all who had ever loved me, by all whom I had most loved! hateful to myself, belonging to no one, exposed to wrongs and insults from all.

I tried to find out the cause of this dismal change, and how far I was myself the occasion of it. My conduct, with regard to Sir George, though I spontaneously condemned, yet, upon recollection, I thought the arguments which produced it would justify. But as my principles could not preserve me from vice, neither could they sustain me in adversity: conscience was not to be perverted by the sophistry which had beclouded my reason. And if any, by imputing my conduct to error, should acquit me of guilt, let them remember, it is yet true, that in this uttermost distress, I was neither sustained by the consciousness of innocence, the exultation of virtue, nor the hope of reward: whether I looked backward or forward, all was confusion and anguish, distraction and despair. I accused the Supreme Being of cruelty and injustice, who, though he gave me not sufficient encouragement to resist desire, yet punishes me with the consequences of indulgence. If there is a God, cried I [...] he must be either tyrannical and cruel, or regardless of her creatures. I will no longer endure a being which is undeservedly miserable, either from chance or design, but fly to that annihilation in which all my prospects terminate. Take back, said I, listing my eyes to Heaven, the hateful gift of existence, and let my dust no more be animated to suffering, and exalted to misery.

So saying, I ran to the brink of the river, and was going to plunge in, when the cry of some person very near me made me turn my eyes to see whence it came. I was accosted by an elderly gentleman, who, with looks of terror, pity, and benevolence, asked what I was about to do? At first I was sullen, and refused to answer him: but by degrees the compassion he shewed, and the tenderness with which he treated me, softened my heart, and gave vent to my tears.

“O, Madam!” said he, “these are gracious signs, and unlike those which first drew my attention, and made me watch you unobserved, fearing some fatal purpose in your mind. What must be the thoughts which could make a face like yours appear the picture of horror? I was taking my morning

walk, and have seen you a considerable time: sometimes stopping and wringing your hands, sometimes quickening your pace, and sometimes walking slow, with your eyes fixed on the ground, till you raised them to Heaven, with looks not of supplication and piety, but rather of accusation and defiance. For pity tell me, how it is that you have quarrelled with yourself, with life, [...]ay even with Heaven? Recal your reason and your hope, and let this seasonable prevention of your fatal purpose be an earnest to you of good things to come, of God's mercy not yet alienated from you, and stooping from his throne to save your soul from perdition?"

The tears which flowed in rivers from my eyes while he talked, gave me so much relief, that I found myself able to speak, and desirous to express my gratitude for the good man's concern for me. It was so long since I had known the joys of confidence, that I felt surprising pleasure and comfort from unburdening my heart, and telling my kind deliverer every circumstance of my story, and every thought of my distracted mind. He shuddered to hear me upbraid the Divine Providence, and stopping me short, told me he would lead me to one who should preach patience to me whilst she gave me the example of it.

As we talked he lead me to his own house, and there introduced me to his wife, a middleaged woman, pale and emaciated, but of a cheerful placid countenance, who received me with the greatest tenderness and humanity. She saw I was distressed, and her compassion was before hand with my complaints. Her tears stood ready to accompany mine; her looks and her voice expressed the kindest concern; and her assiduous cares demonstrated that true politeness and hospitality, which is not the effect of art but of inward benevolence. While she obliged me to take some refreshment, her husband gave her a short account of my story, and of the state in which he found me. "This poor lady," said he, "from the fault of her education and principles, sees every thing through a gloomy medium. She accuses Providence, and hates her existence for those evils which are the common lot of mankind in this short state of trial. You, my dear, who are one of the greatest sufferers I have known, are best qualified to cure her of her faulty impatience, and to convince her, by your own example, that this world is not the place in which virtue is to find its reward. She thinks no one so unhappy as herself; but i [...] she knew all that you have

gone through, she would surely be sensible, that if you are happier than she, it is only because your principles are better."

"Indeed, my dear madam!" said she, "that is the only advantage that I have over you; but that indeed out weighs every thing else. It is now but ten days since I followed to the grave my only son, the survivor of eight children, who were all equally the objects of my fondest love: my heart is no less tender than your own, nor my affections less warm. For a whole year before the death of my last darling, I watched the fatal progress of his disease, and saw him suffer the most amazing pains. Nor was poverty, that dreaded evil, to which you could not submit, wanting to my trials: though my husband is, by his profession, a gentleman, his income is so small, that I and my children have often wanted necessaries: and though I had always a weakly constitution, I have helped to support my family by the labour of my own hands At this time I am consuming, by daily tortures, with a cancer, which must shortly be my death. My pains, perhaps, might be mitigated by proper assistance, though nothing could preserve my life; but I have not the means to obtain that assistance." O, hold! interrupted I, my soul is shocked at the enumeration of such intolerable sufferings: how is it that you support them? Why do I not see you, in despair like mine, renounce your existence, and put yourself out of the reach of torment? But, above all, tell me how it is possible for you to preserve, amidst such complicated misery, that appearance of cheerfulness and serene complacency which shines so remarkably in your countenance, and animates every look and motion.

"That cheerfulness and complacency," answered the good woman, "I feel in my heart. My mind is not only serene, but often experiences the highest emotions of joy and exultation, that the brightest hopes can give." And whence, said I, do you derive this astonishing art of extracting joy from misery, and of smiling amidst all the terrors of pain, sorrow, poverty, and death? She was silent for a moment, then stepping to her closet, reached a Bible, which she put into my hands: "See there," said she, "the volume in which I have learnt this art. Here I am taught, that everlasting glory is in store for all who will accept it upon the terms which Infinite Perfection has prescribed; here I am promised consolation, assistance, and support from the Lord of Life; and here I am assured, that my transient afflictions are only meant to fit me [...] eternal and unspeakable happiness.

This happiness is at hand. The short remainder of my life seems but a point, beyond which opens the glorious prospect of immortality: thus encouraged, how should I be dejected? Thus supported, how should I sink? With such prospects, such assured hopes, how can I be [...]therways than happy?”

While she spoke, her eyes sparkled, and her whole face seemed animated with joy. I was struck with her manner, as well as her words. Every syllable she uttered seemed to sink into my soul, so that I never can forget it. I resolved to examine a religion, which was capable of producing such effects as I could not attribute either to chance or error. The good couple pressed me, with so much unaffected kindness, to make their little parsonage my asylum till I could better dispose of myself, that I accepted their offer. Here, with the assistance of the clergyman, who is a plain, sensible, and truly pious man, I have studied the Holy Scriptures, and the evidences of their authority. But after reading them with candour and attention, I found all the intrinsic arguments of their truth superfluous: the excellency of their precepts, the consistency of their doctrines, and the glorious motives and encouragements to virtue which they propose; together with the striking example I had before my eyes of their salutary effects, left me no doubt of their divine authority.

During the time of my abode here, I have been witness to the more than heroic, the joyful, the triumphant death of the dear good woman. With as much softness and tenderness as I ever saw in a female character, she shewed more dauntless intrepidity than the sternest philosopher, or the proudest hero. No torment could shake the constancy of her soul, or length of pain wear out the strength of her patience. Death was to her an object not of horror but of hope. When I heard her pour forth her last breath in thanksgiving, and saw the smile of extasy remain on her pale face when life was fled, I could not help crying out in the beautiful language I had lately learnt from the Sacred Writings, “O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?”

I am now preparing to leave my excellent benefactor, and get my bread in a service, to which he has recommended me in a neighbouring family. A state of servitude, to which once I could not resolve to yield, appears no longer dreadful to me; that pride, which would have made it galling, Christianity has subdued, though philosophy attempted it in vain. As a

penitent, I should gratefully submit to mortification; but as a Christian, I find myself superior to every mortification, except the sense of guilt. This has humbled me to the dust: but the assurances that are given me by the Saviour of the world of the divine pardon and favour, upon sincere repentance, have calmed my troubled spirit, and filled my mind with peace and joy, which the world can neither give nor take away. Thus, without any change for the better in my outward circumstances, I find myself changed from a distracted, poor, despairing wretch, to a contented, happy, grateful being; thankful for, and pleased with my present state of existence; yet exulting in the hope of quitting it for endless glory and happiness.

O! Sir, tell the unthinking mortals, who will not take the pains of enquiring into those truths which most concern them, and who are led by fashion, and the pride of human reason, into a contempt for the sacred oracles of God, tell them this truth, which experience hath taught me, that though vice is constantly attended by misery, virtue itself cannot confer happiness in this world, except it is animated with the hopes of eternal bliss in the world to come.

FINIS

The Biograph y

Ramsgate, Kent, in the early nineteenth century. During the last twelve years of her life, Radcliffe suffered from a spasmodic asthma, calling for the unwearied attentions of her affectionate husband. In the hope of obtaining relief, they visited Ramsgate in the autumn of 1822. Radcliffe wrote her last piece of writing here.

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF MRS. RADCLIF FE

An anonymous 1826 biography, with extracts from Mrs. Radcliffe's journals

THE LIFE OF MRS. RADCLIFFE is a pleasing phenomenon in the literature of her time. During a period, in which the spirit of personality has extended its influence, till it has rendered the habits and conversation of authors almost as public as their compositions, she confined herself, with delicate apprehensiveness, to the circle of domestic duties and pleasures. Known only by her works, her name was felt as a spell by her readers. Among the thousands, whose life-blood curdled beneath her terrors, many little suspected, that the potent enchantress was still an inhabitant of this "bright and breathing world." Even her romances, forming a class apart from all, which had gone before, and unapproached by imitators, wore a certain air of antiquity, and seemed scarcely to belong to the present age. Having long ceased to publish, she acquired in her retreat the honours of posthumous fame. Her unbroken retirement suggested to those, who learned that she still lived, a fancy that something unhappy was connected with her story, and gave occasion to the most absurd and groundless rumours, respecting her condition. But, while some spoke of her as dead, and others represented her as afflicted with mental alienation, she was thankfully enjoying the choicest blessings of life — with a cheerfulness as equable as if she had never touched the secret springs of horror, and with a humility as genuine as though she had not extended the domain of romance, for the delight and the benefit of her species.

In drawing aside the veil from the personal course of this celebrated lady, her biographer cannot exhibit any of the amusing varieties, which usually chequer the lives of successful authors: here are no brilliant conversational triumphs; no elaborate correspondence with the celebrated, or the great; no elegant malice; no anecdotes of patrons or rivals; none of fashion's idle pastime, nor of controversy's more idle business. Even the great events of Mrs. Radcliffe's life, the successive appearances of her novels, extend over a small part only of its duration. A stranger,

witnessing its calm tenor of happiness, would little guess to what high and solemn inventions some of its hours had been devoted; yet the more attentive observer would perceive, in her ordinary reflections and pleasures, indications of the power so marvellously exerted in her works. Fortunately, the means of watching the development of her faculties and tastes in her daily pursuits are supplied by copious memorandums written on several of her journeys; in which, among rich and vivid descriptions, many characteristic traits of sentiment and feeling are scattered, and her moral excellencies shine forth in a lustre which warms, while it enlightens.

Mrs. Radcliffe was born in London, in July 1764. She was the only child of William and Ann Ward, persons of great respectability, who, though engaged in trade, were allied to families of independent fortune and high character. She was descended from the family of the De Witts of Holland. It appears, from some of the documents in the hands of her friends, that a member of this distinguished house came to England in the reign of Charles the First, under the patronage of Government, to execute a plan for draining the fens of Lincolnshire. The project was interrupted by the political troubles which ensued; but its author remained in England, and passed the remainder of his days in a mansion near Hull. He brought with him an infant daughter, named Amelia, who was the mother of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's male ancestors. Her paternal grandmother was the sister of Cheselden, the celebrated Surgeon, of whose kindness her father retained a lively recollection. Her maternal grandmother was Ann Oates, the sister of Doctor Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard Jebb; and she was related, on her mother's side, to Dr, Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester, and to Dr. Halifax, Physician to the King. She was instructed in all womanly accomplishments after the earlier fashion of the time, but was not exercised in the classics, nor excited to pursue the studies necessary to form the modern heroine of conversations. In childhood, her intelligence and docility won the marked affection of her relatives, who moved in a somewhat higher sphere than her parents, and she passed much of her time at their houses. Her maternal uncle-in-law, the late Mr. Bentley, of the firm of Wedgewood and Bentley, was exceedingly partial to his niece, and invited her often to visit him at Chelsea, and afterwards at Turnham Green, where he resided. At his house she enjoyed the benefit of

seeing some persons of literary eminence, and many of accomplished manners. Mrs. Piozzi, Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Ord, and the gentleman called “Athenian Stuart,” were among the visitors.

Although the quickness and accuracy of Mrs Radcliffe’s powers of observation were early felt by her friends, it does not seem, that the peculiar bent of her genius was perceived till after her marriage. She had been educated among members of the old school, in manners and morals, whose notions while they prompted the most considerate kindness towards their young charge, did not perhaps tend to excite precocious intellect, especially in a female of diffidence, approaching to shyness. Something of the formality derived from education may be traced in her works, supplying a massive but noble and definite frame-work for her sombre and heroic pictures. There was also, in the feeling of old gentility, which most of her relatives cherished, a natural repugnance to authorship, which she never entirely lost even after her splendid success was ensured, and she had found herself the creator of a new class in English romances.

In the twenty-third year of her age, Miss Ward was married to Mr. William Radcliffe, a graduate of Oxford, who, at one period, intended to follow the profession of the law, and, with that view, kept several terms at one of the Inns of Court, but who afterwards changed his purpose. The ceremony was performed at Bath, where her parents then resided, and she afterwards proceeded with her husband to live in the neighbourhood of London. Encouraged by him, she soon began to employ her leisure in writing; and, as her distrust of herself yielded to conscious success, proceeded with great rapidity. Mr. Radcliffe, about this time, became the proprietor of “The English Chronicle,” and took an active share in the management of the paper, which, with other avocations, obliged him to be frequently absent from home till a late hour in the evening. On these occasions, Mrs. Radcliffe usually beguiled the else weary hours by her pen, and often astonished her husband, on his return, not only by the quality, but the extent of the matter she had produced, since he left her. The evening was always her favourite season for composition, when her spirits were in their happiest tone, and she was most secure from interruption. So far was she from being subjected to her own terrors, that she often laughingly presented to Mr. Radcliffe chapters, which he could not read alone without shuddering.

Although Mrs. Radcliffe was as far as possible removed from the slavery of superstitious fear, she took an eager interest in the work of composition, and was, for the time, completely absorbed in the conduct of her stories. The pleasures of painting have been worthily celebrated by men, who have been devoted to the art; but these can scarcely be regarded as superior to the enjoyments of a writer of romance, conscious of inventive power. If in the mere perusal of novels we lose our painful sense of the realities of “this unimaginable world,” and delightedly participate in the sorrows, the joys, and the struggles of the persons, how far more intensely must an authoress like Mrs. Radcliffe feel that outgoing of the heart, by which individuality is multiplied, and we seem to pass a hundred lives! She spreads out many threads of sympathy and lives along every line. The passions, the affections, the hopes of her character are essentially her’s; born out of her own heart; figured from the tracings of her own brain; and reflecting back again, in shape and form, the images and thoughts, which work indistinctly in the fancies of others. There is a perpetual exercise of that plastic power, which realizes the conceptions of the mind to itself, and gives back to it its own imaginations in “clear dream and solemn vision.” How delightful to trace the dawnings of innocent love, like the coming on of spring; to unveil the daily course of a peaceful life, gliding on like smooth water; to exhibit the passions in their high agitations and contests; to devise generous selfsacrifice in heroic thought; to pour on the wearied and palpitating heart overflowing happiness; to throw the mind forward to advanced age, and through its glass to take a mournful retrospect of departed joy, and pensively understand a mild and timely decay! No exertion of the faculties appears more enviable than that of forming the outline of a great tale, like “ The Mysteries of Udolpho;” bringing out into distinctness all the hints and dim pictures, which have long floated in the mind; keeping in view the catastrophe from the first, and the relations to it of the noblest scenes and most complicated adventures; and feeling already, as through all the pulses of-the soul, the curiosity, the terror, the pity and the admiration, which will be excited by the perusal in the minds of thousands and thousands of readers.

Incited by the intellectual recompense of such a pursuit, Mrs. Radcliffe gave her romances in quick succession to the world: — her first work,

“The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne,” was published in the year 1789; the “Sicilian Romance,” in 1790; the “Romance of the Forest,” in 1791; “The Mysteries of Udolpho,” in 1794; and “ The Italian,” in 1797. It is pleasing to trace the development of her resources and her gradual acquisition of mastery over them in these productions. The first, with a goodly number of old towers, dungeon keeps, subterraneous passages and hair-breadth escapes, has little of reality, or life; as if the author had caught a glimpse of the regions of romance from afar, and formed a sort of dreamy acquaintance with its recesses and glooms. In her next work, the “Sicilian Romance,” she seems to obtain a bird’s-eye view of all the surface of that delightful region — she places its winding vales and delicious bowers and summer seas before the eye of the mind — but is as yet unable to introduce the reader individually into the midst of the scene, to surround him with its luxurious air, and compel him to shudder at its terrors. In the “Romance of the Forest,” she approaches and takes up her very residence in the pleasant borders of the enchanted land; the sphere she chooses is small and the persons limited; but here she exercises clear dominion, and realizes every thing to the fancy. The “Mysteries of Udolpho” is the work of one, who has entered and possessed a mighty portion of that enchanted land; who is familiar with its massive towers and solemn glooms; — and who presents its objects of beauty, or horror, through a certain haze, which sometimes magnifies and sometimes veils their true proportions. In the Italian,” she occupies a less space; but, shining in golden light, her figures have the distinctness of terrible pictures; and her scenes, though perhaps less astounding in the aggregate, are singly more thrilling and vivid.

This splendid series of fictions became immediately popular with the numerous class of readers, who seek principally for amusement, and soon attracted the attention of the finer spirits of the age. Dr. Joseph Warton, the Head Master of Winchester School, who was far advanced in life when “The Mysteries of Udolpho” was published, told Mr. Robinson, the publisher, that, happening to meet with it, he was so fascinated, that he could not go to bed till he had finished it, and actually sat up the greater part of the night for the purpose. Mr. Sheridan spoke of the same work in terms of the highest eulogy. Mr. Fox, in a letter written to an intimate friend, soon after the publication of “The Italian,” spoke of Mrs. Radcliffe’s works in terms of high praise, and entered into a somewhat

particular examination and comparison of the respective merits of the “Mysteries of Udolpho” and “The Italian.’” The author of the Pursuits of Literature, not much given to commend, describes her as “ The mighty magician of The Mysteries of Udolpho, bred and nourished by the Florentine muses, in their sacred, solitary caverns, amid the paler shrines of Gothic superstition, and in all the dreariness of enchantment: a poetess, whom Ariosto would, with rapture, have acknowledged as

— La nudrita
Damigella Trivulzia al sacro speco.”

The pecuniary advantages, which she derived from her works, though they have been exaggerated, were considerable, according to the fashion of the times. For the “Mysteries of Udolpho” she received from Messrs. Robinson £500.; a sum then so unusually large for a work of fiction, that Mr. Cadell, who had great experience in such matters, on hearing the statement, offered a wager of £10. that it was untrue. By the Italian, although considerably shorter, she acquired about the sum of £800.

The reputation, which Mrs. Radcliffe derived from her writings did not draw her from the retirement, in which they were written. Although, as she had no children, the duties of a family did not engross her attention, she declined entering into the society she was so well calculated to adorn. Nothing but entire reciprocity in all the accompaniments of society could satisfy her ideas of the independence it became her to preserve. She would, indeed, have conferred honour and obligation on any circle, which she could prevail on herself to join; but a scrupulous self-respect, almost too nice to be appreciated in these days, induced her sedulously to avoid the appearance of reception, on account of her literary fame. The very thought of appearing in person as the author of her romances shocked the delicacy of her mind. To the publication of her works she was constrained by the force of her own genius; but nothing could tempt her to publish *herself;* or to sink for a moment, the gentlewoman in the novelist. She felt also a distaste to the increasing: familiarity of modern manners, to which she had been unaccustomed in her youth; and, though remarkably free and cheerful with her relatives and intimate friends, she preferred the more formal

politeness of the old school among strangers. Besides these reasons for preserving her seclusion, she enjoyed, with peculiar relish, the elegant pleasures it gave her the means of partaking with her husband. She chose at once the course she would pursue, and, finding that her views met the entire concurrence of Mr. Radcliffe, adhered to it through life. Instead of lavishing time and money on entertainments, the necessity for which, according to her feelings, was connected with a participation in general society, she sought the comforts of residing in airy and pleasant situations, of unbroken leisure and frequent travelling; and, as her income was increased by the death of relatives, she retained the same plan of living, only extending its scale of innocent luxury.

In the summer of 1794, subsequent to the publication of “The Mysteries of Udolpho,” Mrs. Radcliffe accompanied her husband on a tour through Holland and the western frontier of Germany, returning down the Rhine. This was the first and only occasion, on which she quitted England; though the vividness of her descriptions of Italy, Switzerland and the south of France, in which her scenes are principally laid, induced a general belief, that she had visited those countries. So strongly was this conviction impressed on the public mind, that a recent traveller of celebrity referred to her descriptions as derived from personal observation; and it was asserted in the “Edinburgh Review” for May 1823, that she accompanied her husband to Italy, when he was attached to one of the British Embassies, and that “it was on that occasion she imbibed the taste for picturesque scenery, and the obscure and wild superstitions of mouldering castles, of which she has made so beautiful a use in her romances.” After their return from the Continent, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe made a tour to the English Lakes, and were highly gratified by the excursion. On these journeys, Mrs. Radcliffe almost invariably employed snatches of time at the inns where she rested, in committing to paper the impressions and events of the day, which she could afterwards review at leisure — a happy mode of prolonging those vivid pleasures of life, for which she had a fine relish. Such a habit, when it does not become too frequently introspective, or “sickly o’er” our enjoyments with “the pale cast of thought,” tends to impart a unity to our intellectual being. It enables us to live over again the unbroken line of existence; to gather up the precious drops of happiness, that they be not lost; and, in the last moments of feeling and thought, to

find “a glass which shows us many more.” After Mrs. Radcliffe’s return, she was prevailed on to give to her notes a regular form, and to publish them in a quarto volume, which met with a favourable reception.

The subsequent excursions of Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe were of less extent, and chiefly directed to the southern coast of England. Always once, and generally twice in the year, they took a journey through some beautiful or interesting country, limiting themselves to no particular course, but enjoying the perfect freedom, which was most agreeable to their tastes. Mrs. Radcliffe continued her little diary of these pleasant rovings, but without the slightest idea of publication, from which she generally shrunk as an evil. Some specimen of these journals are now first presented to the reader, which will exhibit her mind in its undress — show her feelings as they were undisguised — and display her tact of observation and descriptive power, as existing simply for her own gratification. She always travelled with a considerable number of books, and generally wrote, while Mr. Radcliffe derived amusement from reading them.

The following notes are extracted from memoranda made on a little tour to the coast of Kent, in the autumn of 1797. They appear to have been written at the Inn at Hythe, while Mr. Radcliffe rode to Folkstone.

“September 1st. Began our tour to the seaside. Between Gravesend and Rochester, the road, though farther from the river than about Northfleet, commands delightful views of it, expanding to great breadth, and in length reaching towards the Nore; ranges of distant hills in Essex and Kent finally close the prospect. The shores green and rich, and the water covered with sails tacking in all directions. Sweet afternoon. Continual villages; neat and pleasant country houses, with lawns and shrubberies and high-walled kitchen gardens. Views of the river. The dignity of these views now much increased; the distant hills run out into long ridges, and fold one behind the other. The river often seen between green-dipping hills, and then opening in vast majesty. Descended towards Rochester: solemn appearance of the castle, with its square ghastly walls and their hollow eyes, rising over a bank of the Medway, *g* rey and massive and floorless; nothing remaining but the shell. From the bridge looked on the right, up the Medway, winding broad between woody picturesque heights,

sometimes shelving into points. On the left, the river busy with shipping, as it winds round the town, towards the Thames, and very broad.

“Made our way in the gig through the long narrow streets, and then, leaving Chatham on the left, mounted a very steep road, having wide views of Chatham, the docks and shipping, the new barracks — a town themselves — rising up a hill, with fortifications above its green mounds, with cannon and two small artificial hills, with flags. A great prospect, but too broken, and full of scars and angles of fortifications and other buildings and of excavations, to be quite pleasing. Further on, mounted Chatham Hill; the view wonderfully grand and various. The vale of the Medway, sweeping from Rochester to Sheerness, and the Nore, with the Essex hills beyond the Thames, bounding the scene to the north-west; one of the richest green landscapes, with wood and villages, I ever saw. The Thames itself visible for many miles, running sometimes almost parallel with the green, rich vale of the Medway, till it pours its broad waves into the sea opposite Sheerness. The fortress lying low upon this side of the Medway, with its shipping distinctly seen by the help of a good glass; the sea, animated with ships beyond Southend, visible on the Thames opposite to Sheerness, almost upon the open sea: knew a sloop to be one, which we had seen sailing on the Thames by Greenhithe. Proceeded to Sittingbourn, through orchards, pastures and fragrant villages; the road frequently rose and fell, but the prospects were not considerable, except at Sittingbourn, an open, pleasant town.

“September *2* . — Set out about eleven for Canterbury. The road very hilly, but through a most rich country of orchards, hop-grounds and pastures, villages and pretty houses, with lawns and gardens frequently occurring. Feversham, a mile on the left; saw it with its arm of the sea, and the sea itself, at a distance. Soon after began the long ascent of Boughton Hill; the summit rewarded us with a prodigious prospect. The hill itself wild with fern and coppice wood. Many woods also in the near prospect, intermingled with surprising richness of pasture, orchard and hops. Descending the other side, saw the tower of Canterbury cathedral, cresting a hill beyond; the body of the cathedral and the city not yet appearing; the tower became visible again at intervals, and, at length, the city, with its ancient gates and buildings. The cathedral itself looked very tall and solemn, like a spectre of ancient times, and seemed to hint of what it had

witnessed. As we approached the gate, supported by octagonal towers, a long line of horses and soldiers poured from the high narrow arch. Proceeded, after dinner, to Dover over Barham Downs. Views into rich little valleys on the right; each village having its tall grey steeple. Noble mansions and parks frequently on the rising grounds.

“September 3. — Walked on the beach, watching the retiring and returning waves, and attending to the bursting thunder of the surge.

“Afterwards stood on a fortified point below the castle, immediately and high over the beach, commanding a vast marine horizon, with a long tract of the French coast, a white line bounding the blue waters. Below, on the right, Dover curves picturesquely along the sea-bay; the white and green cliffs rising closely over it, except near the castle, where they give place to hills, that open to a green valley, with enclosures and a pretty village, beyond which it winds away. The most grand and striking circumstances, as we stood on the point, were — the vast sea-view — the long shades on its surface of soft green, deepening exquisitely into purple; but, above all, that downy tint of light blue, that sometimes prevailed over the whole scene, and even faintly tinged the French coast, at a distance. Sometimes, too, a white sail passed in a distant gloom, while all between was softly shadowed; the cliffs above us broken and encumbered with fortifications; the sea viewed beyond them, with vessels passing from behind; the solemn sound of the tide, breaking immediately below, and answered, as it were, at measured intervals, along the whole coast; this circumstance inexpressibly grand; the sound more solemn and hollow than when heard on the beach below. A fleet of merchantmen, with a convoy, passed and spread itself over the channel.

“Afternoon. — Walked towards Shakspeare’s Cliff; the fleet still in view. Looked down from the edge of the cliffs on the fine red gravel margin of the sea. Many vessels on the horizon and in mid-channel. The French coast, white and high, and clear in the evening gleam. Evening upon the sea becoming melancholy, silent and pale. A leaden-coloured vapour rising upon the horizon, without confounding the line of separation; the ocean whiter, till the last deep twilight falls, when all is one gradual, inseparable, undistinguishable, grey.

“September 4. — Morning fine, calm, but become slightly cloudy. Walked to the topmost point of Shakspeare’s Cliff, which appears a huge

face of chalk over the sea. The way through fields; the path constantly rising, and leading near the edge of the cliffs; leaned sometimes over the railing, and looked down the precipices and on the blue sea; little boats and a sloop below. Coast of France visible; though always most clearly seen about sunset, when the western rays strike horizontally upon it, and light up all its features. Proceeding to the point of the cliff, had no longer the protection of a railing; bushes of hawthorn, mossed with yellow, alone fence the precipice. Putting our hands on the ground, we peeped over, ledge below ledge, abrupt down. Many of the ledges hung with plants and bushes. On the east, Dover — the bay — the castle — cliffs beyond — the boundless sea. In front, France, (Calais not visible,) a long tract sinking away to the West, and leaving a wider sea. Westward, charming view towards Beachy Head, the high and farthest promontory; black points of land, or rather low promontories, running out, one beyond another, into the sea; hills retiring to some margin, wild, heathy and broken; then the coast makes a fine sweep; and, after forming a vast bay, stretches out in the long, low point of land, called Dungeness, on which stands a lighthouse. Within this fine bay, Folkstone was visible, with Sandgate castle and village on the margin; then Hythe, a little more removed and higher; then an old castle, higher still and further from the shore; Romney, with its long marshes, beyond; and far beyond all, the high lands of Beachy Head, so eminent and bold, as scarcely to be known for a continuation of the same coast. The cliffs decline towards Folkstone, and there are none beyond, on this side of Beachy Head; but at some distance, from the shore, rise broken and wild, though small hills. The best circumstances in the view are, first, the fine dark points and then the noble sweep of the coast, the dark levels of the marshes contrasting with the blue sea they skirt. Crows took wing for their nests in the cliffs below us. Thought of “ the midway air no sea-fowl. The white surf beating far along the curving margin below to where other chalky points uprear themselves. Within land, the hills are brown and bleak and broken. The castle hills, on the land side, scarred by roads and far from picturesque; steep chalk hollows among the heath.

“About half past five in the afternoon, set off for Hythe, ten miles, chiefly along the high sea-cliffs, except that about a mile from Dover, we wound among brown hills, and, the cliffs sometimes sinking a little, we had catches of the sea and of France, between green dipping heights. Near

Folkstone, descended a very long chalk hill, whence an enchanting view towards Beachy Head; the hills, retiring at some distance from the shore, open a curving bosom, and show towns and villages at their feet. Glad to get through the narrow steep streets of Folkstone, though the town is well situated. Proceeded in the dusk for Sandgate. Descended upon it — a white, new village, straggling along the beach, on each side of the wide road. Green hills rising all about it, and the place wide and free and pleasant; the sea beach appearing at every step between the houses, on one side, and as easy an access to the hills, on the other side. On the beach an ancient castle, of several round towers, ivied and clustered together, and built low like Sandwich castle. Soldiers on guard at the gate; thick walls; cannon; all on the outside was green sod. The village being full, proceeded through deepening dusk to Hythe, a mile and a half farther, the road leading along the beach, at the foot of green hills; the sea appearing to flow even with us. Cottages by the road side and people straggling all the way. Came late to Hythe, and slept there. Its ancient church stands high, is a sea-mark and a picturesque object, its grey towers and gothic windows appearing among wood, and having a hill behind them."

In the autumn of 1798, Mrs. Radcliffe, accompanied by her husband, visited Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and Winchester. Her journal on this little tour, which she seems to have particularly enjoyed, is too minute to give entire; but we select the following specimens.

"September 20 — Set out in a beautiful afternoon for Portsmouth. Ascending to Esher by twilight, heard the bells sounding, with most melancholy sweetness, from the summit, and strengthening as we approached: every thing pensive, and tranquil.

"September 21, 1798. Sweet fresh morning. Left Cobham between seven and eight. Passed under a picturesque bridge uniting the grounds of Paine's hill; high, rough, broken banks, topped with lofty trees, that hang over a light rustic bridge. Then enter upon a wide scene of heath, skirted here and there with rich distances; afterwards, many miles of heath, of a dull purple and dusty iron brown, with, sometimes, sudden knolls planted with firs; sometimes distances let in between bold hills. After Guildford, a large neat old town, and pretty Godalmin, at the end of a green level; steep hills to Haslemere and beyond it, but opening to vast prospects: — again, many miles of purple and rusty heath, with scarcely a tree or a hut. Nearer to

Horndon, the country, though it continues to be heathy, is upon a grander scale, opening to distant ridges of high swelling hills, that probably overlook the sea; the hills in Hampshire, on the right, more cultivated; those in Sussex vast, sweeping and downy. Fine sunset from under clouds; the strong gleam almost blinded us as we descended in a hollow; the high, heathy banks receiving the full effulgence, while all below was gloom. The rays had already become much fainter, as we wound up a chalky precipice of great sweep and length, with steep downs rising over it; sheep on the summit showing themselves against the sky. A fine moon rose, and lighted us over the downs to Horndon. Heard only the sheep-bells, as the shepherd lad was folding his flocks, and they came down from the hills. Slept at Horndon.

"September 22. Showers, but cleared up to a fine morning. Passed over two or three miles of the beautiful forest of Bere, the most picturesque of any we have seen in England, breaking in sweet woodland glades, all around to other hills and valleys, with patches of green-sward and heath; and to the bold ridges, that extend to the sea. A cottage, here and there, under the trees, with its grey curling smoke. As we mount Portsdown hill, views, on the left, towards Chichester and the bay of the sea; on the right, towards Southampton; retrospect of Bere forest in the valley, and ascending among the Hampshire hills most beautifully. Having reached the summit of Portsdown hill, the channel, the blue, high, sweeping ridge of the Isle of Wight, Spithead, Portsmouth, with its long embankments and spacious harbour, spread before our eyes. This view, though very grand, was not so striking as I expected. The hills do not advance near enough to the shore to hang over it, nor are they bold and broken in their shapes. We are not allowed to look down abruptly on the sea and the Isle of Wight; but view the first at four miles distance, after the eye has gradually passed over the flat lands below, and the landlocked harbours, which break the scene with comparative littlenesses. The shipping at Spithead appeared beyond the town, on the left, where a low coast extends to the Chichester river, and towards St. Helens on the main sea. The Isle of Wight rises immediately in front of the picture. Farther is the chalky ridge, that sinks towards the Southampton water, and admits within its concave a tract of low coast, that extends towards the channel.

“Descend, and pass through the village of Cosham, at its foot. The road now becomes animated, and shows symptoms of a populous place; carts, coaches, horsemen, private carriages, soldiers, frequent signs and dusty air, instead of the lonely wilderness and breezy freshness of the hills and forest. Pass Portsea bridge, fortified and guarded, and so to Portsmouth, between other fortifications and the deeply-arched gates of the town. The ditches, the turfed embankments, crowned with rows of trees, reminded me of Bommel, in Holland. On the right, a view over the harbour, with huge, black prison-ships moored upon it. Passed through the long dusty old suburbs. The town itself old, level and somewhat mean, except the Highstreet, and about the seaward ramparts. Drove to the Fountain, a large and good inn, but could hardly get a room to dine in, as a West India and a Lisbon fleet were waiting to sail in a day or two. Went to the ramparts over the sea, crowded with officers of the army and navy, their wives and friends, and many well-dressed people attending to see the guns fired, in honour of the coronation. From this place the shipping at Spithead in front, and the Isle of Wight, with the whole channel, are enchanting. Returned to the Inn.

“After dinner we left the horse and chaise at the inn, and walked down to the busy, dirty place, called the Point, where we got into a wherry, and so went over the harbour to the decked passage-boat, that was to carry us to the Isle of Wight. Adverse wind, but not much of it. Sat on the deck; a fine view of the town, the hospital, the forts and harbour, as we sailed out: the sea not rough. Hear the *he-hoes* of the sailors, afar in the channel, and the boatswain’s shrill whistle. Passed through a part of the fleet; saw Sir Sidney Smith’s fine ship, of immense size, with many other large ones round it. A cloudy sunset, but a gleam came out that fell upon the distant town and harbour, lighted up the sea, and touched the dark polished sides of all the ships; glanced athwart the western hills of the island, of which we were now gaining a view. Sailed down the channel for Cowes. The breeze gradually sunk, and we were becalmed. A full September moon rose, and shed its radiance on the waters. Glided along the woody steeps of the island, and saw many a sweeping bay and obscure valley beyond. Reached Cowes about nine; the approach to it, in a beautiful bay, striking, with its summer lights illuminating many windows, and its houses seeming to rise steeply from the shore; many vessels at anchor in the bay;

its slopes of scattered wood and pasture traced darkly round the bright clear water, and opening to an obscure valley. Landed at West Cowes, and went to the Vine Inn.

“September 23. Lovely day. Walked down to the shore and to the castle, a low grey tower on a rocky point, washed by the tide and shadowed by lofty elms; sentinels pacing under them, round the fort; fine view of Cowes and the bay. Thence mounted the rising ground over the shore, and walked a mile on the Yarmouth road, the views opening between trees and hedges to the dark lines of the New Forest; the Southampton water just opposite; eastward, Portsmouth faintly seen and the shipping at Spithead; the masts of the ships at Cowes caught among the trees below; the scene changing at every step, with the winding road; sometimes quite shut out, then smiling in the softest colours. All was in gradual shades of blue; the calm sea below, the shores and distant hills, stretching along a cloudless blue sky. Innumerable vessels and little sails, whose whiteness was just softened with the azure tint. It is impossible to express the beauty of those soft melting tints, that painted the distant perspective, towards Spithead, where sea and sky united, and where the dark masts and shapes of shipping, drawing themselves on the horizon, gave this softness its utmost effect.

“Returned to dine at the Vine. Hired a good sailing-boat, to take us to Ryde; and, after dinner, sailed from the harbour. The points, that form the horns of the crescent, are of rough, dark rock and shrub. On a brow, over a wood, rose the picturesque tower of a modern castle, which we heard had lately been the residence of a sister of Admiral Macbride. Glided with gentle breeze along the quiet and beautiful shores of the island, undulating in gentle slopes, covered with woods, to the water’s edge; sometimes the lighter green of meadows and pastures stretched to the very bank, with here and there a cottage, a village church, or some ornamented house on an ascent among trees, above which rose the main hills of the island. The shore seldom runs out into points, but winds into easy bays, hung with woods, sometimes opening into sweet valleys, at others, advancing gently, with all their “green delights,” to meet the passing sails. The coast immediately opposite is uninteresting and flat; the chalky ridge of Portsdown too distant and uniform to be grand. In the retrospect, indeed, the New Forest spread a dark line along the sea, and the western hills of

the island, near Yarmouth, waved along the horizon, and two pointed summits of the Isle of Purbeck folded in behind them, making it difficult to discern which were the different coasts. Sea-fowl showing their white wings in the sun, as they circled over the waters. The breeze increased, and we sailed finely among the now roughening, yet still green and almost transparent waves, along the shore. About half way, the coast returns into a green recess, and the waters wind away among the hills verdant with thick woods and enclosures. Here the Governor has built a picturesque tower above his woods. Hence extend along the shore the fine woods of the rector of a village on an ascent, where the tower of the church, almost hid in wood, insists upon being painted. Here imagination has nothing to do; we have only to preserve the impression of the living picture on the memory, in its own soft colours.

"Vessels of all sizes in the channel; the sailors' *he-ho* , the shrill whistle, and the rattle of cordage, as the sails were altered.

"Reached Ryde, about sunset. The town, among trees, rises from the shore up a long hill.

"At the inn, though very neat, accomodations were so inadequate, that we resolved to proceed in an open boat, which was about to return to Portsmouth. After taking a hasty dish of very good tea, went down a rough causeway, where many people were hurrying to the same boat, and such a crowd collected as alarmed me. A small party was, however, soon made up for a second boat; when, with little sails and two oars, we launched among the peaceful waters; tinged, on one side of the horizon with the red glow of sunset, and brightening on the other, under a broad moon rising over the ships at Spithead. Passed through the fleet. Heard voices talking far off over the dim waves, and sometimes laughter and joviality; especially as we passed near a large ship, where lights in the great cabin high above, told of the Captain and cheer. Distant lights appearing from the ships successively, as the evening deepened, like glowworms, and dotting the waters far around. As we drew near the shore, the music of French horns sounded with faint and melancholy sweetness; discovered at last to come from Monckton Fort. Landed after an hour and a half, at the rampart steps. Walk by moonlight on the rampart. Supped and slept at the Fountain, after a day the most delightful of the whole tour."

From Portsmouth Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe proceeded by Winchester to London. The following is her notice of the approach to Winchester, of the City and the Cathedral, “Saw the City lying deep among the hollows, sheltered from the winds by bare hills, which half conceal the town at their feet. The King’s house, once really a palace, with new houses, conspicuous cm rising ground. Found out at last, through the dusk, the venerable Cathedral, with it’s long roofs and very low tower, among fine old elms; a recess deep and retired. The streets clean and quiet; not a student visible. This decorum and neatness form a curious contrast to the bustle and tumult of Portsmouth, sending forth her people to the whole world; while Winchester seems to be so much withdrawn from it. Went to the George, a noble inn: sat in a part of the Assembly room, severed off. Angelica Kauffman’s drawings at each end. Walked by moonlight up the Highstreet; good, terminated by a fine old gate. Led by the sound of martial music to the court of the barracks in the old palace. The suburbs old and narrow.

“September *25*. Sweet morning. Rose soon, and -went, before breakfast, to see the Cathedral, a very large ancient fabric, not highly ornamented without. Walks round it of most noble, tall elms, forming almost a perfect archway and as high as the roof of the Church. Old men employed to weed them. The Cathedral, we were told, is fifteen feet longer than any other in England, but it did not appear to the eye so long as that of Canterbury. Nave of great height; painted windows poor, but the choir affords the most beautiful *coup d’œil* I ever saw; the carving of the dark stalls, and of the pulpit exquisitely fine; but the white filigranne-work of the altar is as delicate to the eye as point-lace. The altar-piece, by West, is Lazarus rising from the dead. The face well expresses the wanness and sharpness of death; but it might have been much more descriptive of reviving life, beginning to steal upon the langour of death; and of surprize and joyful hope, on beholding our SAVIOUR. The attitude of Lazarus is indeed such, that he might be taken for a person dying lather than one returning to life. The countenance of our SAVIOUR is full of placid benevolence; but the action should have been more expressive of command — of command, without effort. The principal female figure, who supports Lazarus, is clear, beautiful and natural; she looks up to our SAVIOUR, with tears of awe and gratitude; but the grief and anxiety she has suffered are not yet entirely

chased from her countenance by joy and thankfulness; their impression w as too deep to be suddenly effaced, though the cause of them is removed. The faces of the spectators do not sufficiently speak astonishment, awe and adoration, except that of one, seen remotely and obscurely, as if pressing forward more fully to ascertain the fact."

On the 10th of July, 1800, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe left home on a tour to the southern coast. The first evening they reached Capel; — after this the Journal proceeds.

"July 11th. — Fine airy morning. Set off at ten. Hilly road, often narrow and shady. Upon the eminences views over the tops of oaks to mountainous hills and promontories, covered nearly to their summits with thick, woody inclosures; whenever the bank-trees opened, caught blue, peeping hill-tops, or mountainous lines, coloured with a lovely blueish haze, and seen enchantingly beyond the dark, tufted foliage of majestic oak. Passed several open, pleasant villages. Every where, vegetation seems in the utmost luxuriance; every cottage-window arboured with rose, or woodbine. The South Downs, at a distance, heaved up their high, blue lines, as ramparts worthy of the sublimity of the ocean, from whose power they seemed to guard the island. Dined at a little inn in a village — Billinghurst. Terrible road after this; flinty, sandy, and over frequent hills, but with some recompensing prospects. As we drew nearer the South Downs, distinguished the smooth green of their swelling summits from the dark woods below, and in the hollows of the hills, over which the evening sun threw rich lights and shadows. Abundance of wood round the villages; good gardens to the cottages.

"Came at length to Bury, only four miles from Arundel; but our horse wanted rest after so toilsome a road, and we drank tea, before beginning to mount one of the prodigious hills we had long seen. Came at last to the fine downs on its summit, whence a world seemed to lie before us. Grandeur, grace and beauty united in this wonderful view. We Could just distinguish doubtfully in the twilight, at great distance, the channel between the coast and the Isle of Wight, a line of light upon the scene, with faint cloudy lands of the island beyond. We soon entered upon the

domain of Arundel, the road winding finely among its pompous woods and rough forest lawns. Partly by the tediousness of the ascent and partly by our delay upon the summit, these four miles occupied an hour and a half. We did not see the castle from the road, but the woods and the remains of old gateways were perceptible. A church of great extent, apparently old and grand. The main street of the town fearfully steep. Reached an excellent inn, about half past nine.

“July 12. Fine day, but very hot. Went in the morning to see the castle, which stands on an eminence, near the town, about four miles from the sea. An irregular avenue leads to a solemn old gateway very deep and bending like those at Mentz, which, with the ruinous tower over it, mantled with ivy, looked well in the dark perspective of the trees. Low arched doors in the gateway, at the sides; loops for archers and abundance of room for them in the immense thickness of the walls.

“The library is in a long gallery, where hang some portraits; among them James the Second; his first wife, Lord Clarendon’s daughter, handsome, but with an air of discontent; Elizabeth of Bavaria and her husband; two Cardinals, one of them a Howard. In many of the rooms, the walls, wherever a window occurs, are lined with dark mahogany, which forms the cases into frames, as it were, for the landscape seen through them, but in general looks brown and poor: little wood visible from this side of the castle. We passed through several noble apartments, not quite finished, and others indifferently furnished; the walls of several, however, wainscoted, chair-high, with beautiful mahogany. The pillars and Gothic arch-work of the music-gallery exquisitely carved.

“Monday, July 14. — Cool, cloudy morning. Set off, at eleven, for Worthing. A flat, uninteresting coast. Drove partly over the sands, the tide being down. Larks singing among the corn, near the shore. A sea-gull fishing in the salt-pools, near the sands. Within a few miles of Worthing discovered the sweep of grey downs about Brighton, that form a background to the large bay; within which, Brighton, Worthing, &c are seated. Soon after, distinguished the dark masts of vessels lying before Worthing, some of which, seen upon the lighter grey of the distant hills, forming that fine bay, were picturesque, and seemed to be of consequence, but proved to be only small sloops. Horses and a carriage upon the sands informed us of our nearer approach to Worthing, which stands well upon

the beach; the tide out, and a fine plain of sand spread before the village. It was animated by groups of the busy and the idle; little boats along the edge of the tide, others at anchor: altogether it was a very lively and amusing scene. A fleet of ships, said to be transports, convoyed by two men-of-war, came upon the distance, and clouded the horizon for some time, but were too far off to be interesting. Dined at a pleasant hotel near the beach, with a grass-plot before it. Amused with numerous parties, who had come from Brighton in sociables, chariots and gigs, to dine, and who exhibited themselves on the grass-plot under our window. After dinner, and after seeing the tide flow up the beach, very high, set off for Little Hampton, by an inner road, through pleasant, shady lanes, between corn fields, with a range of distant hills on one side, their feet darkened with wood. Delightful afternoon. After a sweet ride, met the sea again, at the Beach House, where we drank tea, supped, and slept.

"July 15. Lovely day. Left Little Hampton about one for Worthing. Could not go by the sands, the tide being too near. Stopped to dine at the village of Terring, at a small house with a garden. After dinner, walked up a high hill to see a celebrated prospect. Gained the summit of the sheep-down, and stood on the top, whence we saw the whole compass of the horizon and such a stretch of sea and landscape! The whole southern sky, and the blue sea, extending from the Isle of Wight (its faint blue-lands rising towards the west) to the white face of what we took to be Beachy Head, but afterwards learned to be Seaford Cliffs: beneath, lay sloping towards the sea, a landscape of exquisite hues, of corn and thick hedge-rows of woods and intermingled villages.

Within the scope of the bay, towards Beachy Head, Worthing, Shoreham, Brighton, on the sea edge, backed with downs. Farther on, the hills begin to whiten, and rise into the high face guarding the entrance of Newhaven river, which seems to fall into a fine bay. To the west, Little Hampton, the woods, town and castle of Arundel; further on, amidst a long tract of woody country, the spire of Chichester Cathedral; further still, the high point of Portsdown-hill, but not Portsmouth. The whole of the Isle of Wight clearly within view; the ridge of hills divided into three parts. Spithead may be distinguished, it is said, at times. To the north, we looked down into woody valleys at the feet of the Downs, and saw Mr. Shelly's new mansion, among his fine woods.

“Went back to our cottage inn delighted. Went to Worthing to tea. The tide just turning, the blue sea flowing almost even with our windows. Parties again from Brighton at our inn. Lovely evening. When the tide was lower, the sands were gay with fine company. In another part, a cricket match going on upon the sands. Fishing vessels at anchor. Saw the Isle of Wight under the evening light, more distinctly in some respects, than before, yet like a dark cloud rising out of the sea.”

From Worthing, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe went by short journeys to Seaford. The following reflections, prompted by the “melancholy greatness of nature,” on a little excursion by the shore, will strikingly illustrate the thoughtful and pious cast of the writer.

“July 19. — Went to see the rural village of Alfriston, over such a road as I never saw before; and leading over such hills! Two men helped the chaise down one of them. Some finely spreading oaks about the village, which stands on an eminence in a green valley backed by grey downs. Dined at a very old inn; had seats brought on the ground, before and after dinner. Walked the greatest part of the way back to Seaford; saw the sun set behind one of the vast hills. The silent course over this great scene awful — the departure melancholy. Oh GOD! thy great laws will one day be more fully known by thy creatures; we shall more fully understand Thee and ourselves. The GOD of order and of all this and of far greater grandeur, the Creator of that glorious sun, which never fails in its course, will not neglect us, His intelligent, though frail creatures, nor suffer us to perish, who have the consciousness of our mortal fate long before it arrives, and of HIM. He, who called us first from nothing, can again call us from death into life.

“In this month, on the 24th of July, my dear father died two years since: on the 14th of last March, my poor mother followed him: I am the last leaf on the tree! The melancholy greatness with which I was surrounded this evening, made me very sensible of this.”

From Seaford the tourists proceeded to Eastbourne, and visited Beachy Head. The journal contains the following short description, which places a striking scene before us, with a few strokes of a masterly pencil.

“July 20. — Dined at the little village of Friston, seated deep down between immense hills, in a valley, that about a mile off opens to the sea, at the dangerous place called Burling Gap. A Prussian captain, whose

vessel had been wrecked at the foot of Beacky, as our landlord called it, had been nine weeks at our poor little inn. The village had been almost buried in the snow, which came down upon the village from the steep sides of the hills; then the thaw nearly overwhelmed it. From the summit of a hill, on our way to Eastbourne, immense retrospect of sea and land. Surprising appearance of the sea, which seemed to rise so high, that it could scarce be distinguished from clouds; ships looked like birds in the sky. Nothing seen but great and simple objects — the round sea — the huge uncultivated headlands."

The ascent of Beachy Head, and the view from it, are described at some length in the Journal; but the following scene on the shore is more peculiar and striking.

"July 23. Walked to the shore and along it, with a hope of having some sight of the sea — front of Beachy Head from beneath it, though four or five miles off. The beach impassable by any sort of carriage. A shore of ruins under the cliffs, which gradually rise from what is called the Wish-House, a small white building standing sweetly near the beach, to the summit of the Cape. Large blocks of granite imbedded on the shore, and extending to the waves, which rage and foam over them, giving one dreadful ideas of shipwreck. Sometimes, patches of gravelly sand, or pebbles, soon ending against masses of granite, or chalk, between which it is difficult, and not always possible to walk; some of them must be stepped upon. Within half a mile of the great front, unable to proceed farther; sat down on a block, wearied out, desiring William to go on; he was soon hid by a turn of the cliffs. Almost frightened at the solitude and vastness of the scene, though *Chance?* was with me. Tide almost out; only sea in front; white cliffs rising over me, but not impending; strand all around a chaos of rocks and fallen cliffs, far out into the waves; sea-fowl wheeling and screaming; all disappeared behind the point, beyond which, is the great cliff; but we had doubled point after point, in the hope that this would be the next, and had been much deceived in the distances by these great objects; after one remote point gained, another and another succeeded, and still the great cliff was unattained; the white precipices beautifully varied with plants, green, blue, yellow and poppy. Wheat-ears flew up often from the beach: *Chance* pursued them. At length, William returned, having been nearly, but not quite, in front of the great

promontory. Slowly and laboriously we made our way back along the beach, greatly fatigued, the day exceedingly hot, the horizon sulphurous, with lowering clouds; thunder rolled faintly at a distance."

The same afternoon, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe continued their tour to Hastings. The following is the picturesque view of their journey from Bexhill to Hastings, in the evening.

"From Bexhill, descended between the high, shrubby banks of lanes, so narrow, that the wheels seemed to fill the passage; in some places a horse could not have passed; we met no carriage, or we must have backed a great way. Breathing honeysuckles on the banks; deep twilight. Heard the sea frequently on our right when the wheels stopped. We had before passed Pevensey levels and the town, with its fine old castle: towers in ruins. On our approach, it reminded one of Newark castle. Near eleven, before we reached Hastings; no moon; starlight; milky-way very lucid; seemed to rise out of the sea. Solemn and pleasing night-scene. Glowworms, in great numbers, shone silently and faintly on the dewy banks, like something supernatural. Judgment of Shakspeare in selecting this image to assist the terrific impression in his ghost-scene. May be called earth-stars. The coast patrole passed us. How far to Hastings? Three miles. Farther on had a narrow escape: horse and chaise suddenly plunged down a bank into the pebbles; nearly overtuned. Happily our horse stood quite still, after the shock, and until we had ascertained the rugged course we were in; I walked the rest of the way. Pass under grand, dark rocks, disjointed and starting up in splintered points, and huge masses. These rocks, near the beach and over the road continue to where the houses open."

From Hastings Mrs. Radcliffe proceeded along the coast to Dover, to which place she was extremely partial, and thence by Fever sham to London. After minutely detailing her little adventures, she thus concludes her journey: —

"In all our tour saw nothing so fine and beautiful as the views of sea and land from the Downs over the East Bourne. The sweet repose of the landscape and sea-bay to Hastings, and the grandeur of the various views, on all sides between the valleys of the South Downs, and even above these summits, circling nearly the whole horizon, with soft blue waves."

In the autumn of this year, Mrs. Radcliffe spent a fortnight at Little Hampton, and returning by Haslemere, thus describes the country

immediately southward of that place.

“Three miles of continual ascent, or descent of almost tremendous hills, long and steep opening to vast distances, now obscured in ruin, but sublime in their obscurity —

‘ These high, wild hills and rough uneven roads,
Drag out our miles and make them wearisome.’

CYMBELINE.

“This is the country, from which Collins drew his first ideas, and fed his early taste for the wild and the grand.

‘ O! vales and wild-woods, would he say,
In yonder grave your Druid lies,”

COLLINS.

“Have never seen such wild woody mountains before in England; they resemble the forests of Wetteravia more than any I have seen, but with this difference, that there the mountains are more pointing, abrupt and rocky, and that here the road often winds round the edge of the hills into deep and most picturesque glades, where comfortable cottages lie snug beneath noble trees, and ruddy children play under the branches, among the huge timber felled on the ground, the Woodman’s implements and the thatched hovel. Sylvan, or other rural industry appeared in every hamlet. Clouds of smoke from places, where wood was charred, sometimes darkened the air. This is the most woody tract in Sussex, and probably in England. The eastern end of the country has no wood: the immense hills stand bare in all their grandeur.”

The following notes are extracted from the. Journal of a Tour, made in the autumn of 1801, to Southampton, Lymington, and the Isle of Wight. The two first days’ journey supply no matters of interest: in the afternoon of the third day, 29th Sept the travellers thus approach the beautiful neighbourhood of Southampton:

“At length, the blue hill tops of the Isle of Wight appeared faintly on the horizon, over the stretching forest masses of the near scene. At the sixth mile-stone, entered a part of the New Forest; beautiful woods and glades; thick trees shadowing the road; wherever the woods opened, especially on the right and in front, other rich masses and others still beyond, rose pompously. One of the perspectives in front particularly fine, as we saw our road descending among the deep woods, and other woods rising up the hills and crowning the bold summit of an eminence, that seemed to rear itself over all the forest. The deep gloom of stormy clouds and fleeting lights of sunshine extremely various; the sun often shedding a misty glory over the solemn woods in the west, while sudden and awful shadows dwelt wide over other summits. Passed a most picturesque hamlet of green mossed cottages scattered round a little lawn, where the woods opened, but closed again in thicker shades. Four miles of this sweet scenery, when we entered upon heath, and came upon a high level common, extending a mile, or two, that opened upon a vast prospect on either hand: in front, all the hills of the Isle of Wight, from east to west, swelled along the horizon. On the right, the wavy woods of the New Forest bounded all the western and northern view. The richness of this vast mass of tufted woods is indescribable. Part of the Southampton water was visible on this side, flowing between wooded banks with villages on its edge. On the left, the view over the vale was not so grand, but more diversified by the light green of pastures and by frequent villages and white mansions among the woods, that spread among the gentle slopes. Showers and sunshine alternately dimmed and brightened the hills. The splendour of the sun fell, at times, upon the forest, in the west, while a heavy shower darkened an open valley in the east, softened the verdure of the nearer hills, and spread over the woods and meadows and villages a gradual chastening tint, that was enchanting. At length, the spire of the great church of Southampton appeared over the woods in front, while the town was yet unseen.”

After a short notice of Southampton, where Mrs. Radcliffe remained only two nights, the Journal proceeds: —

“After breakfast, set off for Lyndhurst; passed along the head of the bay, and by Millbrook, then the long bridge and causeway After a long hill,

descend upon the New Forest, and pass between open lawns and woods, capping every little eminence, and spreading round like those of Kensington Gardens. Longed for the speed of a stag to bound along these lawns and endless forest-glades. Dined at the Crown, in a parlour opposite to the inn, which was full; some forest-commissioners here. The Princess Sophia of Gloucester expected at the King's House; shown to us by an elderly woman. Good rooms; ancient furniture. A wood fire on the hearth of the Princess's room and on that of the dining-room below. All these rooms look under thick lofty trees to the forest woods, that rise close over the village, towards Brokenhurst. Oak-benches at the upper-end of Rufus'-hall, where the forest courts are held — the most ancient part of the building. A large iron stirrup, called Rufus's stirrup.

"From Lyndhurst, the ride to Brokenhurst is through five miles of pompous forest groves, of which grandeur is the characteristic, mingled with great beauty. The forest crowds over the road. Only two spots the whole way where the trees retire round lawns. Hence to Lymington: the country is inclosed; but still the lanes are forest-lanes. Passed Boldre, leaving Mr. Gilpin's a mile on the left, and soon came in view of the Isle of Wight, with Lymington, and its neat cupola-church. Came in at dusk; made our way in the marketplace, between waggons and cheese piled up for the morrow's fair.

"Oct. 3. Left Lymington at half-past three, in the packet for Yarmouth; after viewing the fair, and the fine booths of trinkets and plate. Passed many charming residences among the woody banks on the left. Glided smoothly under a light summer air; the evening splendid, and the scene most lovely. The Needles are vast dark blocks of rock, tall, but not pointed, standing out from the island in the sea. Hurst castle, with its dark line of peninsula stretching athwart the Channel. The Needles become more huge seen against the light, with the point of the Alum Rock in shade. These objects, with the high line of the Isle of Purbeck, faintly grey beyond, composed a perfect picture, with most harmonious colouring. The light silver grey of the sea first, met the eye, then the dark Alum Rock projected to meet Hurst Castle, whose towers were pencilled in deep grey beyond, which softened away to the heights of Purbeck, that closed the perspective. After sun-set, streaks of brightest crimson appeared on the sky, behind clouds, black and swelling; the upper shores clear, though dark.

Approached Yarmouth, under this sweet twilight. The western shore of Yarmouth goes off in a darkly wooded point, with many white houses, or cottages, among the trees. Landed on Yarmouth quay, small, and crowded with people. Dutch sentinels on the little fort over the quay and rampart of the old casle. Our inn built by Sir Robert Holmes, governor of the island, on the scite, I fancy, of Henry the Eighth's old castle. Our horse and gig came in another packet.

"Oct. 4. After breakfasting at Yarmouth, set out in a bright morning for the Lighthouse above the Needles. As we rose, the Channel and the English coast, from Portsdown Hill (known by its long chalk-pit) to the shore near Pool in Dorsetshire, lay before us, bounded partly by the New Forest and thick inclosures, and spreading with towns and villages and innumerable seats and farms, with a vast extent of the northern part of the Isle of Wight, and with Southampton Bay, to Lymington, here and there a white house on the shore, snug under trees, and other house-tops peeping out, almost wherever I directed the glass, above the forest. Discovered Lyndhurst steeple, with the large white house at Mount Royal, ' bosomed high in tufted trees.' The whole country, from the neighbourhood of Southampton to the West, rises gradually from the shore into a line of horizon little varied; but the richness and cheerful beauty of this widely extending amphitheatre, seen over the calm blue Channel, with here and there a white sail and a ship of war at anchor, permit no desire for greater variety. As we rose upon the down, this scene enlarged: the Isle of Purbeck became more majestic; its outline is more mountainous than that of the Isle of Wight, with a range of high awful cliffs below. It was now tinged with misty azure, but the sun brightened all the sea before it. Two of its summits appeared finely in the perspective from Cowes' Point. The effect of the sea so close on either hand of this vast western promontory, called the Needle Point, or the Alum rock, running out upon the ocean like a long narrow causeway, is awful. You have a wonderful and rather a painful sensation of the narrowness of the earth that bears you, though it may be half a mile, or more, in width. As the Needle rocks were not visible from the Lighthouse, we left the chaise, and descended the down half a mile, and looked upon them. On their summits, which now seem sharp, and splintered into ledges and points, perceived with the glass numbers of dark birds quietly seated; not one took wing, or uttered any cry. Perhaps it was

owing to our great height, that the Needles disappointed us, and appeared insignificant, compared with the grander objects around us: listened to the surge breaking below, round the feet of these rocks. Did not venture near enough the edge to see into Alum Bay. Drove to Freshwater Bay. The inn at Freshwater Gate in the bottom is a little cottage, with two or three rooms apart on the beach. A ruinous and desolate shore spreads and rises on either hand. Mounted a promontory, which confined our view from the inn, on the right. Greatness and desolation. As the tide was coming in, could not see a cave in the cliff below. Returned to Yarmouth at five."

The following is Mrs. Radcliffe's account of a visit to the tract called Undercliffe.

"Oct. 6. Set off for the Undercliffe, a tract of shore formed by fallen cliffs, and closely barricadoed by a wall of rock of vast height. Entered upon it about a mile from Kniton, and found ourselves in such a scene of ruin, as we never saw before. The road is, for the most part, close to the wall of rock, which seems to lie in loose horizontal strata, with frequent perpendicular fissures, which threaten the trravelle with destruction, as he passes sometimes beneath enormous masses, that lean forward. This is the boundary on one side of the road; on the other side, is an extremely irregular and rugged descent of half a mile towards the sea: on this side, there are sometimes what may be called amphitheatres of rock, where all the area is filled with ruins, which are, however, frequently covered with verdure and underwood, that stretch up the sides, with the wildest pomp, and shelter here a cottage, here a villa among the rocky hillocks. We were two hours and a half in going from Kniton to the inn at Steephill, five miles, W. leading the horse almost the whole way: a Druid scene of wildness and ruin. Sometimes the road led us into vast semicircular bays of rock, filled up entirely to the eye with wild wood and broken hillocks; the sea below appearing to stretch so from point to point, that it seemed impossible to make our way out, till the road led us under projecting crags of the promontory into other recesses, and, winding under these threatened ing walls, again led near the sea, on which I looked down, not without terror. Descended upon the romantic and sweet village of St. Lawrence,

among thickets on a hill, near the shore. Beautiful cottages, covered with ivy even to the chimney tops, with each its garden, and some with little orchards hung with golden fruit; clear, gushing rills passing under the shades to the sea. A mile beyond, the beautiful village of Steephill, in the same style. Went to the New Inn, standing on a hill, with a wide sea view in front, half a mile off, and at the foot of St. Boniface Downs, whose steep green sides rise to a tremendous height behind it, having below them, on the other hand, the little woody village of St. Boniface, with its beautiful cottages and villas."

The remaining memoranda of the visit to Steephill, are too long to be extracted, but contain some beautiful descriptions, and several vivid notices of the effects of light, as for example:— "The sea in gloom, with gleams of cold silvery light upon it, where the clouds began to break: these lights finely marked the distances on the grand surface of the ocean, as they fell in blue lines." Again, " Sunlights on the sea, and, now and then, bright green spots between black shadows;" — in the evening " a fiery sun-set with *sullen* clouds." The following short recollection of a storm is full of feeling and power: —

"After dark, a storm, with thunder and lightning; listened to the strong, steady force of the wind and waves below. The thunder rolled and burst at intervals, and often the sound was so mingled with that of the wind and waves, as to be scarcely distinguished from it. No complaining of the wind, but a strong and awful monotony. Lightning, very blue, showed at moments the foaming waves far out: utter darkness between the flashes. Glad to hear from the other side of the house, cheerful voices talking, or singing. When the storm subsided, the thunder rolled away towards the Sussex coast. This display of the elements was the grandest scene I ever beheld; a token of GOD directing his world. What particularly struck me was the appearance of irresistible power, which the deep monotonous sound of the wind and surge conveyed. Nothing sudden; nothing laboured; all a continuance of sure power, without effort."

From Steephill the travellers proceeded to Ryde, where Mrs. Radcliffe made the following characteristic remarks:— "Rejoice to look again on a

peopled sea, and prefer this point of the Isle, for animated and beautiful scenery, to any other. The back of the island has very extensive views; and, for that extensiveness, may be called grand; but there are no mountain lines, no shapes, that overwhelm us with admiration: the want of wood forbids them magnificence. The undercliff is wild and romantic, rather than grand; but the sea horizon from it, is often very grand. Upon the whole, I prefer rich beauty to wild beauty, unless accompanied by such shapes of grandeur as verge upon the sublime. Lovely sun-set; a roseate, melting into saffron and shades of blue; some light purple streaks. Below, the dark woody line of shore bending towards Cowes; the bay at its feet, purpled from the clouds. All this seen from our bedroom windows, above and between lofty trees."

Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe returned by Salisbury. We extract from the journal the approach to Salisbury and the description of its Cathedral.

"Oct. 13. Rainy morning; cleared up to a lovely afternoon. Left Southampton before twelve, for Salisbury. Turned out of the road, at the village of Totting, and soon entered upon the skirts of the New Forest, but saw no avenues there, no lovely forest-glades, rather forest-land, than forest; but we had often rich woody views into the vale, near Southampton on the right, and continual forests rising on the left; and a few miles from Plaitford, came upon some of the sweetest scenery of the New Forest. Upon a wild glade, touching effect of misty light, beyond its gloom. Sometimes an opening in the near copses showed a distant perspective of deep shade. About five miles from Salisbury, gain the summit of a high ridge, and look at once upon a new and grander ridge large and sharper hills rising to a great extent, with the vast Cathedral and lofty spire of Salisbury in front. We had lingered so much on our road, that as we entered Salisbury, a new moon gave us faintly the shadow of its sublime Cathedral, with its pointed roofs and its pinnacles and its noble spire. How could Mr. Gilpin prefer a tower to it! Saw, as we passed, the moonlight shining through the windows of the aisles and touching aslant the lofty spire, while the elms beside it were in deep shade. Had entered the city by

a deep Gothic gateway, and saw others lighted up in perspective, in a street, out of which we turned to our inn, the Antelope — a very good inn.

“Oct. 14. Went, in the rain, to the Cathedral: entered it just as the organ and chaunt struck up; very fine, but not so solemn, as at Canterbury. The church most light, beautiful and elegant; but it did not affect me, like the solemn simplicity, the awful roofs and grand perspective of Canterbury. The tone of the organ, too, very good, but did not listen for its swelling and dying sounds, as through the vast aisles of Canterbury; there is not space for them to roll in, and murmur afar off, as there. Was much struck with the effigies of the dead, laid out on each side of the great aisle, from pillar to pillar. Having been brought by Mr. Wyatt from St. Mary’s Chapel, that terminates the choir, they have been placed on a raised step, that seems indeed to have been originally designed for them. The pillars of this Cathedral are in Gothic clusters, not of the slender form, that afterwards prevailed, but, as Mr. Gilpin says, “ when Saxon heaviness first began to give way.” Their effect is elegant. They are washed of a stone colour, as are the walls and roofs; the last are without tracery, and are marked as if of brick. The arches are obtusely pointed, having one narrow vein of open work running near the outer edge, which gives lightness to them.”

After an attempt to visit Stonehenge, which was frustrated by a violent storm, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe returned, in the leisurely manner which they preferred, to London.

In the autumn of 1802, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe took a journey to Leicester and Warwick, and returned by Woodstock and Oxford. From the journal kept during that tour, the following descriptions of Kenilworth, of one or two scenes in Warwick Castle, and of Blenheim, are perhaps most worthy of selection. Both Warwick Castle and Blenheim are described with great minuteness; but both these mansions are so generally known, that it is thought sufficient to extract such portions of the accounts of them only, as are most characteristic of the writer’s feelings and tastes.

KENILWORTH.

“Left Coventry at half past twelve, and passed through a pleasant wellwooded country to Kenilworth. Almost every village overtopped with lofty trees. Passed for some miles over Kenilworth Chase, by a straight road of noble breadth, bordered with forest. Part of this forest was, in former times, cut down, in order to dislodge robbers. The gate of the castle, to which we drove up, is in the grey square tower, built on a high rock, by Leicester. This gate being now a residence, the former entrance by it to the court of the Castle is stopped up, and we passed through the garden, at its side, into the green and open area, that was once the grand court of the castle. Hence we looked up to the noble masses of ruin that still stand proudly, and form three broken and irregular sides of what was once the inner court. Of the buildings that formed the fourth side, there are now no vestiges, except the *knolliness* of the ground, where they once stood, may be called such, and except part of the buildings still called Leicester’s, these having been built by him. These are a fine mass of ruined walls, covered with thickest ivy, on the left; on the right, stands a more noble mass, with three lofty arches in a row, going the whole depth of the wall, sixteen feet: this is called Caesar’s Tower, and, though the oldest part of the Castle, appears, on the outside, the freshest and newest. It is of a greyer and more solid stone than the rest. This, too, is finely hung with ivy. Between these masses, in perspective, forming the third side of the court, is the most picturesque remainder of the castle, though Caesar’s Tower is the grandest. This was once the great hall, or banqueting-room. Its three beautiful pointed window-frames are there still; and the arch of a Gothic door, most elegantly twined with vine-leaves, all now hung and clustered with the richest drapery of ivy. The trunk of some of this ivy is of great thickness, and it is so old, that in some places, the branches are sapless and leafless, and the grey stalks seemed to crawl about the ruin in sympathy. Other remains of buildings partly connect the three sides of the court, and are intermingled and crowned with alder and ash plants. This view of the ruin was very striking; the three chief masses great and solemn, without being beautiful. They spoke at once to the imagination, with the force and simplicity of truth, the nothingness and brevity of this life— ‘generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us, and shall pass away: they thought of the generations before them, as you now think of them, and as future ages shall think of you. We have

witnessed this, yet we remain; the voices that revelled beneath us are heard no more, yet the winds of Heaven still sound in our ivy.' And a still and solemn sound it was as we stood looking up at these walls."

SCENES IN WARWICK CASTLE.

"After leaving the great hall, went, on the left, into the chapel — a plain memorable chapel, lined with oak; then to the armoury, a long, narrow' gallery, or rather a suite of narrow rooms, communicating by small Gothic doorways, and extending, perhaps, nearly the whole length of the Castle, with tall windows of painted glass, bowing out into-the court of the Castle. The walls of this armoury were covered with weapons of various kinds and sizes, from the Indian war-spear, to the Highland dirk, with a knife and fork tucked into the same sheath. But what struck me most was near the end of the gallery (when it makes a sudden turn into the tower that terminates the castle), where appeared before me a broad, yet dark staircase of oak, and at the foot of it, as if guarding the passage, a large figure in complete armour, the beaver down, and a sword in its hand! The general twilight, with the last western gleam breaking through the painted window at the foot of the staircase, and touching the bronze, gave full effect to this scene, and heightened the obscurity of the stairs, in perspective. This armour came from Germany; our conductor knew no more. Saw the brass coat, shot-proof, worn by Lord Brooke when he was shot in the eye during his attack upon Lichfield Cathedral. On the opposite side, a complete suit of black armour, the knees with projecting points: could learn nothing of its history. Left the building with regret. Paused again in the court to admire the beautiful lofty acacias and other noble trees surrounding the lawn, and the most majestic towers forming the grand front. The octagon tower, rising in the angle of the walls near the house-door, the most beautiful, as far as regards proportion; the one nearest the house the most venerable and warlike. Near the summit an embattled overhanging gallery, where formerly, no doubt, sentinels used to pace during the night, looked down upon the walls of the Castle, the rivers and the country far and wide, received the watchword from the sentinel, perched in the little watchtower, higher still and seeing farther in the

moonlight, and repeated it to the soldiers on guard on the walls and gates below. Before those great gates and underneath these towers, Shakspeare's ghost might have stalked; they are in the very character and spirit of such an apparition, grand and wild and strange; there should, however, have been more extent. Stayed before these grey towers till the last twilight.

BLENHEIM.

"Lovely day. At eleven, walked through the Park. The triumphal arch, at the entrance, has too much the air of a merely handsome gateway; the convenient division into passages in the ordinary mode of considerable gates, leaves nothing appropriate to Fame. The view of the Park, with the turrets of the palace, of the mass of wood beyond, the verdant sweep of the intermediate ground, that descends to the water, with the water itself and the Palladian bridge beyond, is very striking, a few paces after the entrance. The palace itself, though here seen beyond and over clumps of trees, appears to greater advantage than when more distinctly viewed: its many turrets, now beheld in clusters, have an air of grandeur, which they want when separately observable. As we advance, the groves on the left thicken and have a forest-like shade; but the view on the rising ground, including the celebrated pillar, is too much broken into parts. Though the ground rises finely, its great flowing lines are spoiled by too many groves; there should have been one, or two, grand masses of wood, and the rest sweeping lawn. This park is not comparable with that at Knole, either for swell and variety of surface, or for grandeur and disposition of wood; no such enchanting groves of plane and birch and oak, as there. But a very grand avenue extends from the Oxford gate to the palace. On entering the garden, of finest turf and shade, pass the east front to the lawn of the back front, opening to a view of distant hills between the high groves. The back front of the house much the best; more simple, and, seen in perspective, very good. Parterres in the flower-garden, with basket-work round them, in the pretty fashion of the last century in France. Hence, through deep shade to the sheep-walk, where the light opens upon the country, and then soon look down upon another bridge and water. This walk continues on the brow, for about half a mile, very sweetly, and leads to a sloping lawn

shaded with the noblest trees in the garden. More struck with this spot than with any, except about the large lake. First, two poplars of most astonishing height, much larger than those in the avenue at Manheim. At their feet, the light green spray foliage of these deciduous cypresses had a most charming effect. Near the poplars, a lofty plane, but inferior in height. Near this, a surprising Portugal laurel swept the ground, and spread to a vast circumference; a very extraordinary tree for size. Delighted with the steep green slope, the water and bridge below, the abrupt woody banks opposite, and, above all, the grandeur of the shades. Pass the bridge: on the right, the massy rocks of the cascade, but no water; on the left, the water winding beyond the woody banks; a highly tufted island, with a wooden building near its margin, very picturesque.

"Over a sofa, in the dining-room, a large family picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Duke seated, and turning to the Marquis of Blandford, when a boy, with an air and countenance in which the nobleman and the good man are blended; more pleasing and dignified than Romney's portrait of him. The Duchess, of pleasing countenance, and much sweetness in her eyes. Of the children, the most striking is Lady Charlotte (Nares), five or six years old, playfully holding a mask, and laughing behind it, as she frightens her sister, who draws back in doubt and with some apprehension but calmly. The figure of Lady C. has all the natural, playful grace of a child, though the attitude is rather overstrained. Vandyke's portrait of Charles the First's Queen is not so fine as his picture of her in the domestic drawing-room at Warwick Castle.

"It is in the superior colours and expressive drawing of the tapestry, that Blenheim chiefly excels the interior decorations of other great mansions. That in the state room is from Brussels, and most exquisite; presented by that city to the great Duke. It entirely covers the lofty walls. Each compartment displays a different siege or battle, and the distance, fading often into blue hills, is so finely shaded, that the whole seems almost a living prospect, and that you might step into the scene. The figures in the foreground are nearly as large as life, and chiefly portraits: they are admirably grouped, and the action not only spirited and natural, but often full of character. The Duke is always on horseback, and has the same air of countenance — attentive and eager; the features somewhat thin. The face of a French spy, under examination before the Duke, is admirable;

watchful, sedate, and firm. In the next compartment is a very spirited figure of Lord Cadogan, on horseback, his hat held off at arm's length, receiving orders from the Duke. His eagerness, proud submission, and impatience to be gone, while he bends to listen, and can scarcely rein his impatient charger, are all conspicuous. His faithful dog, that would be near him in every battle, and that returned safe home at last, is waiting beside him."

In June 1805, Mrs. Radcliffe went to see Belvedere House, the seat of Lord Eardley. The following is an extract from her account of that mansion.

"The park entrance from Lexden Heath is through a low, iron gate, beyond which is seen the gravel road, winding like a path, among the turf, under the stately branches of clumps of oak, &c. Neither the house, nor any good prospect is visible here; but, as you advance along the elegant plain of the park, a blue distance of the Essex hills appears beneath the low-spread branches of oaks, where there is a seat; on the right, the Grecian portico of the house, among the deep shades, which exclude all other view. The entrance is to a light, elegant hall, or vestibule, of French grey stucco, as are all the extensive passages of the house, the floors covered with oilcloth, of a small pattern, in shades of blue. On the right, through an ante-room of elegant simplicity, pass to a dining-room; the walls of French-grey; silk-moreen curtains, orange; chocolate-coloured fringe. Over the door, two exquisite views of Venice, by Canaletti; the Alchymist, Teniers, in a corner near the fire; then Rembrandt (by himself), looking out of the picture, with a broad smile, a coarse but arch countenance; Van Trump, the Dutch Admiral, a bluff countenance, as if the habits of a seaman predominated over those of the officer. After seeing several other very fine pictures here, pass some smaller rooms and elegant passages to the red drawing-room, the finest in the house; hung with crimson damask, bordered with gold; curtains and chairs the same, and a most rich carpet, in crimson and black. A finely stuccoed carved ceiling; a large bow-window looking upon the woods of the park. In a shaded corner, near the chimney, a most exquisite Claude, an evening view, perhaps over the Campagna of Rome. The sight of this picture imparted much of the luxurious repose and satisfaction, which we derive from contemplating the finest scenes of Nature. Here was the poet, as well as the painter, touching

the imagination, and making you see more than the picture contained. You saw the real light of the sun, you breathed the air of the country, you felt all the circumstances of a luxurious climate on the most serene and beautiful landscape; and, the mind being thus softened, you almost fancied you heard Italian music on the air — the music of Paisiello; and such, doubtless, were the scenes that inspired him. Passed into smaller rooms, and by the same elegant lobbies, to the summer drawing-room, where the bowed window looks down upon a noble sweep of the Thames, with the wellwooded sloping hills of Essex in the distance. The noble simplicity of this long bend of the Thames, and of the whole scene, is very striking. The eye passes abruptly, between the hanging woods of two jutting eminences of the park, to the green level below, which forms in front a perfect bow of several miles. The woods near the house are so planted, as to conceal the entrance and exit of the river upon the plains below, leaving nothing of it visible but that line of perfect grace and grandeur which it marks between the two green shores, while the vessels seem to steal upon the scene, appearing and disappearing, on either hand, from behind the woods. The dark verdure of these, the lighter green of the plain beneath, the silver grey of the river that bounds it, the white sails and various shades of the fleeting vessels, ships with clustering top-gallant sails, sloops with the stretching and elegantly swelling sails at their heads and above them, and skiffs, or other boats, with their little sprit-sails, too often bending low - these, with the hills of Essex bending into bluish distance, form altogether a soothing harmony of tints and objects. — Among other pictures that struck me, (especially the family of Snyders, by Rubens,) was one of “Wouvermans, representing the dark gate of a fort, with cavaliers on war-horses, waiting impatiently for admittance, their horses rearing and prancing; upon the high, shadowing walls, shrubs appear against the light sky, and above them is seen a high embankment, with a cannon pointed downwards, and near it a tree, down which a man is hastily descending, as if he had been overlooking a skirmish on the plains below, (not in view,) whence the party without the gate seem to have made a precipitate retreat. They are, perhaps, waiting till he has reported to the guard at the gate, whether they are friends or enemies. The impatience for admittance of those who think themselves likely to be pursued, the cautious

apprehension of those within the fort, and the unseen and doubtful battle, hinted at by the man on the tree, render this a very interesting picture.

“The grand staircase, by which we passed to the room over this, is remarkable for its lightness and elegance. All its light is received from a raised frame of glass, which crowns a most richly stuccoed roof, that forms a broad border only round it. I was much struck with the lightness, proportion, and elegance of this staircased hall, and indeed with the numerous long passages of the house. In the family dining-room the pictures are all portraits. One of the late Lady Eardley, when young, is a profile of most exquisite sweetness.

‘ Softness and sweetest innocence she wears,
And looks like Nature, in the world’s first bloom.’

Strong countenance of a tutor of Lord Eardley. No view, but of the Park, from any of these rooms; nor from the library, opening by pillars from a kind of ante-room, or vestibule. Before a cone at the upper end, is a most noble mahogany library-table with drawers. Between the windows are semicircular inlaid tables, with deep drawers for maps; some valuable modern books, but no old ones. The art of giving effect to the finest views, by permitting them to be seen only from the rooms whence they may be observed without interruption and in their perfection, is carried very far here; for, as you advance through the grounds to the house, the eye is confined by the woods; and is suffered only once to catch a glimpse of distance under the spreading shades, sufficient to touch the imagination and excite expectation of a scene, whose grandeur and simplicity, when at length it does appear, fully repays the impatience of curiosity. We did not see the woody grounds extending very far along the brow over the Thames, nor the tower of the Belvedere, nearly at the extremity of them and on their highest point. This must look down suddenly upon a new scene of the river, where it spreads into that broad bay, whose eastern point projects opposite to the broken steeps of Purfleet, and comprehends within its curve Erith, with its ivied church, and the hills around it, varied with woods and villas, and whose western point lies near the foot of this eminence, concealed by the woods. But from a window of this lofty tower

I doubt not the eye extends to Gravesend in the east, and probably further. Its southern window must look athwart the back of Shooter's Hill to the Knockholt beeches on the ridge near Seven-oaks; and its northern one over Epping Forest and a great part of Essex. Wherever the wood-walks open, there must be a glimpse of the river, and white sails gliding athwart the vista."

In the autumn of 1807, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe visited Knole House for the second time. The following is a small portion of Mrs. Radcliffe's reminiscences of the house, and especially of its pictures.

"We were astonished at the extent of this mansion, and at its vast collection of portraits. Warwick Castle has the greatest number of Vandyke's pictures; Blenheim of Rubens's; Knole of Holbein's, with many of Vandyke too. The old porter at the first gate had lived about the spot fifty years; was there in the time of the late Duke's grandfather: those were grand times; the late Dukes were very good, but things had got dearer then. When we were going, he desired Mr. R. to write our names in the book, that my lord might have the *pleasure* of seeing who had been there.

*

At the upper end of the lofty and noble hall, where the high table stood, is now a very large statue of Demosthenes, robed, with buskined feet and a book or scrowl in his hand; the attitude composed; the countenance expresses nothing of the energy and fire that characterize his eloquence.

It was bought by the late Duke in Italy, for seven hundred pounds. The brown gallery is almost covered with portraits by Holbein, the greatest assemblage of famous persons I ever saw. In the little closet of entrance, the countenance of Giardini, the composer, gives you the idea that he is listening to the long-drawn notes of his own violin. Holbein's Erasmus, in the gallery, must be truth itself: the keen and quick, small eye; the humorous, though serious smile; the thin, finely-pointed, yet bending nose; the thin-drawn lips and chin, are all exquisite. In a picture containing three portraits, that in the middle is of Luther. His bluff, blunt, strong

habits of expression; his dauntless and persevering mind; his consciousness of the truth and importance of his cause, and his resolution to maintain it, are well expressed: strength and resolution in the chin. On his right is Melancthon, reasoning, acute, amiable. On his left, Pomeranius; a somewhat sly and monkish countenance. Queen Elizabeth and several of her Court: Salisbury, civil, sagacious and fastidious; effeminate; very fair: Burleigh, with a steady, penetrating, grey eye, high forehead, with black hair; a cast of humour: Leicester, sturdy and crafty.

"Lord Surrey, the poet, young, thin and melancholy. No very fine" pictures in what is called Lady Betty Germain's room, which looks delightfully upon the green and stately alleys of the garden.

High state-bed; dingy white plumes crown the bed-posts. In the dressing-room are three Earls of Dorset, and drawings by Titian and Michael Angelo. In another room a state-bed, presented by James the First. In the dressing-room, among many fine pictures, is one of Sir Theodore Mayerne, physician to James the First, and to two of his successors, by Vandyke: he is seated in an armchair, and his right hand rests on a human skull; his own head is grey, and he looks at you with a mild and sensible countenance, turned a little towards his left shoulder; the fading look of age, without actual weakness.

"In the great dining-room below, Hoppner's copy of his portrait of Mr. Pitt, a strong, and, I think, not a flattering likeness. Fletcher, intelligent, thoughtful, and tender; brown complexion, acute black eyes. Beaumont, florid, with light blue eyes; of an open, cheerful, handsome countenance. Near the windows is a group of portraits, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with one of himself, in the midst of these his familiar friends, now all dead. On his right is Doctor Johnson, drawn bareheaded — a severe deduction from the harmonies of any frame: it is nearly a profile; intense thought and anxiety press down the benevolent brow. On the left is Goldsmith, painted in the same style, a strong countenance, but of very different expression; coarse; the eyebrows not bent, like Johnson's, firmly and evenly over the eyes, but only towards the nose; the other end highly hoisted, as if with caprice; unpleasing countenance; nothing of the goodness of Johnson. Garrick, with a most pleasant and living look, piercing eyes fixed upon you, with perfect ease and kindness, as he leans with both arms on a table; older than the portraits I have seen. Burke,

vulgarized by Opie. Betterton, the actor, manly, sensible face. Pope, old, wrinkled, spectre-like. Swift, gentle in comparison with Pope. Otway, heavy, squalid, unhappy; yet tender countenance, but not so squalid as one we formerly saw; full, speaking, black eyes; it seems as if dissolute habits had overcome all his finer feelings, and left him little of mind, except a sense of sorrow. Dryden, in his velvet cap, younger than usual. Addison, mild. Waller, thinner and older than usual, with scarce a spark of his fire left, but still a courtier-like gentleman.

"In a small, domestic parlour, leading into the book-room, is that fine picture of Lord Gowrie and Vandyke, by the latter; the finest portrait I ever saw except one of Rubens, by himself, at Buckingham House, and another at Warwick, in the cabinet that terminates the long suite of staterooms.

"In a blue room, a domestic drawing-room, Lord Whitworth, a shrewd and comely man of the world, with spirited and penetrating grey eyes; an expressive but somewhat clouded brow. The Duchess, in a black velvet riding habit, with a hat and feather, by Opie; a pleasing picture: you do not think of her in this portrait as of the Duchess, which is the object of one in the drawing-room, but as of a happy wife and a good-natured, sensible woman; a little too much care in the attitude.

"In one room a head of Louis the Fourteenth, all flutter and fume.

"The rooms are so numerous and the suites of them so long, that, though I have seen them twice, I could not now find my way through them, and cannot even recollect them all. All the principal rooms look upon the garden, with its lawns and lofty shades. Scarcely a spot of brown earth is visible: so many various tints of green; the trees sometimes bending their branches down to the shrubs and flowers.

"In the Park, abounding with noble beech groves, is one, on the left of the road leading to the house, which, for mass and overtopping pomp, excels even any in Windsor Park, when viewed as you descend from the Park gate, whence shade rises above shade, with amazing and magnificent grandeur. In this mass of wood is one beech, that stretches upwards its grey limbs among the light, feathery foliage to a height and with a majesty that is sublime. Over a seat, placed round the bole, it spreads out a light yet umbrageous fan, most graceful and beautiful. With all its grandeur and luxuriance, there is nothing in this beech heavy or formal; it is airy, though vast and majestic, and suggests an idea at once of the strength and fire of a

hero! I should call a beech-tree — and this beech above every other — the hero of the forest, as the oak is called the king."

In the autumn of 1811, Mrs. Radcliffe went again to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. The following extracts bear but a small proportion to her entire journal of this little tour.— "Passed through Bere Forest, on the right, with many seats and woods and spires, around. Almost dusk. An horizon of glowing crimson lay behind the woods on the right, where the sun had set. Delightful to catch the different saffron, crimson, or fiery tints among the purple streaks. All the prospect lay in sullen twilight from Portsdown Hill, and it was quite dark when we reached Portsmouth. Could just discern the high rampart walks, with trees, before we rambled under the deep, fortified gateway of Portsea. Went to the George Inn, a very large handsome house, with many galleries and staircases. Handsome furniture and excellent accommodation, except that you could get nothing when you wanted it. We had fish brought without plates, and then plates without bread. All this owing to a vast throng of company, two hundred vessels or more being detained by winds, besides many ships of war. Nothing but ringing of bells and running about of waiters. If you ask a waiter a question, he begins a civil answer, but shuts the door before you have heard it all. It was very diverting to hear the different tones and measure of the ringings, particularly about supper time, and the next day about five, when every body happened to be dining at one and the same time, to hear them all ringing together, or in quick succession, in different keys and measure, according to the worn out, or better, patience of the ringer. These different keys enabled me to distinguish how often each bell was rung before it was answered; also the increasing impatience of the ringer, till, at the third, or fourth summons, the bell was in a downright passion. There was a mischievous amusement in this, after we had gone through the delay ourselves, and had gotten what we wanted. Such life and bustle is inspiriting, for a little while. Before supper, we had been down to the platform, over the sea. All was indistinct and vast; the comet high, but no moon; calm. Heard the* falling of the tide — monotonous, not grand — cannon all around and sentinels; some old seamen.

"Oct. 11. — Cloudy, with silver gleams. In the afternoon, sailed in the packet for Ryde. The wind being contrary, though moderate, we were two hours and a half on our passage; had a delightful sail, festooning among all

the fleet at Spithead. A passenger asked ‘ What brig is that?’ as we passed a man-of-war. A midshipman, who leaned over the side, made no answer. ‘ What brig is that, sir?” The Rover.’ Every body admired this vessel. Two ships of 100 guns, one of 74, and many of other degrees of force. It was a grand and glorious sight, this anchored fleet, at various distances on the gleaming waves, some in shadow, others upon long lines of distant light, of coldest silver. Among other passengers were two Missionaries going to Sierra Leone in the brig Minerva, belonging to Mr. Macaulay: the eldest Wilhelm, a German, the younger a Persian; modest, sedate, well-intentioned men; had some knowledge of Greek; one of them was taking his wife with him. The captain of their ship, on board, seemed to be a good sort of German. Another captain of a trading ship was a passenger, Captain Reynolds, going to his ship, the Crescent, bound for the Mediterranean: a plain, steady, grave seaman, of the old stamp; good sense, with a pious tender heart. Said he had carried, or that he was then about to carry, several hundred copies of the New Testament in the modern Greek, to be distributed under the direction of agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Captain — , a Cornish man, going to his ship, the Commerce. These two captains had met “on stronds afar remote,” and now, by accident, on board this packet. One of them accosted the other with an apology for some apparent inattention at Malta, where they had last parted — his ship having been “so far to leeward.” They talked of parts of Smyrna, Constantinople, and other ports beyond the Straights, as familiarly as they could of London or Bristol. Mr. W —— — , a London merchant, having a seat somewhere in the west, a tall thin man, about sixty, with a florid face and white hair; an unassuming well-bred man. The captain of the packet, formerly a pilot, had a keen, steady, dark eye, with a brow low-bent, from attention to distant objects, and a countenance quick and firm, that seemed to say he was master of his business, and proud of it.

“Landed at Ryde, after a fine sail, through a grand and interesting scene.

“Oct. 15. — After a foggy night, a clear and cloudless day, with the warmth of June. At Steephill; saw the skirts of the fog clearing up the steeps of Boniface, like a curtain, and the sea below brightening from misty grey into it’s soft blue, and the whole horizon gradually clearing, till all was cheerful warmth and sunshine, about ten o’clock. About twelve, we set off to walk to the Signal-house, on the highest steep of Boniface, not

visible near the house, nor indeed till we had gone a long way, being on the eastern side of the down. Followed the steep Newport road, for a mile or two; looked down on the vast sea-line, and on the huge promontories and broken rocks of the Undercliffe. Then, leaving the road, turned into a field on the right, with heathy steeps and downs, that would have been capped with clouds, had there been any. The air keen, and the climate considerably different from that below. The views astonishing and grand in a high degree. From these ridges we looked down, on one side, over the whole interior of the island: but the sublime view was that to the south; where, as we seemed perched on an extreme point of the world, we looked immediately down on hills and cliffs of various height and form, tumbled in confusion, as if by an earthquake, and stretching into the sea, which spreads its vast circumference beyond, and its various shades of blue. This soft blue, thus spreading below us, was, in general, deeper than that of the cloudless sky; and the sky itself was paler at the horizon than high above, appearing there like the dawn of light, and deepening as the arch ascended. This might be the effect of vapour, drawn up from the sea. Found our way at length over nearly trackless furze and heath, to the Signal-house, which looks down on the steeps of Boniface, and the rocks of Bonchurch, and over to the sweep of Sandown Bay, then all over Brading Harbour and the long coast of Sussex, which, in clear weather, may be seen as far as Beachy Head.

“In returning, we endeavoured to follow a path down the steeps near Bonchurch, and to find some steps, cut in the precipice, by which to descend. The look down upon the shores and sea tremendous — steeps below steeps, to the surge beating and whitening below all. Followed, for some time without dizziness, till we lost our little track, and saw all around and beneath us scarcely any thing but pathless descents — tremendous. From the fear of coming to some impracticable steep in this wild descent and being unable to find the hewn steps, we reascended to the Signal-house, and so returned home. The sea a desert, except that a fine frigate sailed majestically at a distance, and one brig was also in sight.

“How sweet is the cadence of the distant surge!

It seemed, as we sat in our inn, as if a faint peal of far-off bells mingled with the sounds on shore, sometimes heard, sometimes lost: the first note of the beginning, and last of the falling peal, seeming always the most

distinct. This resounding of the distant surge on a rocky shore might have given Shakspeare his idea when he makes Ferdinand, in the Tempest, hear, amidst the storm, bells ringing his father’s dirge; a music which Ariel also commemorates, together with the sea-wave: —

‘Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Ding, dong, bell!’

“This chiming of the surge is when the tide is among the rocks, and the wind, blowing from the sea, bears and softens all the different notes of the waves to a distance, in one harmonious cadence; as in a concert, your distance from the orchestra blends the different instruments into a richer and softer harmony.’’

From several walks in the neighbourhood of Steephill, we select the following: —

“Passed Lord Dysart’s beautiful cottage. It stands at some distance from the shore, and has several distinct roofs, well thatched: a large conservatory stands on a winding lawn, with a fine beech grove and a long and richly coloured copse, bending along down, and afterwards along the feet of cliffs below. The crimson berries of the hawthorn gave exquisite tints to this coppice, among the brown and various shades of the autumnal woods, and appeared in abundance every where among the trees and wild shrubs of the whole Undercliffe. The little church of St. Lawrence, perhaps the smallest in England, stands on a knoll, and terminates the cultivated valley; immediately beyond which, we entered upon a scene of extreme wildness, grandeur and solitude. Many of the ruinous precipices of the upper cliffs project in horizontal strata, yet have perpendicular rents. Some of the shattered masses give most clear echoes: we stood before one, which repeated every syllable of several passages from the most sonorous languages, with an exactness of tone that was truly astonishing. It seemed as if a living spirit was in the rock, so near, so loud, and so exact! ‘ Speak to it, Horatio!’ I could have listened to it for hours. How solemn is the voice of cliffs and seas Î How great the style of Nature! how expressive! ‘Speak to the rock!’ and again it gave every word, as if in sport or imitation, but with truth itself. How long had it slumbered in silence? We

returned by the course we had come, the yellow sun lighting up seas and shores with the warmth of May, and the birds singing every where.

“Oct. 19. — Left Steephill. Sailed from Cowes in the Southampton packet, about half-past five; the Naiad frigate lying before the town. What particularly struck me in the passage was, not only the sun actually appearing to set in the sea, but the splendid amber light, left upon that long level perspective of waters, and the vessels upon it at various distances, seeming dark on this side, and marking out its extent to the eye. The grace and majesty of an anchored ship, too, lying with her stern to the eye, though at less distance, is indescribable; showing all her shrouds and yards lessening, like a pyramid, as they rise upon the light. How tranquil and grand the scene lay, beneath the gradually deepening shade! Still the dark shores and stately vessels kept their dignity upon the fading waters. How impressive the silence, and then how according the solemn strain, that died upon the waves from unseen and distant bugles, like a song of peace to the departing day! Another of those measured portions that make up our span of life, was gone; every one who gazed upon this scene, proud or humble, was a step nearer to the grave — yet none seemed conscious of it. The scene itself, great, benevolent, sublime — powerful, yet silent in its power — progressive and certain in its end, steadfast and full of a sublime, repose: the scene itself spoke of its CREATOR.”

In this year Mrs. Radcliffe visited Penshurst. From some very extensive notes upon this ancient seat of the Sydneys, we extract the following: —

“As we drew near, the woods began to thin; and an old latticed wooden gate showed one entrance into a park, now in ruins, for the grass is tall, scanty, and intermingled with taller fern. No deer appeared on the rusty lawns, or under the scattered trees, or decaying groves, of this once rich domain. Penshurst lies in a small valley of its own, that hangs upon the ridge of hills which form the southern boundary of the grand valley overlooked from Riverhill. All its heights are hung with its own woods, which shut out every distant prospect from the house, except from the turrets; and even from these, at least from the one I climbed, the view is not extensive; but it is a pleasing scene, with here and there an intermingled spire and ancient mansion. After following for a considerable time the paling of this extensive park, an elderly woman admitted us to it through the chief gate, and the ancient mansion immediately appeared

over a rough lawn, surrounded with groves. The house is much in the style of Knole, but more irregular, and not of half the size. It is of brick and rough stone, with now a tower, and now a turret; high lozenge chimneys, an embattled wall, and, above all, the long peaked roof of the great hall. In the court, over the arched portal, is a row of five shields of the family arms, in stone. The great hall is on the opposite side: it is grand, but gloomy, showing the dark rafters of the roof; the tall, pointed windows below shed but a subdued light on the pavement, which is of brick. The rafters have been blackened by the fires of two centuries, lighted on the centre of the pavement, where the bricks, raised half a foot, form a small octagon, on which, perhaps, Sir Philip Sydney and the knights his companions have often stood round the blazing fagots, piled upon the same iron dogs, of enormous size, that still remain there. I think I see, in glimpses, the strong blaze of the wood flashing on their visages. The armour of Sir Philip himself, with helm (the vizor closed), stands at the back of an obscure gallery, and close beneath a high window, whose small frames admit a blunted, melancholy light. It stands like a spectre in arms, watching over the scene it once inhabited; and is admirably placed to touch the imagination, but not to gratify curiosity, its distance being considerable. A partial light, thrown more strongly on the head, would give it very fine effect. It is best seen from one of the doors, that open from the raised step at the upper end of the hall, where the high table stood.

“The hall being so lofty as to seem shorter than it should be, and than it really is, one of the late owners, to remedy this defect, had a painted perspective placed at one end — a most unsuitable expedient in so great and simple a scene; but the drawings of knights in armour, larger than life, between the windows, are well done. Several very rudely carved wooden images, now v/hitened and probably brought from some other part of the house, are placed in front of the gallery, as if looking over the railing.

“Mrs. Perry, the grandmother of the present Mr. Sydney, who changed his name from Shelley, was a niece of Sydney, Earl of Leicester, and coheiress with her sister, Lady Howard, of the Penshurst estates. The old housekeeper, who attended us, lamented much that Mr. Sydney did not now live here, but hoped to see him return. She had been all her life on the spot, and told us what fine times she remembered when *Lady* Perry used to

drive to the gate in a coach and six, and come down with such ‘ a sight of servants.’ All the tenants used to come to meet her, and ‘ *we girls’* (the speaker was a grandmother) used to stand all in a row to meet her. Such noble liveries! and then the poor woman shook her head, and bustled about, with emotion. The bells were a ringing all day, and there were such goings on. ‘ Was she *Lady* Perry?” Yes sir,’ rather sharply, as if astonished that we could doubt it. ‘Was she a *Lady* by birth?”Yes, sir,’ more sharply, ‘ she w*as* a Lady indeed.’ She led us down a modernized winding staircase into a small hall in the chief part of the mansion, opening into the garden. We passed a fine Gothic window, that gives light to it, having painted shields of arms; among them Queen Elizabeth’s. From the great dining-parlour, a staircase leads past many rooms lined with oak panels, worm-eaten; among them the nursery, which the housekeeper pointed out, with a strong regret of *old times* — not those of Sir Philip Sydney, but of Lady Perry. And there were the children’s playthings; there they were all — with some sighs. As I humoured her, she began, in the midst of her regrets, to apologize for her dress, and to lament that she had not had time to appear better. ‘ Do the stairs near the nursery lead to the top of the turret?’— ‘I don’t know, ma’am, but I’ll see.’ I followed to the small platform, and looked over the battlements upon the wood and the valley. The view was pleasing, but not impressive, or extensive.

“She led us through the great hall, to see the kitchen; one suitable to such a hall, with a lofty, raftered roof, enormous chimney, and long old tables of oak, not nearly so thick as those in the hall at Coventry. Here the good woman was at the climax of her regrets, and she shook her head and sighed often. ‘ It is a dismal place now, and what do I remember it in *Lady* Perry’s time! I remember, when all them hooks,’ pointing to rows of them that run, at a great height, over the wide and lofty chimney piece and round the roof, ‘ were hung with sides of bacon; ay, I ha’ seen them all hung with bacon. And here was such a sight of servants running about, some one way, some another.’ She then reverted to Lady P.’s coach and six, and the rejoicings that were to take place when she came down, and ‘ *we girls* used to stand all in a row.’ In short, one would have thought that nobody had ever lived in this mansion but Lady Perry. As to Sir Philip and the rest of the Sydneys, they were never thought of when she spoke of *old times* — a neglect which at first somewhat embarrassed me, who thought

of them and old times as inseparable. She took us into a smaller kitchen, to show us the stoves and the iron plates, on which, in her old times, teacakes and crumpets were baked, and related, with pride, that she used to assist in turning them."

In October 1812, Mrs. Radcliffe visited Malvern. The following is her note of her walk to the summit of the hills: —

"Oct. 21, 1812. — Having slept at the Foley Arms hotel, an excellent inn, delightfully situated, we walked out, about eleven, hoping to reach the highest point of the Malvern Hills. By the zigzag turf-path, we reached the little Well-house, where we came upon the wild turf, and began to ascend the higher steeps of a mountain. The hoary crags, in vast masses, looked out from among the brown and red tints of the autumnal fern, and from the green earth, but the crags ceased below the summits, which were smooth and still green. Our view here commanded the vast expanse to the eastward, which we had seen from the inn; but we now saw over the broad Breedon hill, which there bounded the horizon in one direction; and many lines were now visible beyond it. This view is great and comprehensive, but not sublime; the elevation reducing the importance of other heights, so that no single object remains sufficiently striking, either in form or character, to arrest attention, and break the uniform harmony of that rich and woody scene, the vale of the Severn, whose waters were visible only here and there, in little glimmering threads of light. At the summit, we could just discern them near Bristol, rolling in greater breadth. From the Well-house, we soon reached a good winding path, cut in the turf, which led us round one mountain, overlooking other craggy or green steeps of Malvern, till we caught a first glimpse of Herefordshire and of the hills of South Wales, over the ridge, to the west. They were more distant, and less broken and individual, than I had hoped, but grand notwithstanding. Having, at length, turned into a sort of intrenchment, which runs up to the summit, and divides Worcestershire and Herefordshire, we walked in this securely, and with some little shelter from the winds, till we reached the highest point of Malvern, and beheld a vast horizon circling at our feet. Thirteen counties are said to be visible from this summit, which overlooks

the other heights of Malvern. It is indeed a defect in the scene, that there are no other supereminent heights, except those which are too distant to have a fully impressive effect. Even Breedon-hill, that broad feature in the vale of the Severn, was here too much lowered. Towns and villages were often distinguishable chiefly by the wreaths of smoke that spread from them along the vale, but sometimes by the broad tower of a church. On a more intent view, white mansions and woody parks would frequently appear; and rich meadows, hedge-rows and groves filled the vale, ascended to the hills of other counties, and often spread over their summits too. Few of the mountains of South Wales were sharp, or very bold, at this distance. On this side of them, the square mass of the tower of Hereford Cathedral was perceivable; and, far more southward, the high, level downs of Clifton. Bristol itself is sometimes seen hence. The broad Gloucester hills — the Cotswolds — and the city of Gloucester, with its noble cathedral, are in the nearer vale. From this spot, we could distinguish, merely by turning round, three great cities, with their cathedrals — Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, to say nothing of the fine abbey-church of Tewksbury. The tower of Malvern church, once a priory-church, is also a venerable feature in the scene. One of the most striking circumstances was the vast sweep of shadows and lights thrown from the clouds over this great prospect. The mottled expanse of moving lights over the surface of the wide vale sometimes resembled the billows of a sea, on which you look down from some lofty cliff. The lights brought out the villages and mansions on the knolls of Herefordshire surprisingly; and many are most charmingly seated." Mrs. Radcliffe was particularly interested by Kenilworth Castle, and spent much time in exploring its history after she had visited its ruins. The subject struck her imagination; and in the winter of 1802, she wrote the tale of Gaston de Blondeville, now for the first time given to the world. After this, she undertook no work of magnitude, but occasionaly employed her leisure in composing poems, from which a selection has been made for these volumes. In Romance, she probably felt that she had done enough; and, feeling it impossible to surpass her "Mysteries of Udolpho" and her "Italian," declined again to subject herself to criticism by publication. Though gratified by a sense of the enjoyment she had provided for multitudes, and justly proud of the honest and blameless means by which it was produced, she rarely alluded

to her novels. At first, the sums she received, though not necessary, were welcome; but, as her pecuniary resources became more ample, she was without sufficient excitement to begin on an extended romance, though, had the first effort been made, the pursuit must have been delightful. Even Gaston de Blondeville was not intended for the press, and, having amused herself and her husband, was laid aside, so disinclined had she become to publication.

It is curious that several years after this tale was written, Mrs. Radcliffe, having forgotten many of the incidents, perused it with nearly the same interest as if it had been the production of a stranger. It was again laid aside; and in the latter part of life she repeated the experiment, but it did not absorb her attention as before, the former perusal having stamped the contents on her memory.

Secluded as Mrs. Radcliffe was from the world, she was tremblingly alive to every circumstance which could, by the remotest possibility, raise an inference injurious to the personal character she valued far above literary fame; and, as nothing could induce her to appear before the public in any sort of contention, every thing of this nature preyed long upon her mind. She was much affected by a passage of Miss Seward's correspondence, which seemed, to her apprehensive feelings, to convey an imputation that she had allowed the dramas afterwards avowed by Miss Baillie to be attributed to her pen. Miss Seward in one of her letters dated May 21, 1799, after mentioning the plays, gave the following quotation from a letter of "her literary friend and correspondent Mrs. Jackson"—"Before their author was known, I observed so much of the power and defects of Mrs. Radcliffe's compositions in these dramas, as to believe them her's, and I hear she owns them. Mrs. Radcliffe, in whatever she writes, attentive solely to the end, is not sufficiently attentive to observe probability in the means she uses to attain it. She bends her plan — or, if it will not bend, she breaks it, to her catastrophe, by making it grow out of the preceding events. Still she always takes hold of the reader's feeling', and effects her purpose boldly if not regularly. Her descriptive talent, used to satiety in her novels, is here employed with more temperance, and consequently to better purpose."

The imputation thus conveyed was, perhaps, implicitly removed by two letters of a few months later date; in one of which Miss Seward, speaking

of the Plays on the Passions, says, “My literary friends now assert that they are not Mrs. Radcliffe’s and in the other, “The literary world now asserts, that the Plays on the Passions are not Mrs. Radcliffe’s for, if Mrs. Radcliffe had really owned them, it is scarcely probable the literary world could so soon have discredited her acknowledgment, while the real author remained unknown. This implied vindication from a charge, which perhaps no one ever regarded, was not sufficient for Mrs. Radcliffe’s delicate sense of propriety and honour. She made inquiries after Mrs. Jackson, the lady mentioned as Miss Seward’s informant, in order that she might trace out the origin of her rumour. Haying learned that Mrs. Jackson, after residing at Bath, had removed to Edinburgh, she requested Mr. Davies, of the firm of Cadell and Davies, who had ample opportunities of procuring information respecting the literary society of Edinburgh, to ascertain if Mrs. Jackson was still in that city. In the result of these inquiries it appeared, that the lady, to whom the report was ascribed, had left Edinburgh; that her residence was unknown; and that she was not even supposed to be living. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Radcliffe was obliged to leave her vindication (as, in truth, she safely might) to the tenor of her whole literary course; for no one ever felt, or expressed, more repugnance to factitious praise, or more strenuously declined to avail herself of the warmth of private regard in softening the rigour of criticism. The prayer of the poet, O grant an honest fame, or grant me none!” was the language of all her actions. She even took pains to prevent some, who, she knew, were desirous of expressing their sense of her genius, from writing eulogies on her works, as she could not endure the conscious degradation of being exalted even by the genial quackery of friendship. It is scarcely necessary now to assert, that the supposition of her having laid claim to the authorship of the Plays on the Passions, or voluntarily endured the ascription of those powerful compositions to her pen, was utterly groundless. Rich as these works are in passion, and richer in fancy, they could not tempt the author of the Mysteries of Udolpho, even if she had not been restrained by any higher feeling than pride, to claim them — not because they would have been unworthy of her, if she had written them, but because the secret sense of merited reputation must alone have created a distaste for eulogies which she did not deserve. Anxious as Mrs. Radcliffe was to repel the suggestion, she felt that, as she could not

discover its author, it would not become her to intrude on Miss Baillie a denial of the report, which she had not sanctioned; and the same susceptible delicacy, which made her feel it so deeply, compelled her to bear it in silence. The subject, which was always painful to her, is rather now alluded to as an instance of the singular apprehensiveness of her moral sense, than as at all required for the vindication of her character.

Another circumstance, of a more trivial nature, gave her uneasiness, though in a less degree. In one of the published letters of the late Mrs. Carter, was a passage of a eulogistic nature, alluding to her works; and to this a note was appended by the editor, showing that “Mrs. Carter had no personal acquaintance with Mrs. Radcliffe.” This statement was literally true; but to her sensitive nature it seemed to bear the construction, that the excellent lady referred to would have avoided her acquaintance. The fact, indeed, was exactly the reverse; for, in the spring of 1799, Mrs. Carter sent to Mrs. Radcliffe a letter of introduction from a lady of high respectability at Bath, and proposed by note to wait on her on the following day; but Mrs. Radcliffe, being engaged to leave town in the morning with her husband, whose health required country air, was obliged respectfully to decline the intended honour. The correspondence appeared in the Annual Biography for 18£4, with a short Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe; and produced from Dr. Pennington, the writer of the note, a most handsome letter, in which he earnestly disclaimed even the slightest idea of disrespect to Mrs. Radcliffe, stating that he was not aware of the little correspondence, or he would have mentioned it with pleasure. Dr. Pennington also avows, not merely with candour, but cordially, the admiration and personal respect, with which Mrs. Carter thought and spoke of Mrs. Radcliffe.

With more reason, Mrs. Radcliffe was amazed at an absurd report, that, haunted by the images of fear, with which she had thrilled her readers, she had sunk into a state of mental alienation. A more unphilosophical foundation for an untruth was never imagined; for it is obvious, that through all her works she holds entire mastery over the terrors which she employs, and even sedulously prepares the means of explaining them by natural causes. It seems, however, that the authoress of a Tour through England, in noticing the Duke of Rutland’s venerable and romantic seat, called Haddon House, asserted that it was there that Mrs. Radcliffe acquired her taste for castles and ancient buildings, and proceeded to

lament that she had, for many years, fallen into a state of insanity, and was under confinement in Derbyshire: — the fact being, not only that the main assertion was false, but that all its accompaniments were destitute of foundation; — for Mrs. Radcliffe was only in Derbyshire on two occasions, for a few days each, after her marriage, and never saw Haddon House at all. This report, the falsehood of which might have been ascertained by the authoress, on a reference to her own publisher, was copied in a larger work of more recent date; and to complete the fiction, a plate and description of Haddon House, as the scene of Mrs. Radcliffe's early impressions, were annexed by way of illustration. It also supplied materials for poetry; as in an " Ode to Terror," with other effusions, published by a clergyman in 1810, Mrs. Radcliffe is bemoaned, as having died in that species of mental derangement called "the horrors." Some of these rumours reached her; but she could not endure the thought of writing in the newspapers that she was not insane; and, at last, learned to smile at the pity of those, who thought her in confinement, and the charity of others, who had kindly permitted her to find a release in death from her supposed intellectual sufferings.

While the fate of the authoress of Udolpho was thus considered by the world as sealed, she was enjoying her wonted recreations and studies, with entire relish. As, however, curiosity was satiated with exploring all the finest country within 100 miles of London, and she became more attached to the comforts of home, she contracted the sphere of her excursions. Instead of making journeys of length, Mr and Mrs. Radcliffe hired a carriage for the summer months, in which they were accustomed to make frequent trips to beautiful spots in the neighbourhood of London, where they dined and spent the day at some good inn, and returned in the evening. Esher, Stanmore, Richmond, Southgate, and Harrow, were their favourite places of resort, especially the latter, where they chose the room, not the largest, but which commands the richest prospect, and where Crawley Wood, near Ashridge, could be often distinctly seen. Mrs. Radcliffe also was much attached to St. Alban's, the antiquities of which she explored with unwearied zeal, and the historical dignity of which she has vindicated in her longest poem. From 1812 to 1815 inclusive, she passed much time at Windsor and its neighbourhood, and formed an intimate acquaintance with all the recesses of its forest.

“She knew each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle or bushy dell of those old woods,
And every bosky bower from side to side.”

She often vividly described the beautiful spots of this regal domain. There was scarcely a tree of importance, with the peculiar form of which she was not familiar, and the varieties of whose aspect in light and shade she could not picture in words. With reference to their age and to the analogy she fancied to the lines of monarchs, with which they might be coeval, she described the trees separately as Plantagenet oaks, Tudor beeches, or Stuart elms. At this time, she expressed her feelings in verse, rather than in prose, and the reader will find them chronicled in several of her poems. One night-scene on the terrace, however, deserves to be inserted; and may be compared with the descriptions of castellated heights, which abound in her novels.

“We stood in the shade on the north terrace, where a platform projects over the precipice, and beheld a picture perfect in its kind. The massy tower at the end of the east terrace stood up high in shade; but immediately from behind it the moonlight spread, and showed the flat line of wall at the end of that terrace, with the figure of a sentinel moving against the light, as well as a profile of the dark precipice below. Beyond, it, was the park and a vast distance, in the faint light, which spread over the turf, touched the avenues, and gave fine contrast to the deep shades of the wooded precipice, on which we stood, and to the whole line of buildings, which rise on the north terrace. Above this high dark line the stars appeared with a very sublime effect. No sound but the faint clinking of the soldier’s accoutrements, as he paced on watch, and the remote voices of people turning the end of the east terrace, appearing for a moment in the light there and vanishing. In a high window of the tower a light. Why is it so sublime to stand at the foot of a dark tower, and look up its height to the sky and the stars?

“What particularly strikes at Windsor is the length of terrace in the east, thus seen by moonlight; the massy towers, four in perspective; the lights and shades of the park below, the obscure distance beyond them, the low

and wide horizon, which you seem to look upon, the grandeur of the heavenly arch, which appears to spring from it, and the multitude of stars, which are visible in so vast and uninterrupted a view. Then the north terrace stretching and finally turning away from them towards the west, where high dark towers crown it. It was on this terrace, surely, that Shakspeare received the first hint of the time for the appearance of his ghost. —

‘Last night of all,
‘When yon same star that westward from the Pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one— ‘“

From inclination, Mrs. Radcliffe was minutely attentive to her household affairs, probably thinking with Schiller, that, after all, one of the best enjoyments of life arises from the exact performance of some mechanical duty. Although by no means disposed to parsimony, she kept an exact account of daily disbursements, until a very short time before her death. Much of her leisure was spent in reading the literary productions of the day, especially poetry and novels. Of the latter works she always spoke with an entire freedom from jealousy, and devoured the earlier Scotch novels with all the avidity of youth, although she felt deeply a slighting expression in “Waverley,” towards herself, which the author might have spared. Sir Walter Scott has, however, made ample amends to her reputation by his elaborate criticism prefixed to Ballantine’s edition of her romances. To music she was passionately attached, and sang herself with exquisite taste, though her voice, remarkably sweet, was limited in compass. At the Opera she was a frequent visitor, and on her return home would sit up singing over the airs she had heard, which her quickness of ear enabled her to catch, till a late hour. She was peculiarly affected by sacred music, and occasionally went to the oratorios, when they afforded her the opportunity of listening to the compositions of Handel. She sometimes, though more rarely, accompanied Mr. Radcliffe to the theatres; and was a warm admirer of Mrs. Siddons, whom she recollected at Bath,

when herself was young. She used to speak with much pleasure of having seen this great actress, before the commencement of her splendid career in London, going to Church with her little son Henry, and was struck by her exceeding dignity and grace. When she visited the theatre, Mrs. Radcliffe generally sat in the pit, partly because her health required warm clothing, and partly because, in that situation, she felt more withdrawn from the observation she disliked. She was fond of listening to any good verbal sounds, and would often desire to hear passages from the Latin and Greek classics, requiring at intervals the most literal translations, that could be given, however much the version might lose in elegance by the exactness.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mrs. Radcliffe suffered at intervals from a spasmodic asthma, which occasioned a general loss of health, and called for the unwearied attentions of her affectionate husband. In the hope of obtaining relief, she visited Ramsgate in the autumn of 1822, and, deriving benefit from the air, recurred to her old habit of noting down her impressions of scenery. The following is the last she ever wrote.

"Ramsgate, Saturday morning, Oct. 19, 1822. — Stormy day, rain without sun, except that early a narrow line of palest silver fell on the horizon, showing, here and there, distant vessels on their course. Ships riding in the Downs, exactly on the sea-line, over the entrance into the harbour, opposite to our windows, were but dim and almost shapeless hints of what they were. Many vessels, with sails set, making for the port; pilot-boats rowed out of the harbour to meet them; the tide rolling in, leaving the foaming waves at its entrance, where vessels of all kinds, from ships to fishing-boats, appeared in succession, at short intervals, dashing down among the foam, and rushing into the harbour. The little black boats around them often sunk so low in the surge, as to be invisible for a moment. This expansive harbour, encircled by the noble piers, might be considered as a grand theatre, of which the entrance and the sea beyond were the stage, the two pier-heads the portals, the plain of the harbour the pit, and the houses at the end of it the front boxes. This harbour was not now, as some hours since, flooded with a silver light, but grey and dull, in quiet contrast with the foaming waves at its entrance. The horizon thickened, and the scene around seemed to close in; but the vessels, as

they approached, though darker, became more visible and distinct, the sails half-set, some nearly whole set. They all kept away a little to the westward of the west pier, the wind south-west, then changed their course, and dashed round the lighthouse pier-head, tossing the foam high about them, some pitching head foremost, as if going to the bottom, and then rolling helplessly, and reeling in, settled in still waters. A lofty tide."

Although the health of Mrs. Radcliffe was improved by this excursion, she was much affected by the severe cold in the beginning of the ensuing winter. On the ninth of January, 1823, another attack of her disease commenced, which ultimately proved fatal. At first it appeared less serious than some of her previous seizures; but it soon became alarming. On the eleventh of January, Dr. Scudamore, to whose care she had formerly been indebted, was called in, and did every thing for her that skill and tenderness could suggest; but in vain. A few days before her death, an account, which she had accidentally read, of a shocking murder recently perpetrated, pressed on her memory, and joined with the natural operation of the disease to produce a temporary delirium. From this, however, she completely recovered, and remained sensible to the last. On the sixth of February, she did not appear to be in any immediate danger, though in a state of great weakness. At twelve at night, Mr. Radcliffe assisted in giving her some refreshment, which she took with apparent satisfaction, her last words being," There is some substance in that." She then fell into a slumber; but, when Mr. Radcliffe, who had been sitting up in the next room, re-entered her apartment, in the course of an hour or two, she was breathing rather hardly, and neither he nor the nurse was able to awake her. Dr. Scudamore was instantly sent for; but, before his arrival, she tranquilly expired, at between two and three o'clock in the morning of the seventh of February, 1823, being in the 59th year of her age. Her countenance after death was delightfully placid, and continued so for some days. Her remains were interred in a vault in the Chapel of Ease, at Bayswater, belonging to St. George's, Hanover Square.

As, since Mrs. Radcliffe's death, the story of her mental alienation has been revived, in reference to her later days, it has been deemed right to

apply to Dr. Scudamore for an authentic statement, which he has kindly given, and which must set such idle reports entirely at rest. It is as follows:

“Mrs. Radcliffe had been for several years subject to severe catarrhal coughs, and also was occasionally afflicted with asthma.

“In March 1822, she was ill with inflammation of the lungs, and for a considerable time remained much indisposed. With the summer season and change of air, she regained a tolerable state of health.

“In the early part of January 1823, in consequence of exposure to cold, she was again attacked with inflammation of the lungs, and much more severely than before. Active treatment was immediately adopted, but without the desired relief; and the symptoms soon assumed a most dangerous character. At the end of three weeks, however, and contrary to all expectation, the inflammation of the lungs was overcome; and the amendment was so decided, as to present a slight prospect of recovery.

“Alas! our hopes were soon disappointed. Suddenly, in the very moment of seeming calm from the previous violence of disease, a new inflammation seized the membranes of the brain. The enfeebled frame could not resist this fresh assault: so rapid in their course were the violent symptoms, that medical treatment proved wholly unavailing.

“In the space of three days, death closed the melancholy scene.

“In this maimer, at the age of fifty-nine, society was deprived of a most amiable and valuable member, and literature of one of its brightest ornaments.

“The foregoing statement will, I hope, afford all the explanation, which can be required, of the nature of Mrs. Radcliffe’s illness. During the whole continuance of the inflammation of the lungs, the mind was perfect in its reasoning powers, and became disturbed only on the last two or three days, as a natural consequence of the inflammation affecting the membranes of the brain.

“Previously to the last illness, and at all times, Mrs. Radcliffe enjoyed a remarkably cheerful state of mind; and no one was farther removed from “ mental desolation,” as has been so improperly described of the latter part of her life.

“She possessed a quick sensibility, as the necessary ally of her fine genius; but this quality would serve to increase the warmth of the social feelings, and effectually prevent the insulation of the mind, either as regards the temper or the understanding.”

Mrs. Radcliffe was, in her youth, exquisitely proportioned, though she resembled her father, and his brother and sister, in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. She was educated in the principles of the Church of England; and through life, unless prevented by serious indisposition, regularly attended its services. Her piety, though cheerful, was deep and sincere. Although perfectly well bred, and endowed with faculties and tastes which rendered her a delightful companion, she wanted that confidence which is necessary to mixed society, and which she could scarcely acquire, without losing something of the delicacy of feeling, which marked her character. If, in her retirement, she was sometimes affected by circumstances which would have passed unheeded amidst the bustle of the world, she was more than repaid by the enjoyments, which were fostered in the shade; and perhaps few distinguished authors have passed a life so blameless and so happy.

Mrs. Radcliffe may fairly be considered as the inventor of a new style of romance; equally distinct from the old tales of chivalry and magic, and from modern representations of credible incidents and living manners. Her works partially exhibit the charms of each species of composition; interweaving the miraculous with the probable, in consistent narrative and breathing of tenderness and beauty peculiarly her own. The poetical marvels of the first fill the imagination, but take no hold on the sympathies, to which they have become alien: the vicissitudes of the last awaken our curiosity, without transporting us beyond the sphere of ordinary life. But it was reserved for Mrs. Radcliffe to infuse the wondrous in the credible; to animate rich description with stirring adventure; and to impart a portion of human interest to the progress of romantic fiction. She occupied that middle region between the mighty dreams of the heroic ages and the realities of our own, which remained to be possessed; filled it with goodly imagery; and made it resonant with awful voices. Her works, in

order to produce their greatest impression, should be read first, not in childhood, for which they are too substantial; nor at mature age, for which they may seem too visionary; but at that delightful period of youth, when the soft twilight of the imagination harmonizes with the luxurious and uncertain light cast on their wonders. By those, who come at such an age to their perusal, they will never be forgotten.

The principal means, which Mrs. Radcliffe employed to raise up her enchantments on the borders of truth, are, first, her faculty of awakening emotions allied to superstitious fear; and, secondly, her skill in selecting and describing scenes and figures precisely adapted to the feelings she sought to enkindle. We will examine each of these powers, and then shortly advert to their development in her successive romances.

I. The art, by which supernatural agency is insinuated, derives its potency from its singular application to human nature, in its extremes of weakness and strength. Simply considered, fear is the basest of emotions, and the least adapted to the dignity of romance; yet it is that, of which the most heroic heart sometimes whispers a confession. On the other hand, every thing, which tends to elevate and ennoble our feelings, to give the character of permanency to our impressions, and impart a tongue to the silence of nature, has reference to things unseen. The tremblings of the spirit, which are base when prompted by any thing earthly, become sublime when inspired by a sense of the visionary and immortal. They are the secret witnesses of our alliance with power, which is not of this world. We feel both our fleshly infirmity and our high destiny, as we shrink on the borders of spiritual existence. Whilst we listen for echoes from beyond the grave, and search with tremulous eagerness for indications of the unearthly, our Curiosity and Fear assume the grandeur of passions. We might well doubt our own immortality, if we felt no restless desire to forestal the knowledge of its great secret, and held no obstinate questionings with the sepulchre. We were not of heavenly origin, if we did not struggle after a communion with the invisible; nor of human flesh, if we did not shudder at our own daring; — and it is in the union of this just audacity and venial terror, that we are strangely awed and affected. It is, therefore, needless to justify the use of the supernatural in fiction; for it is peculiarly adapted to the workings of the imagination — that power, whose high province is to mediate between the world without us and the

world within us; on the one hand to impart sentiment and passion to the external universe, and make it redolent of noble associations; and, on the other, to clothe the affections of the heart and the high suggestions of the reason with colour and shape, and present them to the mind in living and substantial forms.

There are various modes, in which the supernatural may be employed, requiring more or less of a dextrous sympathy, in proportion to the depth and seriousness of the feeling, which the author proposes to awaken. In cases where the appeal is only made to the fancy, it is sufficient if the pictures are consistent with themselves, without any reference to the prejudices, or passions, of those, before whom they are presented. To this class the fables of the Greek mythology belong, notwithstanding their infinite varieties of grandeur and beauty. They are too bright and palpable to produce emotions of awe, even among those, who professed to believe them; and rather tended to inclose the sphere of mortal vision, which they adorned and gladdened, with more definite boundaries, than to intimate the obscure and eternal. Instead of wearing, then, the solemn aspect of antiquity, they seem, even now, touched with the bloom of an imperishable youth. The gorgeous Oriental fictions and modern tales of fairy lore are also merely fantastical, and advance no claim on faith, or feeling. Their authors escape from the laws of matter, without deriving any power from the functions of spirit; they are rather without than above nature, and seek only an excuse in the name of the supernatural for their graceful vagaries. Akin essentially to these are mere tales of terror, in which horrors are accumulated on horrors. Beyond the precincts of the nursery, they are nothing but a succession of scenic representations — a finely coloured phantasmagoria, which may strike the fancy, but do not chill the blood, and soon weary the spectator. It is only the “eye of childhood” which “fears a painted devil.” In some of the wild German tales, indeed, there is, occasionally, a forcible exaggeration of truth, which strikes for a moment, and seems to give back the memory of a forgotten dream. But none of these works, whatever poetical merit they may possess, have the power to fascinate and appal, by touching those secret strings of mortal apprehension, which connect our earthly with our spiritual being.

In these later days, it, no doubt, requires a fine knowledge of the human heart to employ the supernatural, so as to move the pulses of terror. Of all

superstitions, the most touching are those, which relate to the appearance of the dead among the living; not only on account of the reality which they derive from mingling with the ordinary business of life, but of the cold and shuddering sympathy we feel for a being like to whom we may ourselves become in a few short years. To bring such a vision palpably on the scene is always a bold experiment, and usually requires a long note of preparations and a train of circumstances, which may gradually and insensibly dispose the mind to implicit credence. Yet to dispense with all such appliances, and to call forth the grandest spirit, that ever glided from the tomb, was not beyond Shakspeare's skill. A few short sentences only prepare the way for the ghost of the murdered King of Denmark; the spirit enters, and we feel at once he is no creature of time; he speaks, and his language is "of Tartarus, and the souls in bale." Such mighty magic as this, however, belonged only to the first of poets. Writers who, in modern times, have succeeded in infusing into the mind thoughts of unearthly fear, have usually taken one of these two courses: either they have associated their superstitions with the solemnities of nature, and contrived to interweave them in the very texture of life, without making themselves responsible for the feelings they excite: or they have, by mysterious hints and skilful contrivances, excited the curiosity and terror of their readers, till they have prepared them either to believe in any wonder they may produce, or to image for themselves in the obscurity fearful shapes, and to feel the presence of invisible horrors.

Those, who seek to create a species of supernatural interest by the first of these processes, find abundant materials adapted to their use in the noblest parts of our own intellectual history. There are doubtful phenomena within the experience of all reflecting minds, which may scarcely be referred to their mere mortal nature, and which sometimes force on the coldest sceptic a conviction, that he is "fearfully" as well as "wonderfully made." Golden dreams hover over our cradle, and shadows thicken round the natural descent of the aged into the grave. Few there are, who, in childhood, have not experienced some strange visitings of serious thought, gently agitating the soul like the wind "that bloweth where it listeth," suggesting to it holy fancies, and awakening its first sympathy with a world of sorrow and of tears. Who has not felt, or believed that he has felt, a sure presentiment of approaching evil? Who, at some trivial

occurrence, “striking the electric chord by which we are darkly bound,” has not been startled by the sudden revival of old images and feelings, long buried in the depth of years, which stalk before him like the spectres of departed companions? Who has not shrunk from the fascination of guilty thoughts, as from “supernatural soliciting?” Where is the man so basely moulded, that he does not remember moments of inspiration, when statelier images than his common intellect can embody, hopes and assurances brighter than his constitutional temperament, may recal, and higher faculties within himself than he has ever been able to use, have stood revealed to him like mountain-tops at the utmost reach of vision, touched by a gleam of the morning sun? And who, in the melancholy calm of the mind, sadly looking into its depths, has not perceived the gigantic wrecks of a nobler nature, as the fortunate voyager on some crystal lake has discerned, or fancied he discerned, the wave-worn towers of a forgotten city far in the deep waters? There are magic threads in the web of life, which a writer of romance has only to bring out and to touch with appropriate hues of fancy. From the secret places of the soul are “voices more solemn than from old superstitions, to which he may bid us hearken. In his works, prophecies may be fulfilled; presentiments justified; the history of manhood may answer to the dreams of the nursery; and he may leave his readers to assert if they can, “These have their causes; they are natural.” Let him only give due effect to the problem, and he may safely trust their hearts to supply the answer!

The other mode of exciting terror requires, perhaps, greater delicacy and skill, as the author purposes to influence the mind directly from without, instead of leaving it, after receiving a certain clue, to its own workings. In this style, up to the point where Mrs. Radcliffe chooses pause and explain, she has no rival. She knows the string of feeling shé must touch, and exactly proportions her means to her design. She invariably succeeds not by the quantity but the quality of her terrors. Instead of exhibiting a succession of magnificent” glooms, which only darken the imagination, she whispers some mysterious suggestion to the soul, and exhibits only just enough of her picture to prolong the throbbings she has excited. In nothing is her supremacy so clearly shown, as in the wise and daring economy, with which she has employed the instruments of fear. A low groan issuing from distant vaults; a voice heard among an assembly from

an unknown speaker; a little track of blood seen by the uncertain light of a lamp on a castle staircase; a wild strain of music floating over moonlight woods; as introduced by her, affect the mind more deeply than terrible incantations, or accumulated butcheries. “Pluck out the heart of her mystery!” — tell, at once, the secret, the lightest hint of which appals — verify the worst apprehensions of the reader; and what would be the reality in common hands? Y ou can suspect nothing more than a cruel murder perpetrated many years ago by an unprincipled monk, or an avowed robber! Why should we suffer all the stings of curiosity on such an issue? Human life is not held so precious, murder is not so strange and rare an occurrence, that we should be greatly agitated by the question whether, two centuries ago, a bandit destroyed one of his captives; but the skill of the writer, applying itself justly to the pulses of terror in our intellectual being, gives tragic interest to the inquiry, makes the rusted dagger terrible, and the spot of blood sublime. This faculty is the more remarkable, as it is employed to raise a single crime into importance; while others of equal dye are casually alluded to, and dismissed, as deeds of little note, and make no impression on the reader. Assassins who murder for hire, commonly excite no feeling in romance, except as mere instruments, like the weapons they use; but, when Mrs. Radcliffe chooses to single out one of these from the mass, though undistinguished by peculiar characteristics, she rivets our attention to Spalatro, as by an irresistible spell; forces us to watch every movement of his haggard countenance, and makes the low sound of his stealthy footsteps sink into the soul. Her faculty, therefore, which has been represented as melo-dramatic, is akin to the very essence of tragic power, which is felt not merely in the greatness of the actions, or sorrows, which it exhibits, but in its nice application to the inmost sources of terror and of pity.

It is extraordinary, that a writer thus gifted should, in all her works intended for publication, studiously resolve the circumstances, by which she has excited superstitious apprehensions, into mere physical causes. She seems to have acted on a notion, that some established canon of romance obliged her to reject real supernatural agency; for it is impossible to believe she would have adopted this harassing expedient if she had felt at liberty to obey the promptings of her own genius. So absolute was her respect for every species of authority, that it is probable she would rather

have sacrificed all her productions, than have transgressed any arbitrary law of taste, or criticism. It is equally obvious, that there is no valid ground of objection to the use of the supernatural, in works of fiction, and that it is absolutely essential to the perfection of that kind of romance, which she invented. To the imagination it is not only possible, but congenial, when introduced with art, and employed for high and solemn purposes. Grant only the possibility of its truth, which “the fair and innocent” are half disposed to believe, and there is nothing extravagant in the whole machinery, by which it works. But discard it altogether, and introduce, in its stead, a variety of startling phenomena, which are resolved at last into petty deceptions and gross improbabilities, and you at once disappoint the fancy, and shock the understanding of the reader. In the first case, the reason is not offended, because it is not consulted; in the last, it is expressly appealed to with the certainty of an unfavourable decision. Besides it is clear that all the feelings created up to the moment of explanation, and which it has been the very object of the author to awaken, have obeyed the influence of these very principles, which at last she chooses to disown. If the minds to whom the work is addressed were so constituted as to reject the idea of supernatural agency, they would be entirely unmoved by the circumstances arranged to produce the impression of its existence; and “ The Mysteries of Udolpho” would have fallen still-born from the press! Why then should the author turn traitor to her own “so potent art?” Why, having wrought on the fears of her readers till she sways them at her will, must she turn round and tell them they have been awed and excited by a succession of mockeries? Such impotent conclusions injure the romances as works of art, and jar on the nerves of the reader, which are tuned for grand wonders, not paltry discoveries. This very error, however, which injures the effect of Mrs. Radcliffe’s works, especially on a second perusal, sets off, in the strongest light, the wizard power of her genius. Even when she has dissolved mystery after mystery, and abjured spell after spell, the impression survives, and the reader is still eager to attend again, and be again deluded. After the voices heard in the chambers of Udolpho have been shown to be the wanton trick of a prisoner, we still revert to the remaining prodigies with anxious curiosity, and are prepared to give implicit credence to new wonders at Chateau le Blanc. In the romance of Gaston de Blondeviile, Mrs. Radcliffe, not

intending to publish, gratified herself by the introduction of a true spectre; and, without anticipating the opinion of the public on that work, we may venture to express a belief, that the manner, in which the supernatural agency is conducted, will deepen the general regret, that she did not employ it in her longer and more elaborate productions. —

I. — Mrs. Radcliffe's faculties of describing and picturing scenes and appropriate figures was of the highest order. Her accurate observation of inanimate nature, prompted by an intense love of all its varieties, supplied the materials for those richly coloured representations, which her genius presented. Without this perception of the true, the liveliest fancy will only produce a chaos of beautiful images, like the remembered fragments of a gorgeous dream. How singularly capable Mrs. Radcliffe was of painting the external world, in its naked grandeur, her published tour among the English Lakes, and, perhaps still more, the notes made on her journeys for her own amusement, abundantly prove. In the first, the boldness and simplicity of her strokes, conveying the clear images to the eye of the mind, with scarcely any incrustation of sentiment, or perplexing dazzle of fancy, distinguish her from almost all other descriptive tourists. Still the great charm of simplicity was hardly so complete, as in her unstudied notices of scenery; because in writing for the press, it is scarcely possible to avoid altogether the temptation of high so unding and ambiguous expressions, which always impede the distant presentiment of material forms. To this difficulty, she thus adverts in her account of Ulswater. "It is difficult to spread varied picture s of such scenes before the imagination. A repetition of the same images of rock, wood, and water, and the same epithets of grand, vast, and sublime, which necessarily occur, must appear tautologous, though their archetypes in nature, ever varying in outline or arrangement, exhibit new visions to the eye, and produce new shades of effect on the mind." In the journals, as no idea of authorship interposed to give restraint to her style, there is entire fidelity and truth. She seems the very chronicler and secretary of nature; makes us feel the freshness of the air; and listen to the gentlest sounds. Not only does she keep each scene distinct from ail others, however similar in general character; but discriminates its shifting aspects with the most delicate exactness. No aerial tint of a fleecy cloud is too evanescent to be imaged in her transparent style. Perhaps no writer in prose, or verse, has been so happy

in describing the varied effects of light in winged words. It is true, that there is not equal discrimination in the views of natural scenery, which she presents in her romances. In them she writes of places, which she has not visited; and, like a true lover, invests absent nature with imaginary loveliness. She looks at the grandeurs and beauties of création through a soft and tender medium, in which its graces are heightened, but some of its delicate varieties are lost. Still it is nature that we see, though touched with the hues of romance, and which could only be thus presented by one who had known, and studied its simple charms.

In the estimate of Mrs. Radcliffe's pictorial powers, we must include her persons as well as her scenes. It must be admitted that, with scarcely an exception, they are figures rather than characters. No writer ever produced so powerful an effect, without the aid of sympathy. Her machinery acts directly on her readers, and makes them tremble and weep, not for others, but for themselves. Adeline, Emily, Vivaldi, and Ellena, are nothing to us, except as fîlling up the scene; but it is we ourselves, who discover the manuscript in the deserted abbey; we, who are prisoners in the castle of Udolpho; we, who are inmates of Spalatro's cottage; we, who stand before the secret tribunal of the Inquisition, and even there are startled by the mysterious voice deepening its horrors. The whole is prodigious painting, so entire as to surround us with illusion; so cunningly arranged as to harrow up the soul; and the presence of a real person would spoil its completeness. As figures, all the persons are adapted with peculiar skill to the scenes in which they appear; — the more, as they are part of one entire conception. Schedoni is the most individual and fearful; but through all the earlier parts of the romance, he stalks like a being not of this world; and works out his purposes by that which, for the time at least, we feel to be superhuman agency. But when, after glaring out upon us so long as a present demon; or felt, when unseen, as directing the whole by his awful energies; he is brought within the range of human emotion by the discovery of his supposed daughter, and an anxiety for her safety and marriage; the spell is broken. We feel the incongruity; as if a spectre should weep. To develope character was not within the scope of Mrs. Radcliffe's plan, nor compatible with her style. At one touch of human pathos the enchantment would have been dissolved, as spells are broken by

a holy word, or as the ghost of Protesilaus vanished before the earthly passion of his enamoured widow.

As the absence of discriminated feeling and character was necessary to the completeness of the effect Mrs. Radcliffe sought to produce, so she was rather assisted by manners peculiarly straight-laced and timorous. A deep vein of sentiment would have suggested thoughts and emotions inconsistent with that “wise passiveness,” in which the mind should listen to the soft murmur of her “most musical, most melancholy” spells. A moral paradox could not co-exist with a haunted tower in the mind of her readers. The exceeding coldness and prudence of her heroines do not abstract them from the scenes of loveliness and terror through which we desire to follow them. If her scrupulous sense of propriety had not restrained her comic powers, Mrs. Radcliffe would probably have displayed considerable talent for the humorous. But her talkative servants are all very guarded in their loquacity; and even Annette, quaintly and pleasantly depicted, fairly belongs to the scene. Her old-fashioned primness of thought, which with her was a part of conscience, with all its cumbrous accompaniments, serves at once to render definite, and to set off, her fanciful creations. Romance, as exhibited by her, “tricked in antique ruff and bonnet,” has yet eyes of youth; and the beauty is not diminished by the folds of the brocade, or the stiffness of the damask stomacher.

These remarks apply, in their fullest effect, only to “*The Mysteries of Udolpho* ,” and “*The ïtalian* in which alone the chief peculiarities of Mrs. Radcliffe’s genius are decidedly marked. In her first work, “*The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* ” it is scarcely possible to discover their germ. Its scene is laid “ in the most romantic part of the Highlands of Scotland,” yet it is without local truth or striking picture. It is at once extravagant and cold. Except one scene, where the Earl of Athlin pursues two strangers through the vaults of his castle, and is stabbed by one of them in the darkness, nothing is delineated; but incredible events foliow each other in quick succession, without any attempt to realize them. Those, who complain of the minuteness of Mrs. Radcliffe’s descriptions, should read this work, where every thing passes with headlong rapidity, and be convinced of their error. In some few instances, perhaps, in “The Mysteries of Udolpho,” the descriptions of external scenery may occur too

often; but her best style is essentially pictorial; and a slow development of events was, therefore, necessary to her success.

The “*Sicilian Romance* ” is a work of much more “mark and likelihood and, very soon after its first appearance, attracted a considerable share of public attention. Here the softer blandishments of our author’s style, which were scarcely perceptible in her first production, were spread forth to captivate the fancy. Transported to the “sweet south,” her genius, which had shrunk in the bleak, atmosphère of Scotland, caught the luxurious spirit of a happier clime. Never was a title more justly applied than to this romance; it reminds the reader of “Sicilian fruitfulness.” In tender and luxurious description of natural scenery, it is surpassed by none of Mrs. Radcliffe’’s productions. The flight of her heroine is like a strain of “lengthened sweetness long drawn out — as one series of delicious valleys opens on us after another; and the purple light of love is shed over all. Still she had not yet acquired a mastery over her own power of presenting terrific incidents and scenes to the eye of the mind, and awakening the throbs of suspense by mysterious suggestions. The light seen through the closed windows of the deserted rooms — the confession of Vincent stopped by death — the groans heard from beneath Ferdinands prison — and the figure perceived stealing among the vaults, are not introduced with sufficient earnestness, and lose all claim to belief, by the utter incredibility of the incidents, with which they are surrounded. Escapes, recaptions, encounters with fathers and banditti, surprising partings, and more surprising meetings, follow each other as quickly as the changes of a pantomime, and with almost as little of intelligible connexion. One example may suffice. — Hippolitus enters a ruin by moonlight, for shelter; hears a voice as of a person in agony; sees, through a shattered casement, a group of banditti plundering a man, who turns out to be Ferdinand, his intended brother-in-law; finds himself, he knows not how, in a vault; hears a scream from an inner apartment; bursts open the door and discovers a lady fainting, whom he recognizes as his mistress; overhears a quarrel and combat for the lady between two of the banditti, which ends in the death of one of them; fights with the survivor, and kills him; endeavours to escape with Julia; finds his way into a “dark abyss,” which is no other than the burial-place of the victims of the banditti, marked with graves, and strewed with unburied carcases; climbs to a grate, and witnesses a combat

between the robbers and officers of justice; escapes with the lady through a secret door into the forest, where they are pursued by her father’s party; but, while he fights at the mouth of a cavern, she loses her way in its recesses, tili they actually conduct her to the dungeon where her mother, who had been considered dead for fifteen years, is imprisoned; — and all this in a few pages! There are, in this short story, incidents enough for two such works as “ The Mysteries of Udolpho,” where, as in that great romance, they should not only be told, but painted; and where reality and grandeur should be given to their terrors.

In “*The Romance of the Forest* ,” Mrs. Radcliffe, who, since the dawn of her powers, had been as one “moving about in worlds unrealized,” first exhibited the faculty of controlling and fîxing the wild images which floated around her, and of stamping on them the impress of consistency and truth. This work is, as a whole, the most faultless of all her productions; but it is of an inferior order to “The Mysteries of Udolpho” and “ The Italian and can only be preferred by those, who think the absence of error of more importance than original excellence. There is a just proportion between all its parts; its mysteries are adequately explained; it excites and gratifies a very pleasant degree of curiosity; but it does not seem to dilate the imagination, nor does it curdle the blood. Its opening after a sentence of marvellous commonplace, is striking; the midnight journey of La Motte and his family they know not whither, and the introduction of the heroine, under extraordinary circumstances, to their care, rivet attention to all that is to follow. The scenes in the forest where they take up their abode are charming. This seems the most delicious asylum for the persecuted outlaw; its wood-walks and glades glisten before us with the morning dew; and there is something in the idea of finding a home in a deserted abbey, which answers to some of the wildest dreams of childhood, and innocently gratifies that partiality for unlicensed pleasure, or repose, which is so natural to the heart. The whole adventure of La Motte and the Marquis is sufficiently probable and interesting; and the influence, which it ultimately enables the more resolute villain to exercise over the weaker, is managed with peculiar skill, and turned to great account in the progress of the story. There is here scarcely any hint of the supernatural; but the skeleton in the chest of the vaulted chamber; the dagger, spotted with rust; the manuscript of the prisoner, which

Adeline reads by the fitful light of her lamp, and which proves to be written by her own father, possess us with the apprehension of some secret crime, which acquires importance from its circumstances and its mystery. There are some highly-finished scenes; as that where Adeline, in her solitary chamber, dares not raise her eyes to her glass, lest another face than her own should meet them; her escape with a man whom she supposes to be the servant she had trusted, and who startles her with a strange voice; the luxurious pavilion of the Marquis, to which we are introduced after afrightful journey through a storm; and, above ail, the conversation, in which the Marquis, after a seriés of dark solicitations, understood by La Motte, as pointing to Adeline's dishonour, proposes her death. This last, as a piece of dramatic effect, is perhaps equal to any passage in the author's works. The closing chapters of the work are inferior in themselves to its commencement; but they gratify by affording a worthy solution of the intricacies of a plot, which has excited so deep an interest in its progress.

"*The Mysteries of Udolpho* " is by far the most popular of Mrs. Radcliffe's works. To this preeminence it is, we think, justly entitled; for, although " *The Italian* " may display more purely intellectual power, it is far less enchanting. Of ail the romances in the world, this is perhaps the most romantic. Its outline is noble, it is fîlled with majestic or beautiful imagery; and it is touched throughout with a dreamy softness, which harmonizes all its scenes, and renders its fascination irrésistible. It rises from the gentlest beauty by just gradations to the terrific and the sublime. Nothing can be fancied more soothing to the mind, fevered with the bustle of the world, than the picture of domestic repose, with which it opens. We are dwellers in the home of the good St. Aubert, who has retired to a beautiful spot, once the favourite scene of his youthful excursions; and sharers in its elegant and tranquil pleasures. Next come the exquisite journey of the father and daughter through the heart of the Pyrenees, where we trace out every variety of mountain grandeur; the richly-coloured scene of vintage gaiety among the woods of the chateau; and the death of St. Aubert in the neighbourhood of a place, which we und erstand to be connected with his destiny, and where strains of unearthly music are heard in sad accordance with human sorrow. When Emily's aunt, to whose care she is consigned, marries the desperate Montoni, we feel that the clouds

are gathering round her progress, and we shudder at the forebodings of approaching péril. A little interval is given among the luxuries of Venice, which are painted with exquisite delicacy and lightness; and then the work of terror begins. Nothing can be more picturesque than the ascent of the Apennines; mountain seems to rise above mountain in gloomy stateliness before us, tili we skirt the inmost valley, far shut out from the world, and Montoni, breaking a long silence, utters the charmed words, “There is Udolpho!” The ideas of extent, of massiveness, and austere grandeur, conveyed in the description of the castle, have matchless force and distinctness, and prepare the mind for the crimes and wonders, of which it is the silent witness. Every thing beneath “these dark battlements” is awful; the slightest incidents wear a solemn hue, and “Fate in sullen echoes” seems to “tell of some nameless deed.” Not only the mysterious appearances and sounds appal us, but the rushing wind, a rustling curtain, the lonely watchword on the terrace, have power to startle, and keep curiosity awake. The whole persecution and death of Madame Montoni seem prodigious, as though they were something out of nature; yet they derive ali this importance from the circumstances, with which they are invested; for there is nothing extraordinary in the fate of a despicable woman, worried into the grave by her husband, because she will not give up her settlement. The mysteries of Chateau le Blanc are less majestic than those of Udolpho, but perhaps they are even more touching; at least, the visit of Emily to the chamber where the Marchioness died, twenty years before, not without suspicion of poison, and which had been shut up ever since, is most affecting and fearful. The faded magnificence of the vast apartment; the black pall lying on the bed, as when it decked the corpse; the robe and articles of dress remaining as they had been carelessly scattered in the lifetime of their owner; her veil, which hand had never approached since, now dropping into pieces; her lute on the table, as it was touched on the evening of her death; would be solemn and spectral, even if the pall did not move and a face arise from beneath it. This scene derives a tenderer interest from the strange likeness, which Emily seems to bear to the deceased lady, and which is artfully heightened by the action of the old housekeeper throwing the black veil over her, and by her touching the long-neglected lute. Such are some among the many striking features of this romance; its defects are great and obvious. Its mysteries

are not only resolved into natural causes, but are explained by circumstances provokingly trivial. What reader would bear to be told that the black veil, from which his imagination has scarcely been allowed to turn for three volumes, conceals a waxen image; that the wild music, which has chanced to float on the air, in all the awful pauses of action, proceeded from an insane nun, permitted to wander about the woods; and that the words, which startled Montoni and his friends, at their guilty carousals, were uttered by a man wandering through a secret passage almost without motive; unless the power and sweetness of the spell remained after it was thus rudely broken?

"*The Italian* " has more unity of plan than "The Mysteries of Uldopho and its pictures are more individual and distinct; but it has far less tenderness and beauty. Its very introduction, unlike the gentle opening of the former romance, impresses the reader with awe. Its chief agent, Schedoni, is most vividly painted; and yet the author contrives to invest him with a mystery, which leads us to believe, that even her image is inadequate to the reality. Up to the period, at which he unnaturally melts from demon to man, he is the always chief figure when he is present; and, where we do not see him, his spirit yet seems to influence all around us. The great scenes of this romance stand out in bold relief as in compartments; of which the chief are the adventures in the vaults of Pallozzi; the machinations of Schedoni and the Marchioness, for the destruction of the heroine; her confinement in the monastery of San Stephano, and her escape with Vivaldi; her terrible sojourn in Spalatro's cottage on the seashore; and the whole representation of the Inquisition, which fills the mind when Schedoni' s supremacy ceases. Of these, perhaps the very finest is the scene in the church, where the Confessor makes palpable to the Marchioness the secret wishes of her heart for Ellena's death: the situation is essentially fearful; and all the circumstances are contrived with admirable effect to heighten, vary and prolong the feeling of curiosity and terror. The dreary horrors of the fisherman's cottage are admirably painted; but the effort to produce a great theatrical effect is very imperfectly concealed; and we cannot help being somewhat dissatisfied with the process of bringing a helpless orphan

to such a distance, merely that she may be murdered with éclat; with the equally unaccountable delay in performing the deed; the strange relentings of the ruffian; and the long preparation, which precedes the attempt of Schedoni to strike the fatal blow. There is great art in the scene, to which all this is introductory; and the discovery of the portrait is a most striking *coup de theatre;* but the art is too palpable, and the contrast between the assassin and the father too violent — at least, for a second perusal. Not so, the graphic description of the vast prisons of the Inquisition; they are dim, prodigious, apparently eternal; and the style is solemn and weighty as the subject. Mrs. Radcliffe alone could have deepened the horror of this gloom by whispers of things yet more terrible; and suggest fears of the unseen, which should overcome the present apprehensions of bodily torture.

Of the tale and the poems now first presented to the world, it would scarcely become us particularly to speak. The verses, scattered through ail the romances, are so inartificially introduced, that they have little chance of being estimated by an impatient reader; but, when examined, they will be found replete with felicitous expression and with rich though indistinct imagery.

In her own peculiar style of composition, Mrs. Radcliffe has never been approached. Her success naturally drew forth a crowd of imitators, who produced only cumbrous caricatures, in which the terrors were without decorum, and the explanations absolutely farcical. No successful writer has followed her without calling to aid other means, which she would not condescend to use. The Author *of* “ The Monk” mingled a sickly voluptuousness with his terrors; and Maturin, full of “ rich conceits,” approached the borders of the forbidden in speculation, and the paradoxical in morals. She only, of all writers of romance, who have awed and affected the public mind, by hints of things unseen, has employed enchantments purely innocent; has forborne to raise one questionable throb, or call forth a momentary blush. This is the great test not only of moral feeling, but of intellectual power; and in this will be found her highest praise.

THE END

St George Hanover Square Church, Mayfair, London — Radcliffe's final resting place

The church in Radcliffe's time